A Primer for Institutional Retention

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Strategic Enrollment Management is about Student Success

Making the entire college/university active in, and responsible for, recruiting, retaining and graduating students.
“Successful senior enrollment managers have to operate simultaneously on multiple levels. They need to be up to date, even on the cutting edge of technology, marketing, recruitment, the latest campus practices to enhance student persistence, and financial aid practices.”

SOURCE: THE ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT REVIEW Volume 23, Issue 1 Fall, 2007, Editor: Don Hossler Associate Editors: Larry Hoezee and Dan Rogalski
Core Enrollment Management Principles

• No Enrollment Effort is Successful without **QUALITY** Academic Programs

• Recruitment and Retention is an On-going, Multi-year **PROCESS** with Strong Access to Research and **DATA**

• Majority of Enrollments come from **REGIONAL** Student Markets

• The Most Successful Recruitment Programs Clearly **DIFFERENTIATE** the Student Experience from Competitor’s Programs

• The Most Successful Retention Programs Clearly Address Students’ Needs and Regularly **ENGAGE** Students in Academic and Non-Academic Programs

**SOURCE:** Goff, 2005
Recruitment & Retention: Two Sides of the Same Coin
Most Colleges & Universities Have Goals to Increase Student Retention & Graduation Rates
What is included in a SEM Plan?

1. Strategic Framework: Mission, Values, Vision
2. Overview of Strategic Plan Goals & Institutional Capacity
3. Environmental Scan: Market Trends & Competition Analysis
4. Evaluation and Assessment of Position in Market
5. Enrollment Goals, Objectives, & Assessment Criteria
6. Marketing and Communication Plan
7. Recruitment Plan
8. Retention Plan
9. Student Aid and Scholarship Funding
10. Staff Development and Training
11. Student/Customer Service Philosophy
12. Process Improvements and Technology System Enhancements
13. Internal Communication and Data Sharing Plan
14. Campus wide Coordination of Enrollment Activities
Setting Record Student Success Rates

SLU Undergraduate Retention and Graduation Rates

DOE Cohort Definition: First-time, Full-time, Degree Seeking Freshmen

1st to 2nd Year Retention Rate

6 Year Graduation Rate

4 Year Graduation Rate

Benchmark: 81.7%
Retention Rate of Selective 4 Year Private Colleges

Benchmark: 66.3%
6 year Graduation Rate of Selective 4 Year Private Colleges

Benchmark: 54.8%
4 year Graduation Rate of Selective 4 Year Private Colleges
#1 Question:

How did you do it?
Silver Bullet?

OR

Strike of Lightening?
The Truth is...........

Silver Buckshot!
Summary of Key Retention Understandings

• There is **no Magic Bullet** – Retention programs must be designed to meet student needs and have an academic success focus

• Retention programs **must be multi-faceted**

• Do not ignore **Socio-Economic Factors**

• Quick Improvements can be made by examining Processes and Points of Student Interaction

• A **true team effort** must be embraced: IR, Academic Programs, Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, etc.
Figure 2.2. Births in the U.S., 1990-2011

Source: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
Note: 2011 births are considered preliminary.

SOURCE: WICHE 2013, Knocking at the College Door
Source: Office of Institutional Research [9/2016]

* Enrollment includes U.S. military students serving abroad and citizens of Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands not shown on map.

* Enrollment does not include non-degree seeking 1818 Advance College Credit or non-degree Workforce Development students.
The Gender Gap in Higher Education Enrollments Is Projected to Increase

Source: U.S. Department of Education.
BENCHMARKING
collegeresults.org
1st to 2nd Year Retention Rates of Students Starting at Four-year Universities
Five Year BS/BA Graduation Rates

Source: Compiled from ACT Institutional Data Files.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Highest (%)</th>
<th>Lowest (%)</th>
<th>Current (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Two-year public</td>
<td>55.7 ('10)</td>
<td>51.3 ('04)</td>
<td>54.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA/BS public</td>
<td>70.0 ('04)</td>
<td>64.2 ('14)</td>
<td>64.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA/MS public</td>
<td>71.6 ('06)</td>
<td>68.1 ('89)</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD public</td>
<td>78.6 ('10)</td>
<td>72.9 ('08)</td>
<td>77.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-year private</td>
<td>72.6 ('92)</td>
<td>55.5 ('08, '12)</td>
<td>64.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>BA/BS private</td>
<td>74.0 ('89)</td>
<td>67.3 ('10, '12, '13)</td>
<td>69.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA/MS private</td>
<td>78.0 ('85)</td>
<td>69.5 ('13)</td>
<td>73.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD private</td>
<td>85.0 ('85)</td>
<td>80.2 ('12)</td>
<td>80.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td></td>
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<td>67.6</td>
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# Completion Trends 1983–2014

Two-Year Colleges—graduation in three years or less

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<th></th>
<th>Highest (%)</th>
<th>Lowest (%)</th>
<th>Current (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>38.8 ('89)</td>
<td>21.9 ('14)</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>66.4 ('90)</td>
<td>43.7 ('14)</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>44.0 ('89)</td>
<td>23.1 ('14)</td>
<td>23.1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Completion Trends 1983–2014

Four-Year Public Colleges—graduation in five years or less

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Highest (%)</th>
<th>Lowest (%)</th>
<th>Current (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BA/BS public</td>
<td>52.8 ('86)</td>
<td>36.0 ('13)</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA/MS public</td>
<td>46.7 ('86)</td>
<td>37.0 ('00)</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD public</td>
<td>50.6 ('89, '90)</td>
<td>45.0 ('01)</td>
<td>49.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BA/BS private</td>
<td>58.5 ('13)</td>
<td>53.3 ('01)</td>
<td>56.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA/MS private</td>
<td>58.4 ('88)</td>
<td>53.5 ('01)</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD private</td>
<td>68.8 ('86)</td>
<td>62.4 ('14)</td>
<td>62.4</td>
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Primer on Student Persistence and Retention

• Retention rates commonly measure the percentage of freshmen that re-enroll the next academic year as sophomores.

• The primary reason that retention rates, along with graduation rates, are important is that retention rates are perceived as indicators of academic quality and student success.

• Retention and persistence can best be defined as a student's continuation behaviors that lead to a desired goal; this helps describe the processes related to student goal achievement.

• Generalizations about retention can be misleading because each school is dynamically unique in terms of academic emphasis and culture. Retention issues can be further complicated because of the necessity to understand students' educational goals in assessing whether leaving school is a negative or positive decision.

ADAPTED FROM: DANA Center Retention Report, 1998
FUNDAMENTAL STUDENT RETENTION CONCLUSIONS

1. Studies indicate that financial aid helps increase persistence for students who need and receive financial aid.

2. Studies indicate that certain student populations such as:
   - older students,
   - African Americans & Hispanics,
   - students who work more than 30 hours weekly, and
   - first generation college students have persistence problems.

3. Schools can improve retention rates by:
   - accurately determining when and why students withdraw
   - up-to-date information helps administrators determine better strategies for increasing retention rates

SOURCE: DANA Center Retention Report, 1998
• The Role of Academic and Non-Academic Factors in Improving College Retention, indicates that many colleges' retention efforts are too narrowly focused.

• Academic help alone is not enough to keep many students in school. These students also need individual support to feel connected to the campus community. Colleges, however, may focus on only academic or non-academic support, rather than both.

SOURCE: ACT, 2009
Lessons Learned

Must focus on:

• Student-friendly policies

• Improving systems & practices that impede general student persistence inside and outside of the classroom

• All campus units that interact with students MUST be involved
Using the Scientific Process

• STEP ONE: Identify the Problem
Definitions
“the list of 35”

Changes to Improve Retention

Retention Strategies and Tactics

2001-2011

I. Assessment Enhancements
II. Programming
III. Policy Changes
Saint Louis University’s SEM PLAN: What will Billikens Look Like in 2018?
SLU’s RETENTION AND STUDENT SUCCESS COUNCIL

• **CHARGE:** The purpose of the Retention and Student Success Council (RSSC) is to examine issues and challenges of student retention and persistence to graduation. The efforts of this council will focus on assessing plans and actions for the student experience and advancing opportunities that will have direct impact on student progressing to their second and third year at the university, thereby improving student graduation rates at Saint Louis University. The RSSC will define Saint Louis University’s student retention strategies and persistence solutions consistent with the objectives in SLU’s strategic plan.
MEETING SCHEDULE

- COUNCIL MEETINGS: 90-minute meeting scheduled on the first week of each month, excluding January, June and July.

- SEM DATA AND RESEARCH REVIEW SCHEDULE: 90-minute presentation with question and answer session scheduled on the third week of each month.
ANNUAL ACTIVITIES:
The RSSC serves in an advisory role to the SEM Committee by:

1. Review student success data and assessments with regard to student retention and graduation,
2. Review and share regular reports with the SEMC, University Strategic Planning Committee and the Research, Reporting and Assessment Council.
3. Identify specific problem areas with regard to student retention and graduation and, if needed, additional reports and/or assessment.
4. Recommend potential solutions to identified persistence barriers.
5. Identify the stakeholders needed to contribute to the resolution of the persistence barriers.
6. Analyze the potential for resolution given current resources, in partnership with the stakeholders, and
7. Recommend resources and/or reallocations needed to address identified resolutions and solutions.
8. Provide an annual report of the council’s activities and the University’s progress in meeting recruitment goals.
Technology and Social Media

99% Brought a personal computer to campus
   67% new computers / 21% 1-2 years old
   99% are laptops / 14% are tablets
   59% PC Windows users / 44% Apple-Mac users

99% Brought a cell phone to campus
   68% iPhone users
   24% Android users
   8% Other (Windows Mobile, Blackberry etc.)

96% Have an online social network account
   79% Facebook / 17% Twitter

90% Claim to engage on social sites 10 hours or less per week

58% Rarely or never play video games

Finances and Affordability

93% Are receiving financial aid

74% Plan to work while enrolled at SLU

36% Have at least one credit card

23% Are on track to be the first in the family to complete an undergraduate degree

1% Have over $1,000 monthly credit card balance

CONCLUSION:

Retention Success Starts with Knowing the Institution and the Students Served
Low Hanging Fruit
Core Retention Assessments:
Knowing Why Students Chose your Campus, Stayed or Left

1. New Student Survey (prior to start of classes)
2. Withdrawal Survey (prior to cancelling classes)
3. Phone/Email Survey of Non-Returning Students (2-4 weeks prior to start of semester)
4. Student Satisfaction Survey (all returning students)
5. Graduating Student Survey (prior to commencement or within the first six months after graduating)
Building a K-20 Student Pipeline

- Pre-College Years K-12
- Freshmen Years 1-2
- Sophomore Years 2-3
- Junior Years 3-4
- Senior Years 4-6
- Qualified Professionals Entering the Workforce
Basic Enrollment Funnel

Prospects
Inquiries
Applicants
Completed Applications
Admitted Students
Acceptance Fee Paid
Attend Orientation
Enrolled
Graduated
Active Alumni

Strategic Planning
Tactical Planning
Need to Expand
RECRUITMENT FUNNEL ACTIVITIES

PRE-FUNNEL
EARLY INTERVENTION, COMMUNITY SERVICE PROGRAMS
SUMMER CAMPS, WEB REPLIES

EARLY FUNNEL
PSAT/ACT PLAN/TARGET MARKET SEARCHES
ACT/SAT SCORES
DIRECT MAIL
TRAVEL
PUBLICATIONS
ON-CAMPUS PROGRAMS
ADVERTISING

MID FUNNEL
ON- AND OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS
DIRECT MAIL
SCHOLARSHIP/FINANCIAL AID
TRAVEL
TELECOUNSELING
PUBLICATIONS

LATE FUNNEL
ON- AND OFF-
CAMPUS PROGRAMS
DIRECT MAIL
TELECOUNSELING
PUBLICATIONS
SCHOLARSHIPS
FINANCIAL AID

Inquire
Apply
Enroll
ENROLLMENT FUNNEL RETENTION ACTIVITIES

RETENTION INFRASTRUCTURE
CHIEF RETENTION OFFICER, CAMPUS-WIDE RETENTION COMMITTEE, TRACKING & EARLY WARNING SYSTEM, STUDENT INTERVENTION TEAM, SEAMLESS ADVISING SYSTEM

IDENTIFY RISKS, SET EXPECTATIONS & ESTABLISH CONNECTIONS
• FLAG RETENTION RISK FACTORS FROM ADMISSION APPLICATION
• ENROLLMENT CHECKLIST/PORTAL WITH ADMIT LETTER
• NEW STUDENT PROFILE AND ATTRITION RISK SURVEY

PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT & INTERVENTION
• TRACK ATTENDANCE & AUTO TRIGGER E-MAILS
• ACTION NOTES TO HIGH RISK STUDENTS
• GROUP TUTORS FOR HIGH DFW COURSES
• PORTAL WITH ALL SUPPORT RESOURCES

REINFORCE SUCCESS ACTIVITIES
• SPECIAL UNDECLARED ADVISING
• TELE-SURVEY NON-REGISTERED
• SUMMER ADVISING LETTER
• SUCCESS SCHOLARSHIPS
ENROLLMENT FUNNEL RETENTION ACTIVITIES

RETENTION INFRASTRUCTURE
CHIEF RETENTION OFFICER, CAMPUS-WIDE RETENTION COMMITTEE, TRACKING & EARLY WARNING SYSTEM, STUDENT INTERVENTION TEAM, SEAMLESS ADVISING SYSTEM

IDENTIFY RISKS, SET EXPECTATIONS & ESTABLISH CONNECTIONS
• FLAG RETENTION RISK FACTORS FROM ADMISSION APPLICATION
• ENROLLMENT CHECKLIST/PORTAL WITH ADMIT LETTER
• NEW STUDENT PROFILE AND ATTRITION RISK SURVEY

PRE-ENROLL GOALS
New Student Profile,
% Attending Orientation,
% Completing
New Student Assessments

FIRST YEAR GOALS
% Completing 4 weeks,
% Courses Mid-term Grades
% Registered for Spring
% Returning for Spring

SECOND YEAR GOALS
% Dropped for Non-payment,
% Registered for Fall
% Returning for Fall
% Drop-outs Converted to Stop-outs

YEARS 3-6 GOALS
% Completing Degrees in 4, 5 & 6 Years,

PROMOTE ENGAGEMENT & INTERVENTION
• TRACK ATTENDANCE & AUTO TRIGGER E-MAILS
• ACTION NOTES TO HIGH RISK STUDENTS
• GROUP TUTORS FOR HIGH DFW COURSES
• PORTAL WITH ALL SUPPORT RESOURCES

REINFORCE SUCCESS ACTIVITIES
• SPECIAL UNDECLARED ADVISING
• TELE-SURVEY NON-REGISTERED
• SUMMER ADVISING LETTER
• SUCCESS SCHOLARSHIPS

Identify
Track & Intervene
Re-Enroll
Graduate
Retention Plan

I. Introduction and Objectives
1. Institutional Mission, Vision and Goals
2. Institutional Commitment to Student Success
3. Institutional Desired Student Profile & Capacity
4. Retention Committee Charge
5. Philosophy of Student Success
6. Persistence Data of last Five Cohorts
7. Campus Assessment Data

II. Goals
1. Institutional Enrollment Goals (size, profile, financial aid/revenue, etc)
2. Recruitment Goals
3. Student Retention Goals (1st-2nd year, 2-3rd year, 3 or 6 year graduation rate)
4. Course Goals (% of students passing)
5. Student Outcomes Goals (% employed or continuing education w/in 6 months)
6. Student Satisfaction Goals

III. Tactics and Action Plans
1. Messaging and Communicating Expectation in Recruitment Phase
2. Orientation Services
3. Financial Aid and Scholarship Distribution
4. Academic Advising and Academic Support Programs
5. First and Second-year Support Programs
6. Early Warning System and Mid-Term Grade Policy
7. Interventions for Classes & Majors will high failure levels
8. Student Activities & Campus Life
9. Engagement and Community Building Programs
10. Resource Requirements

IV. Assessment and Evaluation
1. Annual Retention/Attrition Studies
2. New Student and Graduating Student Studies
3. Student Satisfaction Studies
4. Institutional Priorities Studies
5. Exit Interviews and Non Re-enrollee Studies
6. Program Audits and Reviews
7. Academic Standards Review

ADAPTED FROM: Successful Retention Planning, Lana Low, June 28, 1999, noellevitz.com
RESOURCES

• [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) (retention study and tracking charts, education policy/tends)
• [www.collegeresults.org](http://www.collegeresults.org) (four-year retention benchmarking)
• [www.educationalpolicy.org](http://www.educationalpolicy.org) (retention calculator)
• [www.nces.gov](http://www.nces.gov) (Digest of Education Statistics)
• [www.higheredinfo.org](http://www.higheredinfo.org) (college participation rates)
• [www.wiche.org](http://www.wiche.org) (student projections)
• [www.educationtrust.org](http://www.educationtrust.org) (k-18 environmental scans and best practices)
• [www.lumina.org](http://www.lumina.org) (research)
• [www.pewinternet.org](http://www.pewinternet.org) (communication and population trends)
• [www.postsecondary.org](http://www.postsecondary.org) (education trends and issues reports)
Summary of Key Retention Understandings

• There is no Magic Bullet – Retention programs must be designed to meet student needs and have an academic success focus
• Retention programs must be multi-faceted
• Do not ignore Socio-Economic Factors
• Quick Improvements can be made by examining Processes and Points of Student Interaction
• A true team effort must be embraced: IR, Academic Programs, Student Affairs, Enrollment Management, etc.
QUESTIONS?