Increasing Student Retention and Persistence in Higher Education: An International Perspective

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Student Success (February 2007) featuring An Interview with Stedman Graham

EPIlive is our new weekly, interactive education news program each Friday afternoon featuring leaders from across the education spectrum. Hosted by Dr. Watson Scott Swail.

Next EPIlive: March 16 (1pm EST).

This Week’s Topic: “A Marshall Plan for Higher Education”

Special Guests: William Tierney, University of Southern California

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StudentRetention.org is a non-profit center for the study of student persistence in postsecondary education. A division of the Educational Policy Institute, an international think tank on educational opportunity, StudentRetention.org was launched in spring 2005 to support the needs of international educators, administrators, researchers, and policymakers looking for answers to the complex problems of student departure. It is our intent to create a one-stop shop for information and strategies related to student retention.

FEATURE

Student Success (February 2007) featuring An Interview with Stedman Graham

STUDENT SUCCESS

» EPI Announces New Database on Student Success Strategies
» Apples to Apples Towards a Pan-Canadian Common University Data Set (November 2006)
» Tuition Constant Since 1999 but Poorest Still Losing Out (August, 2006) Alex Usher

» Student Success (May, 2006)
» Student Success (March, 2006)
2007 Outstanding Student Retention Program Award

Future Event:
Retention 2007 May 22-24, 2007
Westin Riverwalk Hotel in San Antonio, TX

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OF STUDENT RETENTION

A handbook for practitioners and administrators

Educational Policy Institute

Dr. Watson Scott Swail
President

Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
20th Annual Recruitment and Retention Conference

Austin, TX
June 31, 2004

www.educationalpolicy.org

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## Degree Attainment and Persistence

### Table 7.—Percentage distribution of 1995–96 beginning postsecondary students according to degree attainment and persistence through June 2001, by first type of institution attended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest degree attained anywhere</th>
<th>No degree anywhere</th>
<th>Six-year student persistence summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Attained any degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>Associate's degree</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**First type of institution**

- **Public 2-year**
  - 10.3
- **Public 4-year**
  - 53.0
- **Private not-for-profit 4-year**
  - 68.8
- **Private for-profit less-than-4-year**
  - 0.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Attained any degree</th>
<th>Attained still enrolled</th>
<th>Total persisted*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public 2-year</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public 4-year</td>
<td>60.2</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>77.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private not-for-profit 4-year</td>
<td>73.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>82.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private for-profit less-than-4-year</td>
<td>60.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Attained any degree or still enrolled.

**NOTE:** Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Three-Year Attainment and Persistence Rates for 1995-96 and 2003-04 BPS Students

- **Attained Degree**
  - 1995-96: 15.8%
  - 2003-04: 15.9%

- **No Degree, Still Enrolled**
  - 1995-96: 51.9%
  - 2003-04: 50.7%

- **No Degree, Not Enrolled**
  - 1995-96: 32.3%
  - 2003-04: 33.5%
Question 1

• Why is Retention an Important Issue?
  – Retention stable at 50 percent
  – Issues of cost and quality
  – Federal and state intervention
Dropout and Defaults

- **Borrowers Who Completed BA**
- **Borrowers who Dropped Out**

- In Default on Loans: 2 (Borrowers Who Completed BA), 22 (Borrowers who Dropped Out)
- Unemployed: 7 (Borrowers Who Completed BA), 15 (Borrowers who Dropped Out)
Question 2

When does student dropout/departure occur?
Question 3

Why do Students Leave?

– Academic Preparedness
– Campus Climate: Poor Fit
– Weak Commitment to Educational Goals and/or Institution
– Failure to Socially and/or Academically Integrate
– Lack of Financial Support/Aid
Question 4

Why should institutions care?

- Loss of revenue to the institution
- Poor business model
- Lower prestige and morale
- It’s the right thing to do; it’s in the mission
The Student Experience

Institutional Factors

Cognitive Factors

Social Factors
The Student Experience

Financial Aid
Recruitment & Admissions
Academic Services
Student Services
Curriculum & Instruction

Academic Rigor
Quality of Learning
Aptitude
Content Knowledge
Critical-Thinking Ability
Technology Ability
Study Skills
Learning Skills
Time Management
Academic-Related Extracurricular Activities
Financial Issues
Educational Legacy
Attitude Toward Learning
Religious Background
Maturity
Social Coping Skills
Communication Skills
Attitude Toward Others
Cultural Values
Expectations
Goal Commitment
Family Influence
Peer Influence
Social Lifestyle
Increasing student retention and persistence in HE
- Notes concerning Germany and the EU

Common conception of student retention in the past:

• mainly a question of academic ability – therefore an issue for schools pre-entry to HE and individuals (Studierfähigkeit)

• understanding that it is natural / healthy; that a certain level of attrition must occur = filter

However, within the context of efficiency, it is seen as wastage

• particularly an EU perspective (Lisbon agenda)

• one reason for new interest in “social dimension of higher education”

• rising importance due to tuition fees & efforts to open entry to HE
Statistics and issues for Germany

From recent HIS-study (graduates of 2002):

- from 100 students an average of 25 leave HE without postponement or change of institution – differences by gender, institution and discipline
- in unis, language & cultural studies, business, computer have higher levels (<30%), also engineering

*Important factors*: study structure, conditions and motivation

*Initiatives*:

- expectation that BA/MA reform will improve study structure
- PBF allocation of institutional grant to HEIs inter alia by graduate quotas
- (tuition fees?)
Retention 2008
An International Conference on Student Retention
May 28-30, 2008, San Diego Sheraton Hotel & Marina, San Diego, CA

See you in San Diego May 2008