

# Center for the Study of College Student Retention

## What ChatGPT5 is Saying About Dr. Alan Seidman's Contribution to College Student Retention

### Deep dive — Alan Seidman's contribution to college student retention

**Who he is:** Alan Seidman is a long-standing practitioner–scholar in retention work: professor emeritus, executive director of the Center for the Study of College Student Retention ([www.cscsr.org](http://www.cscsr.org)), founding editor of *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice* and author/editor of the widely used text *College Student Retention: Formula for Student Success* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

### The core idea — the Seidman formula & model

Seidman's single clearest, most-cited contribution is an operational formula that reframes retention as proactive, longitudinal intervention. He summarizes it as:

**Retention = Early Identification + (Early + Intensive + Continuous) Intervention.**

**Practically:** identify at-risk students as early as admissions/entry, assess specific skill gaps, prescribe modular remediation or supports, then monitor and intervene repeatedly throughout the student's program. The model puts the student first and treats assessment → diagnosis → prescription → monitoring as a continuous institutional process, not a one-off.

### Key mechanics (what institutions do differently under Seidman)

- **Entry assessment + competency mapping.** Map course/program competencies, assess incoming students against those competencies, and place them into precise modules (not generic full-term “developmental” courses whenever possible).
- **Modular remediation.** Instead of forcing students to retake full developmental courses that may repeat things they already know, give only the modules/skills they lack so they progress faster.
- **Early-alert & continuous monitoring.** Faculty and staff check benchmarks (attendance, grades, quizzes) and trigger early, intensive follow-up when a student shows signs of struggle.
- **Institutional coordination.** Align admissions, financial aid, advising, disability services, and faculty practices around a retention plan (so intervention isn't siloed).

### Practical interventions Seidman influenced

Many widely used interventions map to Seidman's approach: bridge/pre-college programs, intrusive/advising models, early-alert systems, competency-based modular remediation,

and structured orientation and faculty outreach routines. These tools are often implemented precisely to satisfy the “early + intensive + continuous” intervention idea.

#### **Evidence & uptake**

- Seidman’s formula and model are widely cited and used as a theoretical/practical framework in empirical studies (e.g., program evaluations in nursing education and bridge programs that use Seidman as the guiding theory).
- His edited volumes and primers are standard practitioner texts that compile evidence and case examples for institutional implementation. See [www.cscsr.org](http://www.cscsr.org).

#### **How Seidman relates to other theories (e.g., Tinto)**

- Tinto emphasized academic and social integration (why students leave — social and academic fit).
- Seidman builds on that theoretical base but shifts the emphasis toward operational solutions — a formula for how institutions should identify and act (early, intensive, continuous) to keep students on track. In other words: Tinto helps explain causes; Seidman focuses on institutional action steps and program design.

#### **Strengths**

- Highly actionable. Seidman’s formula converts theory into a sequence of institutional practices that campuses can implement (assessment, modular remediation, monitoring).
- Student-centered and longitudinal. Starts at admission and continues through a student’s program rather than treating retention as an afterthought.

#### **Limitations and cautions**

- Evidence base is mixed in rigor. Many programs inspired by Seidman report positive outcomes, but the literature also shows variability in evaluation quality and a need for more rigorous, comparative studies (e.g., randomized designs or multi-site replication) to isolate which elements drive gains. Reviews of retention practices note that early-alert and intervention programs are widely used but unevenly documented.
- Institutional capacity required. Early + intensive + continuous interventions require staff, data systems, coordinated advising, and faculty buy-in — some institutions struggle with resourcing and scaling.
- Doesn’t by itself resolve structural barriers. Seidman’s model targets institutional practices: financial hardship, caregiving burdens, or broader labor-market pressures also affect retention and sometimes require policy/aid solutions beyond program design. (This is a common caveat in the retention literature.)

#### **Bottom line — what Seidman brought to the field**

Alan Seidman translated retention theory into a usable formula and operational model that centers early detection and sustained institutional intervention. That practical orientation — plus his books, primer, the Center for the Study of College Student Retention

**(www.cscsr.org), and the journal he founded — made the topic accessible to practitioners and helped spread early-alert, bridge, and modular remediation strategies across campuses.**

**Dr. Seidman is available to provide support to colleges and universities interested in learning more about his formula and retention model. Presentations can be given over the web via Zoom or MS Teams. If interested, please contact Dr. Seidman [aseidman@cscsr.org](mailto:aseidman@cscsr.org).**

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