

Improving Student Retention

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Presentation Objectives

1. Discuss the research on student retention models in recent literature.
2. Identify the categories of actions that improve student retention.
3. Describe the characteristics and demographics of two “average” Allied Health students.
4. Have audience suggest actions to improve retention with these students.
5. Determine actions to improve retention of Allied Health students.

Student Retention Models

Tinto (1993) Student Integration Model (traditional student)

1. Social interaction with institution**
2. Institution's commitment to students

Successful retention occurs when students have position interaction academically and socially with college system

** most important

Student Retention Models cont

Bean and Metzner Model (1985) Nontraditional Student Attrition Model

1. Environment** (finances, hours of employment, outside encouragement, family responsibilities)
2. Background (age, number of hours enrolled, educational goals, high school performance, ethnicity, gender)
3. Academic (past and present GPA, number of hours studying, study skills, academic advising, class attendance, degree major)
4. Social Integration (campus club memberships, faculty contact, friends in program)

**most important

Student Retention Models cont

Cabrera, Castaneda, Nora (1993) Integrated Retention Model

1. Combined Tinto's model with Bean and Metzner's model
2. Identified important differences between “persisters” and dropouts; “persisters” have greater:

Social interaction as measured by peer group relations

Encouragement from family to continue

Academic performance (GPA)

Commitment to institution

Non-Academic Problems That Influence Retention

- Health (illness/pregnancy) of self or family
- Family/personal problems (death, divorce, mental health issues)
- Burnout
- Time pressure, conflicting demands
- Feeling unprepared for course work
- Discrepancy between perceptions and actual experience

Impact of Poor Retention on Faculty

- Pressure to increase admissions
- Stretched human, fiscal, and physical resources
- Staffing varies with mission and structure of school
- Culture of efficiency
- Role conflict, ambiguity
- Complexity of role-clinical vs. education

Improving Retention Helps Both Faculty and Students!



The Answer

“Just admit the smart students!”---

An anonymous University President

It is easier to predict who will be successful than to predict those that will be unsuccessful.

Keys to Retention: Admissions

- Evaluate and enroll the right students at the right time
- Provide a supporting, professional environment setting clear expectations along the way (e.g., no surprises)
- Smooth transition to student success team

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Keys to Retention: Advisors

- Partner advisors with admissions to welcome students
- Guide students through orientation, registration, book ordering, course progression, field student complaints, troubleshoot navigation issues
- Assess high risk students
- During orientation, paint an accurate picture of the course work
- Provide assistance with time management

Keys to Retention: Advisors cont

- Proactive outreach to new students to assess student risk level
- Timely response to student questions
- Encouraging, entrepreneurial advising
- Mix of proactive and reactive outreach
- Personalized service (call on birthdays, handwritten notes, etc...)
- Resources that help students be successful (tutoring, webinars, tip sheets, online community)

Keys to Retention: Social Interaction

- Set the stage with a student orientation
- Provide an opportunity for student organizations
- Formal student study groups
- Peer mentoring by upper division students

Keys to Retention: Mentor Program

Mentor

- Assigned to lead groups of mentees (1:5 ratio)
- Recommended by Faculty
- Must have A or B GPA and a passion for education
- Must sign confidentiality agreement
- Mentors paid @ rate of typical employment

Mentees

- Characteristics:
- Previous course failure
- Previous biological science failure
- GPA of 2.3 to 2.8
- Faculty or advisor recommendation
- Mentees paid for As and Bs

Keys to Retention: Academics

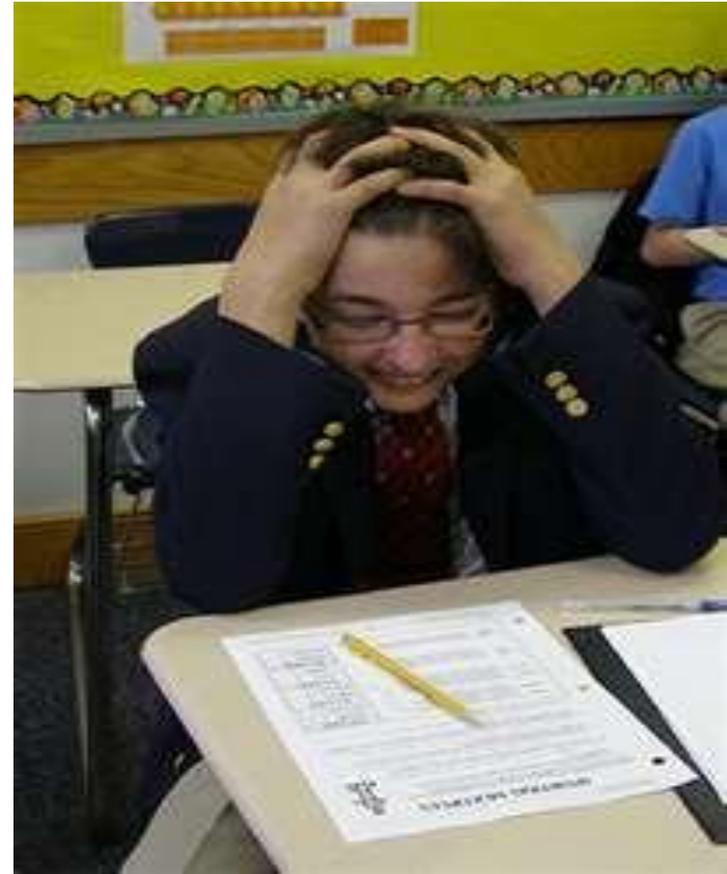
- Engaged faculty that get to know each student
- Timely grading
- Relevant, current curriculum
- Partnerships with all departments
- Substantive, relevant feedback
- Individualized remediation and test review
- Tutoring
- Workshop on study tips, effective test taking strategies

Keys to Retention: Encouragement

- Informal assessment of family support
- Increase social interaction may also provide encouragement
- Provide support for personal barriers to encourage students

Example: Test for Success

- One faculty member assigned to this program (.25-.50 FTE)
- Introduced in first course
- Bi-Weekly optional workshops, primarily for first level students



Sally Smith

- 28-year old Caucasian woman, divorced for 6 years, mother of a 10-year-old boy and 8-year-old girl
- Parents didn't complete high school
- Estranged from family, few close friends
- Children go to a church daycare before and after school
- Achieved a GED 5 years ago
- Worked as forklift operator until plant closed two years ago, now works as wait staff in a restaurant
- Wants to enroll in a Respiratory Care program because she heard that there are available jobs
- Will continue to work at the restaurant
- Will use Title IV funds to pay for education

Ramon Garcia

- 20-year-old Hispanic man
- Parents moved from Mexico and became naturalized US citizens 21 years ago
- Parents completed some grade school in Mexico
- Lives with parents and four younger siblings
- High school GPA 3.2
- Very interested in computers
- Does data entry for several insurance companies as needed
- Wants to enroll in a Health Information Technology program
- Will use Title IV funds to pay for education

What will work for your program?



References

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- Douglas, W. T. (2009). *Associate Degree Nursing Students: A Study of Retention in Nursing Education Programs*. Retrieved from www.lesn.appstate.edu/olsontoo/Post.../Wands%20Douglas.doc
- Tinto, V. (1993). *Leaving college: Rethinking the causes and cures of student attrition* (2nded.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.