Effective Practices for Retaining and Graduating Students
“Retention” requires us to examine and address fundamental questions of educational quality on our campus. It responds to our greatest concerns as educators, including the teaching/learning process.

Choosing Retention Strategies and Activities

- Importance of a framework for evaluating alternatives
A traditional view: The Deficit Model

- Students are deficient, and need remediation/repair to accommodate to the campus environment.
- The institution is static. It is unchanged and unaffected by student characteristics, experiences, needs, and strengths.
An “Asset” Model

- Student success and institutional quality are the result of interactions between students and the institution.
- The campus climate is a critical factor in facilitating student retention and success.
- The institution is dynamic. Institutional planners are intentional about promoting change in response to student experiences and characteristics.

The Structural Dimension

Effects result in changes to:

- Changes to Gatekeeper Courses
- Audit of high D/F/W Courses
- Supplemental Instruction
- Tutoring

Students and the Institution

Students only
The **Structural** Dimension

Effects result in changes to:

- Students and the Institution
- Students only

- Structured First Year
- Freshman Interest Groups
- Block Scheduling

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The **Intentionality** Dimension

- Intentional, Coordinated
- Random; effects or participation left to chance

- Institutional Retention Plans/ Accountability
- Structured First Year
- Leveraging student behavior/ connection
- Letter to units encouraging effort. Optional Workshops

- Departmental Retention Plans/ Accountability
- First Year Seminar
- Training for Front-Line Staff
The **Intrusiveness** Dimension

**Developmental Stages**

- Institution designs key experiences and influences student participation
- Decisions, feedback left to students

- Data-driven discussions with all students
- Instructors report absences, midterm grades for all students
- Probation letters inform of status

**Grade Monitoring for specific populations**

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The **Cross-Boundary** Dimension

**Integration Level**

- Integrated
- Isolated

- Senior Year Transition
- Community College Connection
- Common Readings

- Learning Center/Faculty Development Center
- Supplemental Instruction

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Retention Strategy...

• …should be connected to institutional situation and needs.
• …should reflect institutional choices along dimensions of structure, intentionality, intrusiveness, and integration.

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