

# Center for the Study of College Student Retention

## Retention Resources for Individuals & Educational Institutions

$$*RET = E_{ID} + (E + IN + C)_{IV}$$

A RETENTION FORMULA FOR STUDENT SUCCESS. *FINALLY*,  
PUTTING THE PIECES OF THE RETENTION PUZZLE TOGETHER

## Dr. Alan Seidman

- Executive Director: Center for the Study of College Student Retention ([www.cscsr.org](http://www.cscsr.org))
- Editor: *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*
- Author: *College Student Retention: Formula for Student Success.*



6/1/2008

*"You have until he rolls his eyes and looks at his watch."*

# **Education Department Will Emphasize Retention Issues in Next Higher Education Act, Official Says**

The U.S. Education Department will emphasize student-retention rates and other issues of interest to for-profit colleges as it works with Congress in the next year to reauthorize the Higher Education Act, a top department official said Friday at the annual meeting of the Career College Association. Data indicate that the record of all kinds of colleges on retaining first- and second-year students "is not good," said Ms. Stroup. The Education Department will examine retention policies "and look at ways to use federal money in an incentive fashion to reward programs that work," she said.

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Ms. Stroup also hinted that President Bush's emphasis on quality through the examination of outcomes-based education could extend to the postsecondary level. "I think you'll see that now we'll be pushing for outcomes and results," she said, noting that the Education Department will look specifically at retention and completion rates. "These are things we need to be able to show to be accountable to the taxpayer," she said.

## **SEIDMAN SAYS**

**“OVER THE YEARS, COLLEGES HAVE SPENT A LOT OF MONEY TO HELP IMPROVE RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES. IN SPITE OF ALL THE MONEY SPENT ON THESE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES HAVE NOT IMPROVED OVER TIME”**

# College Retention Trends

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1983-2005

## First to Second Year Retention Trends

	Highest %	Lowest%	2005%
Two-Year Public	53.1 ('83)	51.3 ('04)	51.6
Two-Year Private	72.6 ('92)	61.7 ('05)	61.7
BA/BS Public	70.0 ('04)	66.4 ('96, '05)	66.4
BA/BS Private	74.0 ('89)	60.1 ('97)	70.9
MA Public	70.1 ('05)	68.1 ('89)	70.1
MA Private	78.0 ('85)	74.3 ('03)	75.8
PhD Public	78.1 ('04)	73.3 ('86)	77.5
PhD Private	85.0 ('85)	82.1 ('05)	82.1
<hr/>			
National	68.3 ('04, '05)	66.6 ('96)	68.3

# College Retention Trends

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2004

First to Second Year Retention Rates By Admissions Selectivity  
4 year colleges

Typical Test Scores

Selectivity Level	ACT	SAT	N	Mean %
Highly Selective	27-31	1220-1380	73	93.3
Selective	22-27	1030-1220	198	82.6
Traditional	20-23	950-1070	315	70.8
Liberal	18-21	870-990	80	66.1
Open	17-20	830-950	106	68.1

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All Institutions

772 75.1

# College Completion Rates

1983-2005

	Highest %	Lowest%	2004%
*Two-Year Public	38.8 ('89)	27.5 ('05)	27.5
Two-Year Private	66.4 ('90)	51.9 ('04)	57.5
**BA/BS Public	52.8 ('96)	39.5 ('05)	39.5
BA/BS Private	56.7 ('04)	53.3 ('01)	56.2
MA/MS Public	46.7 ('86)	37.0 ('00)	38.0
MA/MS Private	58.4 ('88)	53.5 ('01)	55.4
PhD Public	50.6 ('89, '90)	45.0 ('01)	46.8
PhD Private	68.8 ('86)	63.1 ('05)	63.1
<b>National</b>	<b>54.6 ('90)</b>	<b>50.9 ('01)</b>	<b>51.8</b>

\* Three years or less

\*\* Five years or less

Source: ACT Institutional Data File 2005

# SEIDMAN SAYS

***“FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMS  
AND SERVICES TO BE SUCCESSFUL  
THEY MUST BE POWERFUL  
ENOUGH TO EFFECT CHANGE”***



# How Do You Get From Talk To Action?

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**FORM A CROSS-FUNCTIONAL COMMITTEE  
.....OF COURSE!!!**

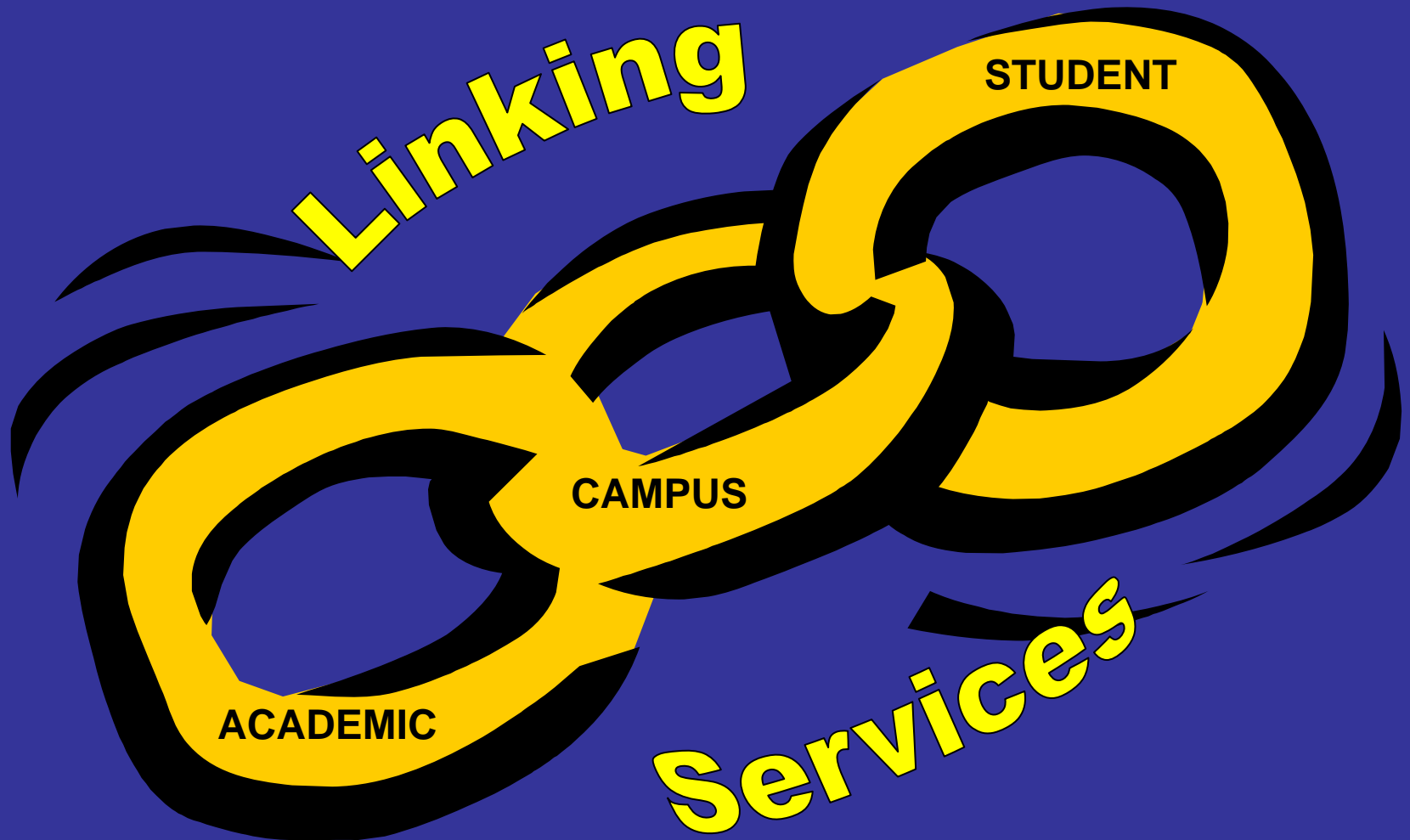


**RETENTION COMMITTEE**  
Statement of the Problem  
Definition (s)  
Data Gathering  
Model  
What Are You Planning To Do?  
Implementation  
Assessment  
Keep Campus Informed

**EM = Optimum recruitment, retention and graduation**

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# Retention Is An Institution Wide Process



# Faculty Involvement In Retention

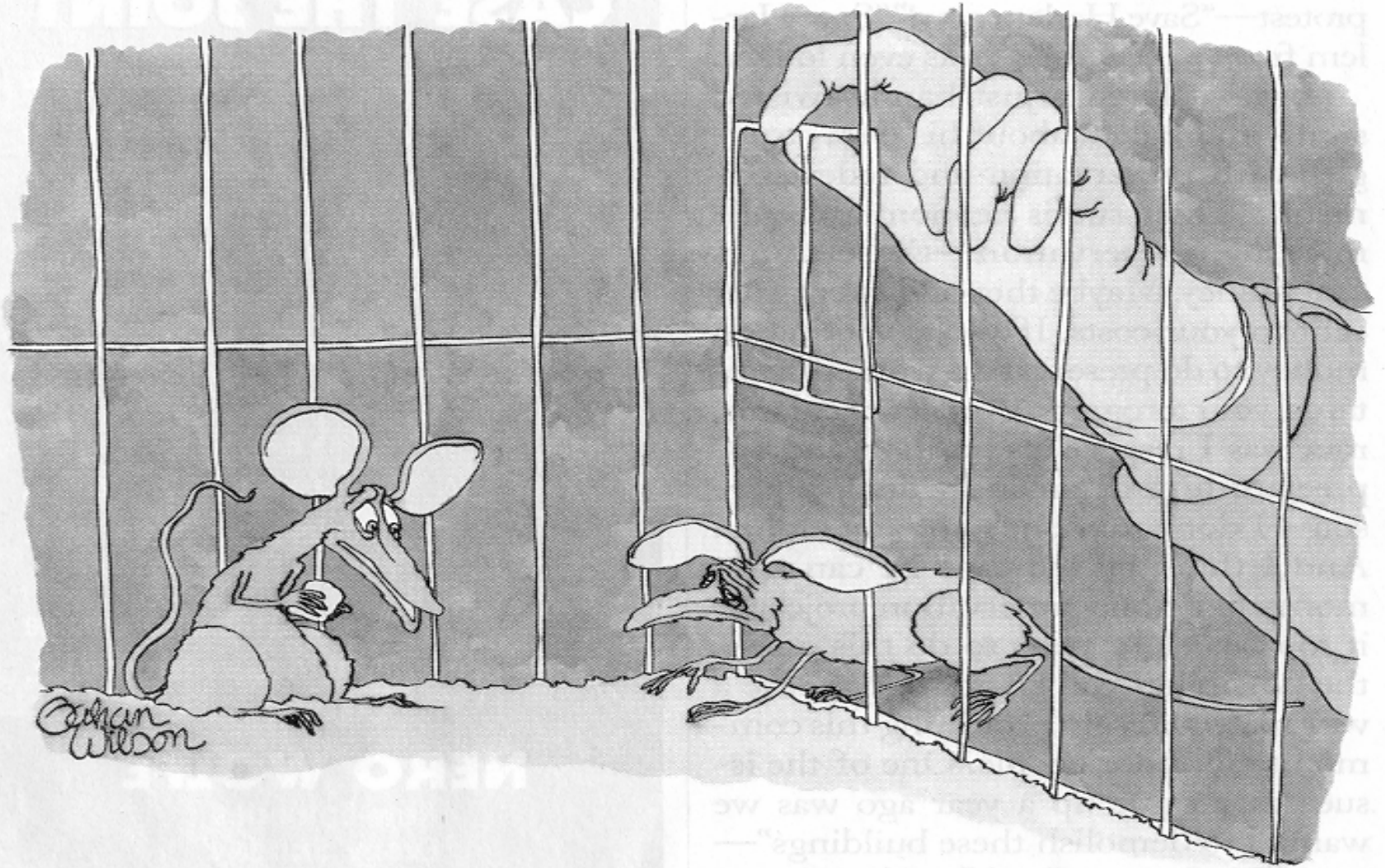
**“BUT I ALREADY HAVE TOO MUCH TO DO. TEACH, ADVISE, RESEARCH, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT, DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES, COLLEGE COMMITTEES. RETENTION IS ‘NOT MY JOB’.”**



# Campus Community Involvement In Retention

**IMAGINE. THEY WANT  
US TO DO MORE WORK.  
WHAT IS THIS RETENTION  
FORMULA ANYWAY?**





*"Tough day at the labyrinth?"*

# There Is A Role For College Community In Retention

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Who Helps Maintain Enrollments?

*College Community*

Who Helps Retain Students?

*College Community*

Who Helps Students Meet Their  
Academic & Personal Goals?

*College Community*

Who Helps Link Academic  
& Student Services?

*College Community*

Who Helps Increase  
Student Satisfaction?

*College Community*

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IT IS A FACULTY, STAFF, STUDENT & ADMINISTRATIVE PARTNERSHIP

# Top Level Support Needed



# RETENTION COMMITTEE

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Chair: Faculty Member

Recruit Members From The College Community

Statement of the Problem

**We Can/Want To Do Better**

Define Retention/Attrition

What Is Your Definition of Retention?

Gather Data/Benchmark

Compare with Peers (are you satisfied with your results?)

Model for Your Interventions

Tinto Model

What Do You Plan to Do?

$RET = E_{ID} + (E+IN+C)_{IV}$

Assign Responsibility

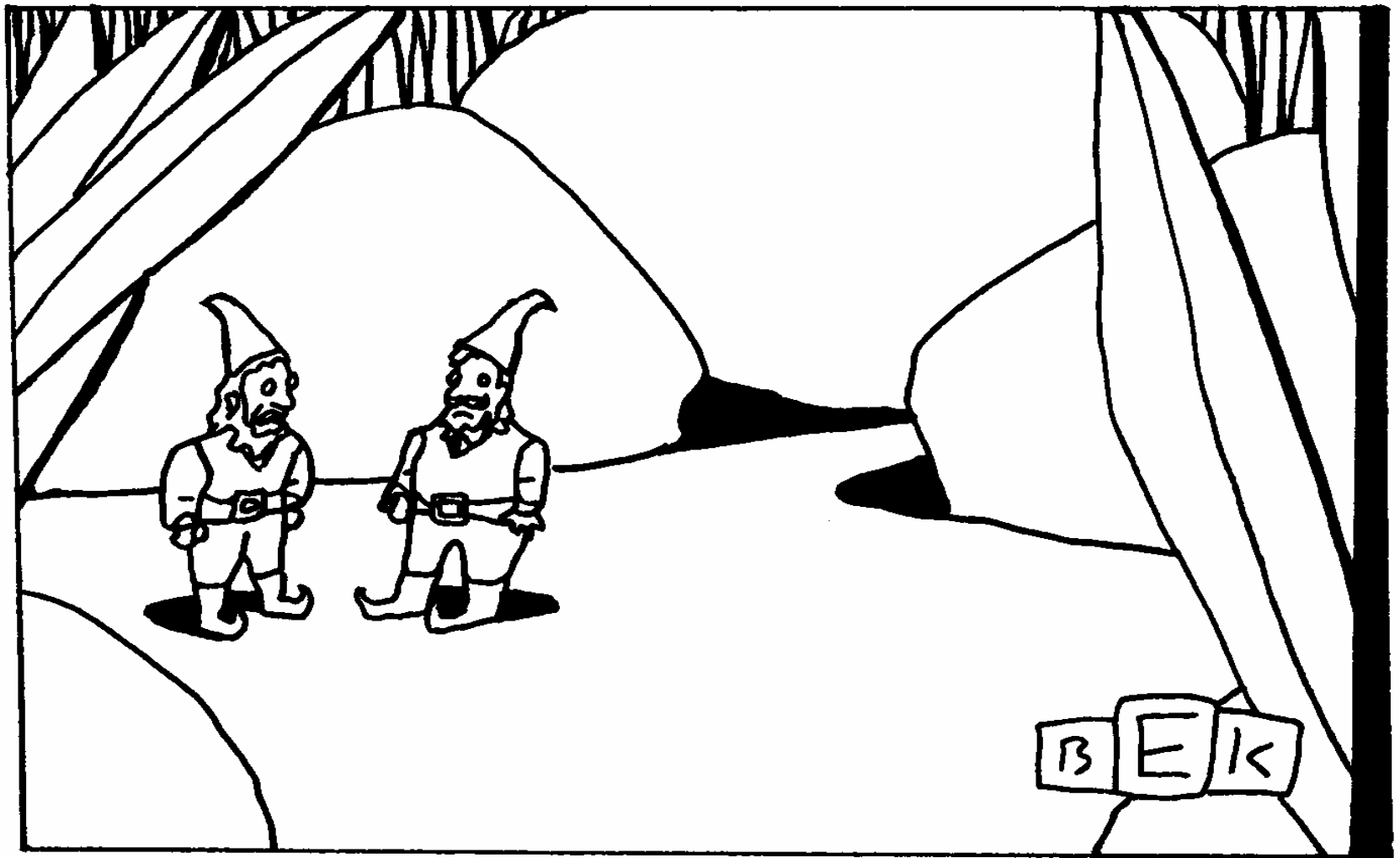
Faculty, Student Affairs Staff,  
Institutional Research etc.

Evaluation Plan:

Evaluate/Modify Where Necessary

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*"I can't live in a glen that has such a narrow definition of what it is to be elfin."*

# Defining Retention/Attrition

**PROGRAM RETENTION:** Tracks the full-time, first-time student in a degree program over time (6yrs/4yr college, 3yrs/2yr college) to determine whether the student has completed the program.

**COURSE RETENTION:** The number of students enrolled in each credit course after the course census date and the number of students who successfully complete the course with an A-D grade at the end of the semester.

**STUDENT RETENTION:** If a student does not enroll for two consecutive regular semesters, determine whether the student has achieved his/her academic and/or personal goals.

**Your College Definition Of Student Retention/Attrition**

# SEIDMAN SAYS

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**“BENCHMARK WITH PEER INSTITUTIONS.  
DO YOU KNOW WHO YOUR PEERS ARE?  
DO YOU HAVE A RETENTION AND/OR  
GRADUATION PROBLEM?”**

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# Tinto Model Major Concepts

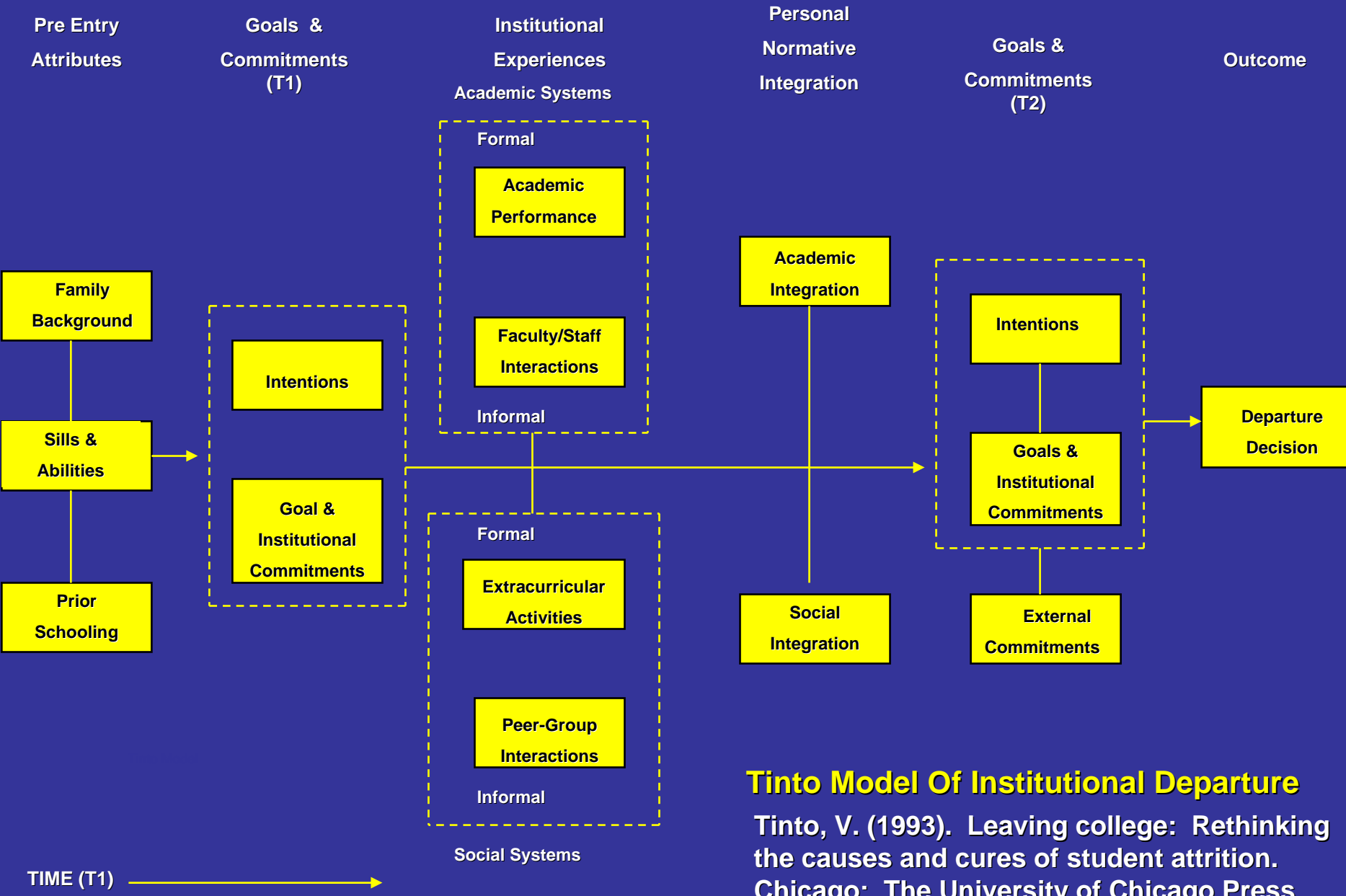
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## Stages Of Passage In Student College Careers

- **Separation** From Communities Of The Past
- The **Transition** Between High School And College
- **Incorporation** Into The Society Of The College

## Interactions

- Individual Pre-entry College Attributes Such As Family Background, Skill And Ability, Prior Schooling Form Individual Goals And Commitments
  - Individual's Goals And Commitments Interact **Over Time** With Institutional Experiences (Formal And Informal Academic And Social Systems)
  - The Extent The Individual Becomes Academically And Socially Integrated Into The Academic And Social Systems Determines Departure Decision
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**Tinto Model Of Institutional Departure**

Tinto, V. (1993). Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

# Astin's Student Involvement

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- "Student involvement" refers to the amount of physical and psychological energy that a student devotes to the academic experience.
- Highly involved student who devotes considerable energy to studying, participates in student organizations, and interacts frequently with faculty members, is more committed to the institution.
- 
- The more committed to the institution, the higher likelihood of success.
- 
- Anything that is done to enhance a student's commitment to a goal and to the institution should further enhance his/her social and academic integration, and therefore promote retention.

# Person-Environment Fit Theory

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- **Person-environment fit theory predicts that congruence between the person and the social environment results in satisfaction**
- **Institutional programs that promote student institutional "fit" from the beginning and programs, which promote student development and involvement in the institution, should produce satisfied students.**
- **Satisfied students should achieve their academic and personal goals more fully than those students who are not satisfied with the institution or its environment.**

# A Retention Formula For Student Success

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*“FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE SUCCESSFUL  
THEY MUST BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO EFFECT CHANGE”*

$$*RET = E_{ID} + (E + IN + C)_{IV}$$

\*RETENTION = EARLY<sub>IDENTIFICATION</sub> + (EARLY + INTENSIVE + CONTINUOUS)<sub>INTERVENTION</sub>

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# EARLY IDENTIFICATION

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## *Prior To Enrollment*

At The Earliest Possible Time Identify “The Student At Risk” Academically & Socially

What Is The College Profile Of Previous Unsuccessful Student?

Use College Specific Data As An Initial Screening Tool

*“FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE SUCCESSFUL  
THEY MUST BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO EFFECT CHANGE”*

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# EARLY IDENTIFICATION

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## *Prior To Enrollment - Continued*

### *Identifying Students*

At Application Through The Examination Of Academic Records & Recommendations

- Essays
- Standardized Assessment
- College Assessment
- Academic Goals
- Personal Goals
- Parents Educational Attainment
- Economic Level
- Family Structure

***“FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE SUCCESSFUL  
THEY MUST BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO EFFECT CHANGE”***

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# EARLY IDENTIFICATION

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## *After Enrollment*

As Early In The Semester As Possible

Use *Faculty Knowledge* of Student Behaviors To Help Define The “Student At Risk” Faculty Know Their Students

Faculty Should Be Able To Submit Names Anytime During The Term  
Follow-up With Faculty

*“FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE SUCCESSFUL  
THEY MUST BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO EFFECT CHANGE”*

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# EARLY IDENTIFICATION

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## *After Enrollment - Continued*

### Faculty Know Their Students

Characteristics Students Exhibit In Class That May Indicate A Need For Intervention?

- Poor Attendance
- Distracted Easily
- Failing Tests And/or Quizzes
- Does Not Participate In Class Discussions
- Falling Asleep In Class; Always Tired
- Not Attentive
- Disruptive
- Poor Written Work
- Appears Hung Over

### Faculty Should Be Able To Submit Names Anytime During The Term

- Use Opscan Form
- Enter Information Directly From Office Computer

### Follow-up

- With Faculty Indicating That The Student Has Been Contacted
- Feedback From Faculty The Effectiveness Of The Intervention

# EARLY INTERVENTION

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## **ASSESSMENT** (Identification)

Either Prior To Enrollment or As Soon After As Possible

## **DIAGNOSIS** (Directly After Assessment)

Student Needs To Meet With A Professional To Interpret Assessment With The Student

## **INTERVENTION**

Develop Prescription (Contract) With The Student

- Remediation
- Restriction Of Credits
- Attend Campus/Off Campus Programs/AA
  - Tutorials
  - Peer Counseling
  - Psychological Counseling

## **FOLLOW-UP**

Schedule Follow-up/Monitoring Sessions

Keep Faculty Informed of Student Progress/Give Feedback

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# INTENSIVE INTERVENTION

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*“FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE SUCCESSFUL  
THEY MUST BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO EFFECT CHANGE”*

**Intensive Enough And Meet Regularly To Be Effective**

**Must Be Focused On Identified Problem (s)  
Regular Feedback To The Student On Progress  
(Outcome Measures)**

**Modify Intervention Where Necessary**

# CONTINUOUS INTERVENTION

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*“FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE SUCCESSFUL  
THEY MUST BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO EFFECT CHANGE”*

**Continue As Long As It Takes The Student To  
Demonstrate That He/She No Longer Needs The  
Intervention**

**Regular Contact With A Professional To Ascertain  
Student Progress**

**Adjust Intervention Where Necessary**

# Look At Your Programs And Services

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## Do They:

- Help Bond Students To Students?
- Help Bond Students To The College?
- Identify Specific Deficiencies?
- Remediate Deficiencies?

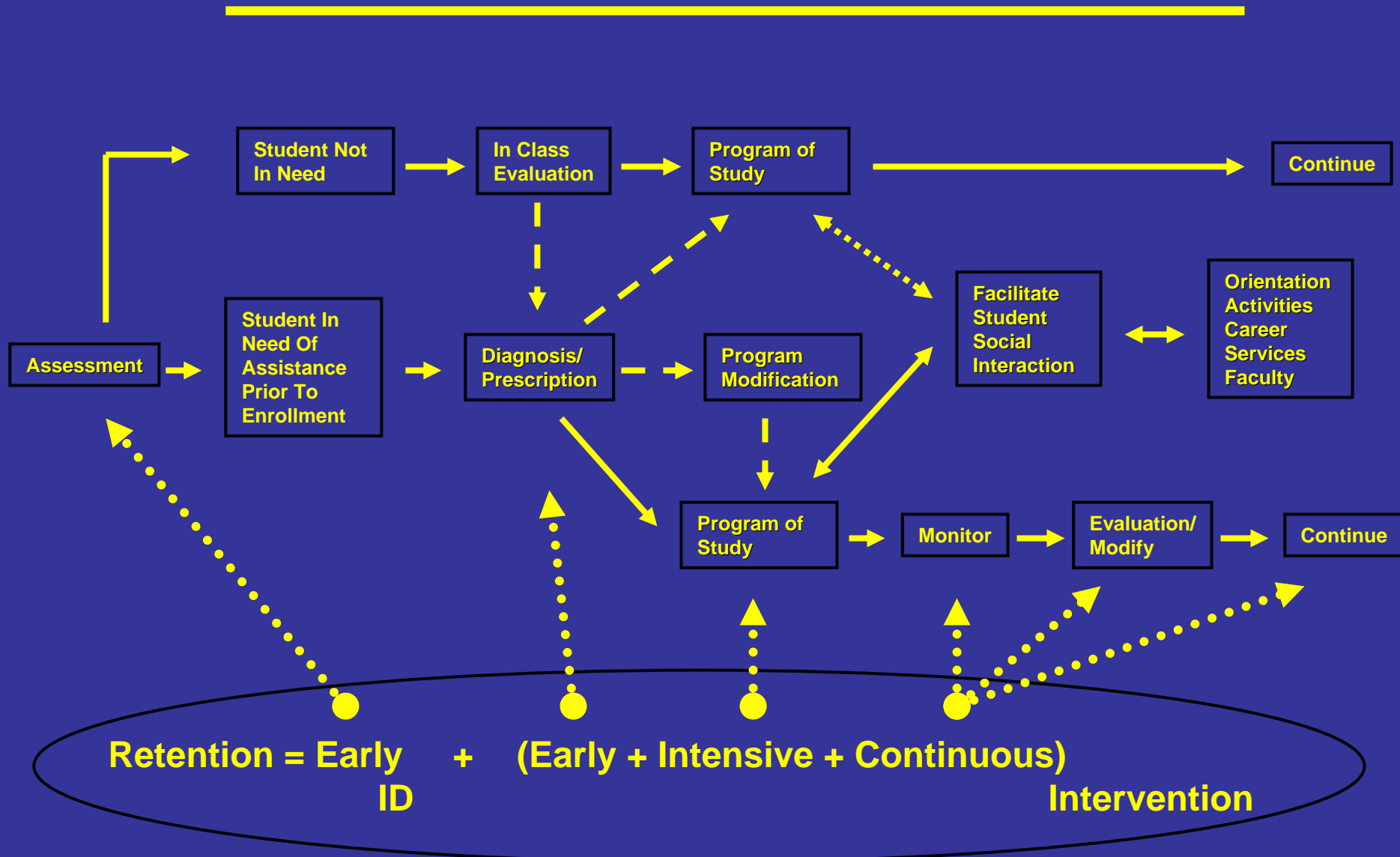
## Seidman Says:

**“Do Not Recruit Students To Your Campus Who Will Not Be Successful Unless You Are Willing To Provide Programs And Services To Help Overcome Deficiencies. Philosophy Does Not Have To Follow Finance”**

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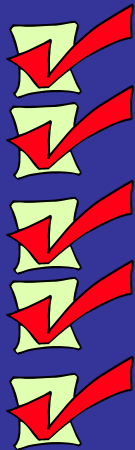
# Implementing the Seidman Formula



# RETENTION COMMITTEE

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*“FOR INTERVENTION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE SUCCESSFUL  
THEY MUST BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO EFFECT CHANGE”*



**Statement of the Problem**

**Define Retention/Attrition**

**Gather Data/Benchmark**

**Model for Your Interventions**

**What Do You Plan to Do?**

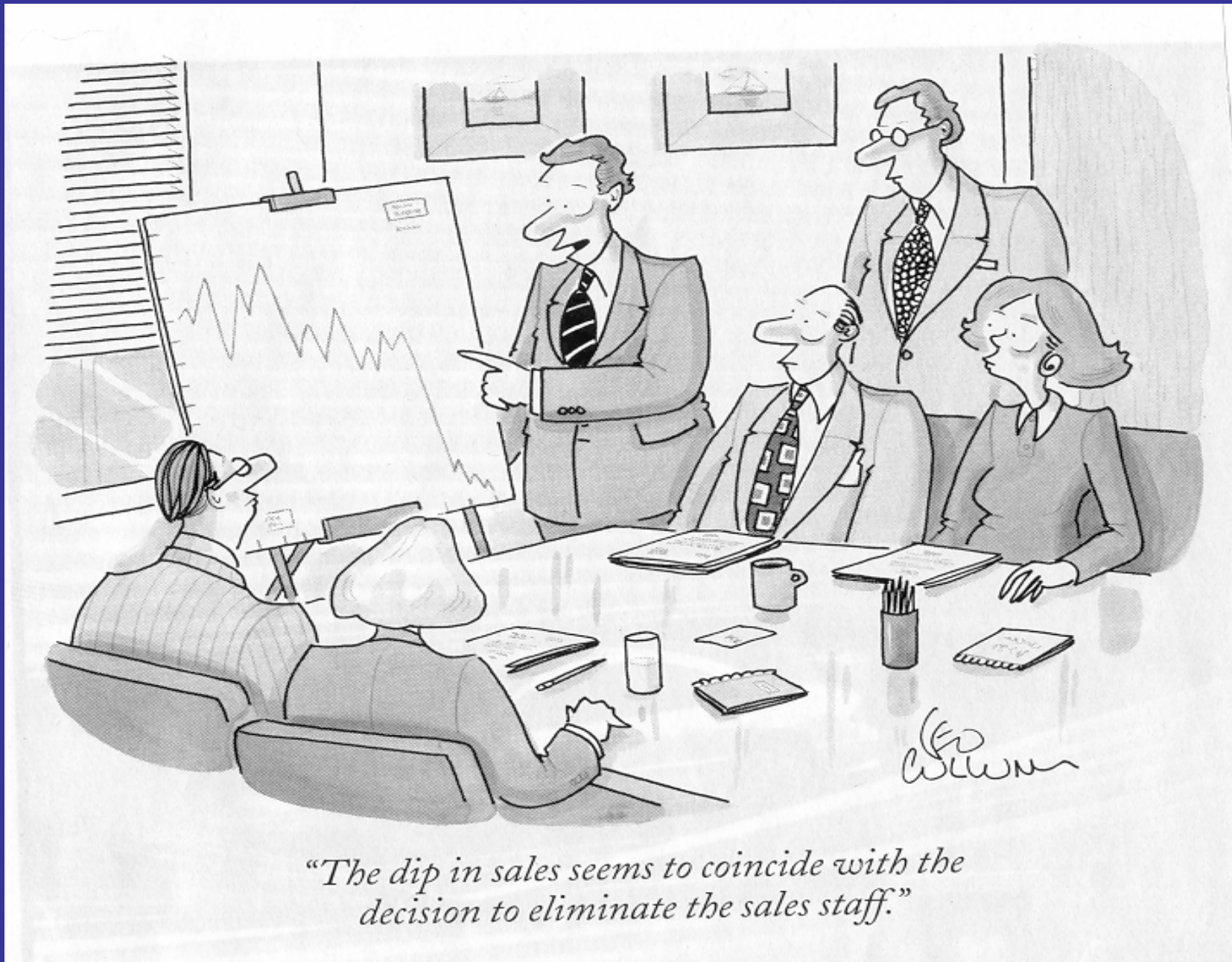
## Assign Responsibility

**Faculty, Student Affairs Staff, Institutional  
Research etc.**

## Evaluation Plan:

**Evaluate/Modify Where Necessary**

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*"The dip in sales seems to coincide with the decision to eliminate the sales staff."*

# Is It Cost Effective To Keep Students?

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Tuition & Fees = \$10,000 per year

~~(Three Year Loss Per Student = \$30,000)~~



*ONLY*

**10**

**STUDENTS**

**=**

**\$50,000 ONE TERM**

**\$300,000 THREE YEARS**

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**This does not count auxiliary services money**

# So, Does The Seidman Formula Work?

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Reisberg's (1999) article in The Chronicle of Higher Education states, "Ohio State University...has turned to a high-priced consultant to identify incoming freshmen who are most at risk of dropping out before their sophomore year...(p. 54)."

He continues, "Using admissions applications, high-school transcripts, and surveys of freshmen...and noted the common characteristics of the students who returned, as well as those of students who did not. The company used that data to assign "at-risk" scores to freshmen who enrolled in 1998 (p. 56)."

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"The report also found that Seidman's retention model does apply to the colleges studied, with early and intense intervention providing a positive influence on retention rates."

Young, R. J. (1999). *An examination of factors influencing retention of developmental education students at selected Texas community colleges*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. University of Texas at Austin.



*"What does he know, and how long will he know it?"*

# Thank You

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