Strategies for Increasing Enrollment
HED 2289

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Shifting Efficiencies: Expenditure Productivity to Revenue Generation

- This course focuses on the revenue side of the ledger by examining student retention concepts.
- Participants will learn about leading concepts and strategies used to retain students.
- This session shows how the business officer can better evaluate the allocation of resources that support successful student retention strategies.
- Through class discussion, we will review "best practices" that other colleges use to generate and "safe-guard" enrollment revenue.

Why Business Managers?

The Business Officer is no longer a "spectator" in the enrollment management process—marketing, recruiting and student retention.

Managers must be leaders who are able to quantify their assessment of institutional effectiveness and understand the importance of locating and funding "high impact" functional areas.

It is through the ability to identify and effectively redirect discretionary funds that fiscal managers are becoming involved in the allocation of resources enrollment management areas—important high impact functional areas.

Financial "State" of Our Colleges

Moody's credit reporting agency gave a 2013 negative grade to the entire college field. Their report cited a weakening revenue stream caused by:

1. projected long-term declines in national high school students;

2. a growing inability of students and their families cannot respond to continued increases in tuition;

3. reduction in government support; and

4. a softening of endowment giving.

Decline in High School Grads

- The unprecedented growth that higher education experienced after WWII has been sustained by back-filling with high school graduates to replace the one-in-three freshmen that didn't persist to their sophomore year, and the 60 percent of college students that did not complete college on four-years. (U.S. News & World Report, 2015 College Edition)

- The higher education growth strategy is coming to a predictable end with the last of the baby-boomers' children graduating from high school-- by 2012.

Financial Inability of Students Pay Tuition

A growing inability of students and their families cannot respond to continued increases in tuition.

College tuition is spiraling out of control. The cost of going to college in the past 30 years has gone up ten-fold. Even health care has only gone up six-fold while inflation has risen three-fold. (Altucker).

Tuition and fee costs are reaching prohibitive levels.

- During the years 1993 to 2007, the tuition and fees for attending in-state public universities rose an inflation-adjusted 79 percent, while those for private colleges and universities rose 57 percent.

- 1980, annual tuition at public and private four-year institutions were 4 and 17 percent respectively of median family income.

- Today (2015) they are 9 and 38 percent.

- The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges report noted that, "Projected out to 2036, tuition would go to 24 percent of the family budget " (Lewin).

Tuition Spiraling out of Control

- Financing a college education is becoming an unsurmountable challenge for many families.

- Student loans, now totaling $1+ trillion, were once an attractive alternative for financing college until the average debt has became a significant financial burden averaging $26,600.

Federal Aid – Less Support

- Financial aid has <u>not</u> kept pace with the rise in tuition and college living expenses.

- In 1979, the maximum Pell Grant, a federally funded need based tuition and living expenses stipend, covered about three-quarters (75%) of the cost of attending a public four-year college and nearly the entire cost of a community college.

- Today, it covers less than a third of the cost of attending a four-year college and roughly 40 percent of a community college education (Gibson).

State Funding – Less Support

- In public colleges, where three-quarters of undergraduates' study, the big challenge is that states are getting out of the business of higher education.

- In 1987, states contributed about three-quarters of what higher education spent; now they contribute about half (Selingo).

- Since 2008, states' per-student spending on higher education has fallen 18 percent nation-wide, according to inflation-adjusted numbers from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Excessive Non-completer Rates

- One out of three freshmen at the end of 2013 did not persist to their sophomore year.

- Less than half of the millions of full-time students actually end up with a bachelor's degree in four years.

- The United States now has the highest college—dropout rate in the industrialized world, and in terms of 25-to-34 year-olds with college degrees, it has fallen from first to twelfth.

Cost of "Failure"

- According to the National Center for Education Statistics nearly a million students each year fail to continue their higher educational aspirations.

- This indicates that more than $10.5 billion in tuition is paid annually by students that don't persist and graduate--based on an average annual (2013) tuition rate for public four year in-state set at $8,893 (not including books and living expenses) and for the average community college annual tuition was $3,264.

Declining Enrollments – Excessive Fixed-Cost Commitments

- College programs and buildings have been built around a model that allows 50+% of the students to fail; a model that cannot be sustained when the student feeder (high school) pool is diminishing .

- Colleges are now faced with oversized fixed costs—infrastructures (debt service and operational expenses) and staffing commitments (tenure & union contracts) that tuition increases cannot support.

Summary--Higher Education Issues Today

- higher than inflationary rate cost increases

- declining high school feeder populations

- fixed operational costs that cannot be sustained with potentially declining enrollments

- traditional (public and private) stakeholders withdrawing or reducing financial support

- student debt-to-family income ratios that cannot be sustained

- **excessive non-completer rates that make college an unachievable goal for too many young adults**

Reasons for "Finish-in-Four"

- Extra time reduces likelihood of graduating
- Extra time results in significant student loans and debt
- Extra time impacts colleges' fiscal stability because of excess fix costs

Students Aren't Ready For College

- High School Students Not Prepared

- Math Illiteracy: Yes, Our Kids Count; But Many Can't

- Dumbing Down High School Graduates

- Other Non-academic Reasons Students Don't Graduate

Some High School Students Are Not Academically Prepared for College

A report released by the Iowa City based ACT college entrance exam found that at least 60% of the 2012 high school graduates who took its test are at risk of not succeeding in college. (Marklein)

Percentage of students taking ACT's tests that are <u>not</u> college-ready:

- English   23%
- Reading   48%
- Math   54%
- Science   69%

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Math Literacy

- Math, a subject that reliably predicts children's future earnings, continues to be the United States' weakest area at every income level based on 2015 OECD sponsored international PISA test results.

- Despite the U.S. being one of the world's biggest per-student spenders, America's 15-year-olds tested below average in math; ranking 25 out of 34 nations, and scoring better than only two of 12 other developed comparison countries—Italy and Spain. (Ripley)

Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Attempt to improve Graduation Rates by Dumbing Down College Curriculum

- The National Association of Scholars (NAS) hypothesized that while general education requirements have undergone a gradual loosening over the course of the century, since the mid-1960s they have, to a very large extent, "dissolved."

- To verify their hypothesis, NAS engaged in a close examination of general education requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree at the fifty top-ranked schools, as listed in the U.S. News & World Report's, as America's best colleges.

Dumbing Down College Curriculum

- The study noted that certain courses and prerequisites that were required in 1964, during the first two years of college, had largely been abandoned by the mid-1990s, including:

Graduation Requirements	1964	1993
Physical and/or Biological Science	90%	34%
Foreign language	90%	4%
History	60%	2%
Philosophy	46%	4%
Literature	50%	0%
Thesis of comprehensive	50%	12%
Number of days in the academic year	191	156

Dumbing Down College Curriculum

The NAS report claimed that the decline in academic rigor since the 60s was caused by:

- "…increased reverence by academics for the idealism and wisdom of students;

- the professoriate's interest in emphasizing specialized research at the expense of general education; and

- believing that less the rigor, the easier it is to attract and retain students and their tuition checks."

However, despite the intended outcome, America's colleges have improved its graduation rates by only three percent since 1995—from 38% to 41%.

- Source: "The Dissolution of General Education: 1914—1993," *National Association of Scholars*

Dumbing Down College Curriculum

- Another study showed that in addition to current students studying fewer hours than their predecessors, less effort is being rewarded with inflated grades—e.g., 43% of all college grades are A's today, compared to 31% in 1988 and 15% in 1960. (Rojstaczer and Healy)

- In a study of more than 2,300 undergraduates surveyed by The Collegiate Learning Assessment Foundation (2011) one-half of the students had not taken a course requiring 20 pages of writing during their prior semester, and one-third did not take a course requiring even 40 pages of reading per week (Arum and Roksa).

- In a wider context, many students are just not preparing for lectures at colleges. "About one in four freshmen and one in five seniors said they frequently came to class without completing readings or assignments." (Lipka)

Examples of College Created Barriers

Flawed Placement Criteria

- In the analysis published in September, 2016 by the National Center for Education Statistics, when two additional factors to determine academic readiness were considered — grade-point average and level of math taken in high school — it found that 40 percent of "strongly prepared" students at public two-year colleges and 13 percent at four-year institutions had taken remedial math.

- These students should have been automatically advanced into the college Algebra courses indicating that the placement criteria are flawed. (Hanford)

College Created Barriers

Remedial Courses – Dead-end Strategy

- <u>Nine out of ten</u> four-year colleges have been offering remedial courses for at least twenty years to approximately 1.7 million freshmen annually, at an estimated cost of <u>$3 billion a year</u> (Will).

- <u>Thirty-eight percent</u> of students at four-year colleges and <u>sixty percent</u> of community college students are <u>referred to remedial classes</u> before they can enroll in some required college level courses (Cho)—e.g., algebra and/or English.

College Created Barriers

Failed Remediation

- Of the full-time four-year college students that take remediation courses, <u>fewer than 25 percent that survive the remediation gauntlet</u>, ultimately complete their degree within six years.

- Only <u>6 in 10 remedial students</u> in community colleges <u>complete</u> their remedial courses and enroll in the college level class.

- Of those only <u>one-in-ten will graduate</u> within three years *(Complete College America).*

Other (Non-academic) Reasons Why Students Don't Graduate

- Financial: short-fall in funding or unexpected nonacademic expenditures

- Family dynamics (child birth, separation from spouse, health, etc.)

- Social commitments such as military commitments, travel abroad, volunteer work

- Career issues such as relocation or change in work load or schedule

- Conflict between work and studies

- Maturity: Lack of long-term commitment or social issues

- Competing interruptions—students not able to stay academically focused in a relatively unstructured environment

- Takes too long—"pipeline" seems endless with a perceived low return on investment

- Unable to make positive social and academic connections resulting in isolation—home sickness

Examples of Ten High-Impact Retention Areas

1) Institutional Research: Using Data to Identify At-risk Student and Improve Retention

2) Predictive Modeling—Setting the Stage for Institutional Equilibrium

3) Recruitment and Admissions—Committing to Students' Success

4) Financial Planning: Preparing Students for a Long-term Commitment

5) Proactive Advising: Preempting Student Failure

6) Curriculum Scheduling: Charting a Course for On-time Graduation

7) Faculty Influence—Supporting a Culture of Academic Success

8) Student Life: Creating a Student Success Environment

9) Nontraditional Students: Integrating "Ghost" Students into the College's Culture

10) Career Advising: Supporting Post-graduate Objectives

Why Institutional Research?

Process Related

Using reverse engineering, or a "<u>peel-the-onion</u>" approach, a college can find the root causes of retention related problems not just identify the symptoms—example; oil leak.

- Analyzing system-steps to determine what's working, or not by using Deming's and Juran's quality-control model:

  – Breaking processes into measurable building blocks with targeted objectives; and

  – Quantifying performance against measurable standards—Control-Point Accountability Measurement (C-PAM) model.

- Assigning accountability to individuals.

  – NYC

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Finding the Cause

Understanding the <u>cause</u> for dropping out—e.g., financial reasons?

- Geogia State University discovered that <u>minor</u>, but to students, <u>unsurmountable financial issues</u> was the main reason seniors were not graduating.

- University established small <u>emergency "retention" grants</u> (averaging $900) primarily to seniors.

- Result? Senior class on-time graduation increased by 25%.

Institutional Assessment Questionnaire

The following is the institutional research College Assessment Tool. It describes five progressive levels of college based commitments to improve student retention.

After reviewing each profile column, select the description that best exemplifies the college you are evaluating. If it is determined that there is a blending of two <u>adjoining</u> styles, split the difference and note the average score on the summary score sheet. If you are not familiar with your college's program, indicate a score of 5 points.

College Assessment Tool
Institutional Research

Traditional Two points	Darwinism Four points	Equal Treatment Six points	Strategic Eight points	Proactive College Ten points
We don't use research to analyze the college's students or institutional effectiveness. We focus primarily on getting students registered and into class. We take pride in our ability to make the college accessible to all students. _____ We have the typical array of remedial and tutorial programs at our college. We believe that we are addressing students' needs, although we have not analyzed what is working or not. _____ The acceptance with the status quo is reinforced when we conduct strategic planning sessions. The college rarely uses data metrics to evaluate programs or student success. We believe the intuitive knowledge and experiences of our education leaders is adequate for assessing performance. _____ We are fine with our college's programs and student success rates, whatever they are, and don't plan to change institutional processes or practices.	Our college has an institutional researcher. Any data that we use is provided by different departments and relates to their performance—e.g., number of students serviced, amount of aid distributed, persistence and graduation rates, etc. _____ We find that major milestone indicators such as freshmen persistence and graduation rates provide adequate milestone benchmarks for assessing institutional effectiveness. _____ Our college's programs that are implemented to help students are patterned after best practices introduced at other colleges. We keep abreast of the latest student retention trends by implementing programs that appear to be effective elsewhere. We don't bother to analyze whether programs work at our college. _____ We don't believe there are any patterns of student behavior or college readiness that merit developing strategic initiatives. There are too many variables that impact students' decision to stay and graduate to categorize and develop customized responses.	We use historical data to assess which students are likely to have difficulty at our college. Developing "at-risk" profiles is helpful in determining what services and advising initiatives will be needed to assist students. _____ While it might be beneficial to tailor responses to meet individual student needs, we rely mostly on department driven programs to service the largest possible at-risk population. _____ We have used data to analyze program effectiveness. While we try to incorporate data metrics into our strategic planning process, we don't typically measure whether action plans and program changes have been effective. _____ We have a substantial data base that is beginning to become helpful in analyzing student performance. However, it is just beginning to be used by other than our research department and therefore has limited applications. _____ If we improve our retention rates, a greater use of data to set recruitment and admissions parameters as well as linking planning and budgeting efforts will be needed. We are initiating but still at the beginning stages of using data to assess institutional effectiveness and plan future initiatives.	Data driven decisions are important at our college. The data base we have developed encompasses all elements of student experiences—e.g., recruitment, admission, academic, financial, social and career preparation and placement. This provides the data to develop definitive parameters that can be used for creating predictive models. _____ As a part of our strategic planning process, every conceivable part of our campus' operations that impacts student success is evaluated through reverse engineering process. _____ Accountability for achieving measurable improvement is a part of the annual personnel evaluation process. _____ We are using data metrics not only to improve operational effectiveness, but also to customize support for "acceptable risk" students and students that become at-risk after they enroll. _____ Establishing student profiles by analyzing data patterns related to previously unsuccessful students is important for improving retention rates. _____ We build our recruitment and supporting practices based on data driven information—looking for students that can be admitted and will succeed given our college's commitment of resources.	Our college has embraced data collection and use to a significant degree. While we have an institutional researcher, the users (e.g., department heads) have been educated to develop their own data driven reports to assess students, faculty and department operational effectiveness. _____ An example of using data to monitor student success can be seen when cross-campus classroom attendance is used weekly by department heads or advisors to identify students that may need intervention. _____ User hands-on and interactive use of data has brought life to the planning and review process. It is not necessary to wait for periodic review of information to assess whether programs are working and students are being served. _____ Critical data points are constantly reviewed to determine if new or better indicators can be utilized to identify and predict student behavior. _____ We believe that data is effective for helping faculty and staff to be innovative by providing clues or "trail-head" indicators for what is happening on campus. Data driven assessments and initiatives have been accepted because the metrics are used to help set standards, not dictate how standards are to be met.

Accumulative Score Sheet
College Assessment Tool
Student Retention and Graduation Rate Efforts

Control-Point Focus Area	2 pts	4 pts	6 pts	8 pts	10 pts
Institutional Research—Using Data to Improve Student Retention					
Predictive Modeling—Setting the Stage for Institutional Equilibrium					
Enrollment Management—Aligning the Institution for Success					
Financial Planning—Preparing Students for a Long-term Commitment					
Proactive Advising—Preempting Student Failure					
Curriculum Scheduling and Registration—Charting a Course for On-time Graduation					
Faculty Influence—Supporting a Culture of Academic Success					
Student Life—Creating a Success Environment					
Integrating the Non-traditional—"Ghost" Students					
Career Guidance—Supporting Degree Objectives					
Subtotal for Each Column					
	Total Score _____				

Why Predictive Modeling?

Data Driven

- In its simplest form, predictive modeling uses assessment of student <u>attributes and behavior</u> to predict certain outcomes.

- If a student arrives at college with academic or social deficiencies or behaves in an identified unconstructive manner after arriving, <u>predicted outcomes</u> can be expected.

- If the college intervenes with a precise approach, those <u>outcomes can be modified</u>, also with predictable results.

- The trick in the process of developing predictive models is to make certain that <u>cause-outcome relationships are accurate</u>.

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Why Predictive Modeling?

- **Admission's Strategies:** Some colleges, such as West Virginia University and Houston Baptist University, are using sophisticated <u>statistical methods</u> to predict which students are most likely, if accepted, to matriculate and, therefore determining where recruiting efforts should be focused and what resources will be needed to help at-risk students be successful.

- **Monitoring Behavior:** Georgia State University, the University of Kentucky, Lexington, Arizona State University, and the University of Arizona, are "data mining" their <u>institutions data banks</u> to predict which of their current students are most at risk of dropping out, and how best to help these students with additional support.

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Why Predictive Modeling (cont.)?

Using predictive modeling to <u>discredit unsuccessful "sacred cows."</u>   Example #1:

- Many colleges assume that high school GPA and national scores are a valid predictor of students' success and completely rely on these indicators in their admission review process.

- National college admission (ACT/SAT) <u>scores</u> have proven to be a <u>poor predictor </u>of whether a test taker will graduate from college.

- A paper in <u>The Journal of Public Economics</u> (Bulman) noted that <u>later high school G.P.A. averages </u>are approximately five times more predictive of whether a student drops out of college within two years than using a cumulative high school average.

Why Predictive Modeling (cont.)?

Example #2

- By using the <u>ACT composite score</u>, college admissions offices are giving equal weight to each of the four subtests—math, English, reading and science.

- Yet, research data results from public college students in Ohio provided evidence that the <u>math and English subject tests are more predictive </u>(10.4%) of college success than the reading and science test scores. (Pope)

College Assessment Tool
Predictive Modeling

Traditional Two points	Darwinism Four points	Equal Treatment Six points	Strategic Eight points	Proactive Ten points
Our efforts are directed towards finding new students to replace graduates and non-persisting freshmen. I don't remember if we have ever stopped and evaluated our retention, remedial or graduation results using numeric indicators. _____ We do regular strategic planning at our college, but don't assign responsibility for change or set numeric outcome expectations. _____ Colleges are not manufacturing oriented organizations. Learning is individualized to each student's needs and is not something that can be measured to assess or predict at-risk behavior. _____ We don't know what our student success rate is and therefore don't talk much about our graduation rate. _____ Our college uses some data to facilitate scheduling of classrooms, faculty, and courses. _____ We don't focus on our graduation rate and believe college-ready freshmen will always succeed.	Our college believes that it provides the best education among its peer colleges. However, the belief has not been validated by measurable comparisons. _____ Students must take responsibility for their success. Trying to interfere with the students' learning processes by intervening because of statistical indicators is not necessary. _____ We believe that students' success is important, and have established all the requisite student retention programs needed to help students. The effectiveness of these programs is never questioned nor are results measured. _____ We watch freshmen persistence rates and graduation rates to make certain that we do not fall below other peer colleges rates. When rates drop, we typically blame it on admission's practices and claim that standards are slipping. _____ It's not that there is an aversion to data, but the professional educators believe that experience and intuitive decision making provides better results than trying to push number driven processes into a change resistant culture.	Our college's average freshmen ACT/SAT scores are considered an important indicator of institutional excellence. _____ We don't take the time to predefine at-risk students before they enroll because we consider them all to be ready for college. _____ We emphasize equal access to college programs and support, but rely on students to seek help when needed. _____ Use of statistical information tends to focus on macro or organization-wide assessments (e.g., graduation rates, freshmen persistence rates, average SAT scores for freshmen class, etc.) and less on evaluating individual student or departmental retention issues. _____ We don't do any predictive modeling other than to recognize that annual trends and historical benchmarks of graduation rates informs us that there may be a need to change something. _____ Early attempts to use data for examining persistence related issues has been successful. However, the fix is usually focused on addressing the result and not for determining the cause—e.g., more financial aid vs. better student budgeting.	Profiling admitted freshmen using quantifiable at-risk indicators is critical for program planning purposes. _____ Our college believes that data mining to predict student needs, monitor student behavior for intervention (in and outside the classroom) and to assess institutional performance is critical to student success. _____ By embracing a culture of investigative analysis, there is a continued search for what is working, or not. _____ Numeric targets are published for all to see and updated results are exhibited frequently. Weekly staff and regular public meetings typically includes discussions about what is working well, or not, in the organization. _____ Data is best used for analyzing the micro parts of the organization as opposed to only the outcome or final product results—e.g., remediation results vs. graduation rates. _____ The institutional research team constantly tells us when data identifies a weak operational program and/or multiple students' behavior that are signaling a retention issue requires institutional intervention.	Our college is considered a model retention college because statistically validated best practices are operational and monitored. _____ Target expectations are quantified and progress towards improving retention related control points are communicated to the college's faculty, staff and students regularly. _____ When the leadership meets, there is always time set aside to review the latest update on key indicators with discussion on what can be improved. _____ Using historical information to determine which future students can be salvaged is fundamental for setting recruitment and admissions parameters, creating pre-enrollment programs for admitted students, and implementing advising intervention strategies. _____ Data mining to monitor students' behavior, creating predictive modeling for early warning and assessment of what is working to help students succeed is a fundamental cornerstone of our college's retention efforts. _____ Our college only enrolls freshmen that are college ready or are believed to be "acceptable-risk" students. Resources are dedicated to support certain categories of formerly at-risk students. The college will not enroll students that cannot be supported by the college.

Why Recruitment & Admissions?

- **Soft Applications:** The percentage of students submitting seven or <u>more applications</u> has risen from nine percent to twenty-two percent since 1998.

- One of the causes of <u>application inflation</u> appears to be the Common App process—a <u>universal application</u> that went on-line in 1998 and is currently used by over 700 colleges worldwide.

Why Recruitment & Admissions?

- Forced to cover their bets, some colleges may look <u>deeper into their applicant pools</u> and admit less than previously qualified students to cover a potential drop in "yield"—applied-to-admitted freshmen ratio.

- This should not be an issue for colleges that are working with a sound admissions plan based on predictive modeling backed up with program support for the <u>targeted enrollment population</u>.

Recruitment & Admissions—Summer Melt & Behavioral Nudges

Techniques to get the best class

- The summer after high school is a perilous time, with 20 percent of those who plan to attend college not starting—a phenomenon known as "<u>summer melt</u>."

- <u>Behavioral nudges</u> have proven to be successful.   "*Grad students at Harvard set up a system of automatic, <u>personalized text messages</u> that reminded high school students about their college deadlines.*

- *Students who received the <u>texts</u> enroll in college—70 percent, compared with 63 percent of those who were not on the program. Seven percentage points is a big increase in this field, similar to the gains produced by scholarships that cost thousands of dollars. Yet, this programs cost only $7 per student.*"

College Assessment Tool
Recruitment & Admissions

Traditional Two points	Darwinism Four points	Equal Treatment Six points	Strategic Eight points	Proactive Ten points
Our college has more students than available seats. Overflowing and perhaps underfunded. Recruiting more students is unlikely. _____ We are not a selective college and accept all high school graduates or GED completers. _____ No recruiting is needed for new students and little or no effort to attract students that will improve student retention is being attempted _____ Our college only focus is to handle an overwhelming herd of new students each year. We are funded for seats filled, not for graduating them. _____ Many students don't fit the traditional student profile which makes using metrics to measure student needs or institutional effectiveness difficult. _____ Recruiters and the admission are not concerned or aware of what happens on campus after a student applies for or is admitted. _____ We rely on word of mouth, regional reputation, and regular advertising to market our college. _____ We have not attempted to sort our applicants or enrolled students into acceptable risk profiles.	Our college's enrollment is relatively easy because of regional/state loyalty, academic reputation, or strong alumni/family feeder population. _____ Recruitment and admissions are independent department and while important for marketing and maintaining the college's reputation (especially among alumni foundation donors), it is not integrated into the academic and student life aspects of our college. _____ Recruiters assume that they are doing fine since no negative feedback or suggested recruiting criteria has been offered. "Silence is assumed to be success." _____ Our marketing image is based on positive factors like a winning athletic program, a fun Greek system, several highly-regarded faculty researchers, and many successful graduates. _____ While we accept more than two-thirds of applicants, we consider ourselves to be exclusive. _____ While our student graduation rates are average, we are not concerned about replacing drop-outs because there seems to be an unlimited pool of prospective students.	Our college has a good student retention program, but recruiting is not connected to retention efforts. _____ In recent years, the college has recruited an increasing number of first-generation students, but the college is careful not to label or treat them differently than our "traditional" freshmen. _____ Once our freshmen class is (admitted), we analyze the aggregate needs of the students and try to build a budget that provides equal access to services for all students. We have not considered building services and then targeting our recruiting to match our support abilities. _____ We place strong effort in establishing one-on-one relationships with prospective students by providing numerous on-campus events, one-on-one counseling and advising sessions and use social media to help ("nudge") applicants connect to the college and its programs and services. _____ We minimize the use of ACT/SAT scores to assess student ability to graduate. We use high school grades (last two years) and class rankings to help determine who is ready to attend our college. .	The college annually compares its freshmen persistence rates to its recruitment strategies. _____ Recruiters are included as members of the admission/enrollment management team and understand the college's commitment towards improving graduation rates. They are also included in resource allocation and program review committees. _____ The college president signs off on the recruitment strategy that operates under the premise that all students who are admitted will graduate. _____ When high school students complete their college prep algebra and English courses, we immediately administer our college's placement tests at their schools. If they pass, students are invited to take college algebra in their senior high school year; at their school. _____ Information related to financial aid, the need to be academically ready and our proactive advising policies are communicated to prospective students at high school seminars and via personal web-addresses. This helps prospective students understand that on-time graduation has a high priority at the college.	Our college has a very strong strategic recruitment plan that links retention planning to specific targeted prospects. We focus on targeting and building relationships with low-risk prospects, often not desired by other colleges. We have programs to help them succeed. _____ Before expanding our recruitment to focus on first generation and other typical high-risk students, we determined whether we had the culture and resources to support them. We subsequently expanded the recruitment pool to meet our commitments. _____ The definition of at-risk prospects is adjusted annually based on program success in dealing with former students' difficulties. _____ Our college uses technology and face-to-face counseling to communicate with prospective students on an ongoing basis. _____ Thanks to effective admission profiling that matches our college's willingness and ability to facilitate students' success, our college is above average in persistence and graduation rates and continues to improve the success rates of first-generation students.

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Why Financial Planning?

- Common reasons for dropping out of college were clustered into six themes in Goldie Blumenstyk's book, <u>American Higher Education in Crisis</u> (2014).

- **Tuition (30%)**
- Attendance (29%)
- Partying (19%)
- **Financial Aid (11%)**
- Grades (6%)
- Sleep (5%)

Financial related reasons accounting for 41%.

Why Financial Planning?

- The <u>gap</u> between the haves and have-nots remains a barrier to students' ability to get a college degree. There are enormous inequalities in attaining higher education degrees in the United States when <u>family income </u>is factored into the statistics.

- A child born into a <u>poor family has only a 9 percent</u> chance of getting a college degree, but the odds are favorable for <u>54 percent of children raised by high-income families</u>.

- The <u>financial need to work</u>, especially full-time, while attending college places many low-income students into a high-risk category.

Why Financial Planning

- **The Working Student:** As reported by the Complete College America's (Gates funded) 2014 report, "The Four-Year Myth," working students that attend college on a part-time basis are more likely to drop out than graduate.

- Sixty-two percent of full-time community college students graduate as opposed to twenty-seven percent that take 12 to 24 credits a year.

- Seventy-nine percent of full-time four-year college students graduate as opposed to thirty-seven percent of part-time students that take 12 to 24 credits annually.

- To mitigate the economic challenges faced by low-income students, colleges desiring to retain students must play a strong role in helping students and their families prepare long-term budgets for the financial commitment needed to successfully complete college.

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College Assessment Tool
Financial Planning

Traditional Two points	Darwinism Four points	Equal Treatment Six points	Strategic Eight points	Proactive Ten points
There are more applications for financial aid processing than we have staff available to provide one-on-one advising with students. We focus on two issues. Packaging all financial aid awards for distribution before classes begin, and assuring that the college is protected against any potential liabilities._____ We provide cost-of-education counseling information on our web-site and at recruiting sessions with prospective students and their families._____ We don't monitor students' adequate progress related to credits completed each academic year._____ Once a student begins, we do not confirm that full aid funding and graduation will coincide. We believe that is the responsibility of the students._____ It would be correct to state that the financial aid department is more of a processing and regulation compliance center than an advising source for student retention oriented operation.	Our college develops relationships with local high school students by showing them how to apply for financial aid. We also provide a comprehensive web-site to assist transfer and adult learners as they prepare their FAFSAs (applications) for federal aid._____ Counseling appointments can be made with appropriate financial aid counselors until the registration process begins. These are critical for helping students apply for tuition discounts, student and parent loans, and other work and aid opportunities._____ Late students obtain a tentative Pell Grant determination based on the college's preliminary assessment of their application. FAFSA must be filed before a Pell Grant award is made._____ The college believes that each student has the responsibility to assess the adequacy of funding, including remaining financial aid each year..	Our financial aid department, is excellent in providing on-time packaging and budget related information to students and their funding sponsors (e.g., families)._____ Our college's approach for providing support is to employ adequate staff to meet the needs of all our students with advance scheduling—before classes begin. Financial aid lines during registration are not an issue._____ Adequate progress is monitored for financial aid students and a review of students' degree plans are conducted at the end of the junior year. Availability of remaining financial aid is not always assessed._____ We are accessible, have staff to service students in need, but are not overly proactive in anticipating problems or intervening unless asked to by a student to help.	Every student with their family completes an enrollment-to-graduation budget under the direct supervision of a qualified staff assistant, whether financial aid is provided or not. We monitor and cross reference the student budget plan as well as the degree plan at least annually._____ Our college understands that budget and degree planning is critical for late arrivals and mandate a counseling session within the first ten days after classes begins._____ We direct our limited resources to address the anticipated financial needs of our salvageable high-risk students. Ongoing financial monitoring is provided and freshmen college survival lectures/classes are mandatory._____ Since our last-minute enrollees are often unable to secure federal financial aid during the frantic registration process we created a no-interest short-term loan program that is repaid when Pell grants are awarded._____ Our foundation provides bridge grants to last semester students when needed.	Our fundamental philosophy is to verify that each student can obtain a degree without being surprised or stopped because of funding issues. This requires one-on-one counseling before classes begin and continues until graduation._____ When our college signs off on a student's budget plan, strategic plans are established to confirm all potential financial contingencies are identified and backup plans are agreed upon._____ Our foundation financial aid office guarantees that resources will be available to cover expenses until graduation._____ If a student experiences a change in program or an unexpected financial emergency, an assigned mentor is available to work through the problem with the student and family members._____ Our college considers a student's inability to graduate from college, especially for financial reasons, to be an institutional failing. We believe that the cost of failure is an unnecessary expense to the student and college.

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Why Proactive Advising?

- Proactive advising means that faculty and staff <u>anticipate and prepare</u> for at-risk attributes that entering students bring to college, or <u>intervene</u> when student behavior indicates a problem is occurring. It's the opposite of build it and they will come—e.g., passive advising.

- Georgia State University improved its graduation rates by 20% over a ten-year period after implementing a strong <u>intrusive</u> advising program.

Proactive Advising—Academic Support

Based on the annual National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE 2014) survey of approximately 127,000 students:

- about one-third of students had <u>fewer than two meetings</u> (standard minimum) with an instructor or academic advisor during their first year;

- twenty-three percent had <u>just one meeting</u>, and another one-third rarely met with an advisor.

More than a quarter of students who <u>rarely met </u>with an adviser described their institutions' emphasis on academic support as "some" or "very little."

Why Proactive Advising?

- A disproportionate share of those not seeking advising are commuting, <u>nontraditional</u>-aged, and part-time students.

- Students that believed they were <u>less prepared </u>for college and anticipated more difficulty in succeeding in their first year relative to their peers were also <u>less likely to value campus support </u>efforts that could help them.

- The students who rarely met with advisers often turned to <u>friends and family for advice—a real dilemma for first-generation students</u>.

- On the other-hand, students who met with their faculty-advisor <u>at least twice a year </u>were more engaged and <u>gained more from college</u>.

Why Proactive Advising?

- In another program an (externally contracted) academic coach called students to talk about time management and study skills.

- At the end of 12 months, students in the coached group were 5.3 percentage points more likely to still be enrolled than students in the non-coached group (63.3 percent vs. 58.0 percent).

- This represents a 9 to12 percent increase in retention. The effect of coaching on persistence did not disappear after the treatment.

- Coached students were 3-4 percentage points more likely to graduate. These represented roughly a 15 percent increase in college graduation rates.

College Assessment Tool
Proactive Advising

Traditional Two points	Darwinism Four points	Equal Treatment Six points	Strategic Eight points	Proactive Ten points
Our college is providing many standard functions services and programs (e.g., financial aid, counseling, tutorial assistance, job center) to help students succeed, but do not consider ourselves to be intrusive advisors. We rely on students to ask us for help when they need it. _____ We do not profile "at-risk" students, but we do use college placement testing to identify students that need to take remedial courses. _____ The "Center" offers a voluntary non-credit first-year "survival" program. Few students participate. _____ We have a large commuter population which makes on-campus program assistance difficult. _____ We are experts at getting classes on the schedule that students need to graduate, but don't have the staff or resources to monitor each student to determine when a student is in academic trouble. _____ We care about or students, but we don't have the time, staff or resources to take care of them. We have a good reputation for making it possible to access our college's programs, but not necessarily for getting to graduate on time.	Our college is a strong advocate of, "Build it and they will come," advising. Programs for students needing assistance are available if they ask for help. We believe that "taking charge" is an important part of the college maturing process. Our students are ready for the real world. _____ Our counselors/advisors prefer to focus on helping students select a major, transfer to another college, or qualify for graduate school. They don't often deal with student's personal issues. _____ There is not enough staff to be proactive when students exhibit pre-drop-out behavior. Everyone is willing to help, but there is not an organized effort to intervene early when student exhibit behavior that typically precedes dropping out. _____ We have a selective admissions process as receive more applications than we accept. I can't think of any reason a student would fail because they were not college ready—academically. _____ We don't consider our college drop outs to be failures, they are just not ready for college. Maybe, again, later.	We know that we can't afford big cost programs, but we do sort our highest risk, typically low income, first-generation college students into supportive programs. _____ Our freshmen are assigned to advisors who manage case-loads of between 750 to 1,000 students. Advisors rely on faculty referrals, attendance information and mid-term grades to identify students that may need assistance. It usually takes a semester/term before an at-risk student is identified and assisted. _____ We put our greatest effort into monitoring and working with freshmen. If we can get freshmen successfully transitioned into college classes and eventually into declaring a degree major where faculty advisors actively interact with their students, we believe we can keep them until graduation. _____ We do better at identifying and helping new at-risk students than finding and supporting students that are having trouble after they begin classes. _____	We pride ourselves on the strong data approach we use to analyze students who have succeeded and failed. Accumulated data over time has been helpful in determining what institutional barriers were removed to help students graduate. _____ We work in a faculty /advisor team approach towards proactively identifying and working with incoming at-risk freshmen and monitoring student behaviors that might indicate proactive intervention is needed. While our primary efforts are on freshmen, we continue to research the factors that cause upper class students to drop out so that we can better respond to their needs _____ Freshmen attendance is input and monitored daily. Faculty enter exception (absent) attendance by using a phone app. Poor attendance is one of the first retention warning signals. _____ We target our efforts at high return-on-investment students which is made possible by using the data to anticipate, identify and quickly respond to help students before issues become unresolvable. Our average response time after identifying that a student is in trouble is about five days. .	We know what our students are doing! We achieve success with limited resources by using the swipe card method to determine if students are attending classes, eating regularly at the dining facilities, completing lab projects, spending time in the library and even working and attending the college's social events. _____ An advisor and faculty mentor guide students until they graduate. A culture of faculty-student partnering often results in life-long relationships between faculty and their mentees. _____ The college encourages collaborating with first-generation student's families. This has been very successful for freshmen that have left their homes for the first time. _____ If we were to choose a theme for our college, it would be that we specialize in collaborating with each student until they graduate. We have never let lack of resources or real-life distractions interfere with this primary objective. _____ The college always looks for new ideas that will help to continue improving. We can always change if you can show us why and how.

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Why Curriculum Scheduling?

Why Finish-in-Four?

- <u>Scheduling related delays</u> cost students $7.7 billion in additional tuition and the public tax payer another $11.5 billion in funding—totaling $19.2 billion annually.

- Tuition borrowers who do not graduate on time take on far <u>more debt in their extra years</u>.

- According to data from Temple University in Philadelphia and from the University of Texas, Austin, *"…two extra years on campus <u>increases debt by nearly 70 percent</u>."* Most likely because Pell grants runs out after four years.

(Lewin & The Four-Year Myth)

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Why Curriculum Scheduling?

For college students, time kills success.

- Excess time is often the result of too many units taken because of lost transfer credits, changing majors and/or poor degree planning—averaging:
  - 13.5 excess credits for 4-year graduates
  - 20.9 excess credits for 2-year graduates

College/Degree Type	Standard Credits to Graduate	Average Credits Taken	Standard Years to Graduate	Average Time to Graduate	On-Time Graduation
Community College Certificate	30	64.9	1	2.7	15.9%
2-yr Associate Arts	60	80.9	2	3.6	5%
4-yr non-Flagship	120	133.5	4	4.9	19%
4-yr Flagship*	120	134.6	4	4.4	36%
(source: Complete College America, 2014)					

Curriculum Scheduling—Excess Credits Reduces Grad Rates

Best Practice Example

- Since 2004, the number of students graduating at Florida State University (FSU) with an <u>excess of credits was reduced by 50%</u>.

- The result has been that on-time (four-year) <u>graduation rates increased by 17%—from 44% to 61%</u>.

- African-American (73%) and Hispanic (76%) six-year graduation rates are twice the national (2013) average.

College Assessment Tool
Curriculum Scheduling

Traditional Two points	Darwinism Four points	Equal Treatment Six points	Strategic Eight points	Proactive Ten points
95% of our students register on-line using the college's degree requirements and course catalog as a guide. The degree requirements are difficult to understand especially for new students who are not familiar with terms and definitions. _____ Because of the mix of full and part-time students, we are not able to use a block or cohort registration system. _____ While counselors are available to help, students must monitor their own academic progress. _____ Registration is not a controlling point in student retention efforts. Registration is a processing function—getting students into classes and allocating resources to meet their needs. _____ We try to keep our popular, and often required classes open to accommodate all students. We believe that giving the advanced students priority in registration helps them get the classes they need. Unfortunately, first-come-first serve doesn't always work.	Course catalogue schedules provides the necessary guidance for students. While advising assistance is available most students seem to get along OK without it. _____ It is hard to know if students take too many courses because most (part-time and full-time) don't graduate on time anyway. The reasons are too numerous or confusing to list or try to resolve. _____ Some students are unable to obtain classes because they are not offered every semester or are filled quickly. It often takes longer to graduate but the practice seems to be normal—so, we don't worry. _____ Our registration processes are mostly student driven. We create college class schedules (courses, classrooms and faculty) using historical and aggregate enrollment information. _____ We believe that to succeed in college, like the real world, you must hustle to make it happen. You snooze, you lose.	Computerized on-line registration has saved our college from being over-whelmed by sheer numbers of students. It processes transactions, schedules classes, and intervenes when exceptions occur. _____ Our college is more reactive than proactive when scheduling problems occur. The reality is that we are one semester out of sync when a student self-creates a poor class schedule. _____ We provide class scheduling guidance through degree planning seminars and computerized exception audits. _____ Each student's progress on their degree plan is reviewed at the end of their Junior year to confirm whether they will graduate on time. _____ Freshmen and sophomores can take general education courses or declare a major. Most who declare a major before their junior year change their minds at least once—no one minds. _____ No one seems to mind taking more time to graduate—it's accepted as normal.	In addition to our computerized degree planning system, and an automated credit audit system that blocks students from taking classes outside the prescribed degree plan, advisors pre-review proposed class schedules via computer and sign-off on all students' class schedules before classes begin. _____ Even students that change majors have little trouble graduating on time because freshmen and sophomores are required to take the general education curriculum. Students explore different options through the elective process without losing credits when the upper division studies begin. _____ We provide a very structured schedule for students, grouping students with their peers—cohort driven--even for part-time students. _____ We track our students and know when a student is not progressing academically. It is important to determine why there is a problem so that we can intervene properly.	Our college strongly believes that cohort registration, especially for freshmen, creates the best environment for helping freshmen take the correct courses. _____ Our automated degree audit system combined with department mentors and department advisors helps maintain credit audit oversight until students graduate. _____ During registration, we handle drop-in advising by conducting small group seminars to show students how to create a degree plan. _____ We coordinate students and supplemental (remedial) courses by developing schedules that clusters students into groups that need additional lab time, but not segregating them from other students or the college curriculum. _____ We require freshmen and sophomores to complete their general education courses before they declare a major. _____ If a student does not graduate within 120 credits, and a change in major has not occurred, the college picks up the excess tuition costs.

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Why Faculty Involvement?

- Gallup recently (2014) surveyed America's college graduates to determine how well they were doing when compared to the general population.

- "Graduates who felt they had had professors who cared about them, had a <u>mentor</u> during their time in college, and had <u>internships</u> or work opportunities that applied to what they were learning were far more likely later in life to be engaged in their careers and have <u>higher overall well-being</u>…." (Blumenstyk, pg. 151)

Faculty Involvement

The Gallup survey concluded that <u>how students attend college</u> may be more important than where they go or what major they choose.

"Creating an environment where <u>faculty supports students</u> seems to be <u>more a factor of a college's culture</u> than other institutional factors such as size, funding and even exclusivity."

(National Survey of Student Engagement--NSSE, 2014)

Faculty Involvement

Faculty-Student Connections

- Many colleges are creating an array of mandatory <u>high-impact practices</u> (HIB) that requires students to interact with faculty and peers regarding issues of substance and relevance—
  - Culminating Experience
  - Internship Practicum
  - Research with Faculty
  - Service Learning
  - Study Abroad

Faculty Involvement with Nontraditional Students

- As a group, <u>nontraditional seniors</u> (age 25 and older), <u>participated less</u> often in high-impact practices than their traditional-age peers. For example, they were less likely to do <u>internships</u> (33% vs. 59%), <u>service-learning</u> (40% vs. 53%), <u>learning communities</u> (20% vs. 31%), <u>study abroad</u> (6% vs. 19%), and <u>culminating senior experiences</u> (22% vs. 40%).

- Another category of <u>"disconnected" students</u> discovered in the NSSE 2010 survey were <u>upper division students</u>, especially in the senior year, who were generally less engaged and perceived a lower level of support from their campuses.

College Assessment Tool
Faculty Involvement

Traditional Two points	Darwinism Four points	Equal Treatment Six points	Strategic Eight points	Proactive Ten points
A large percentage of our classes are taught by part-time/adjunct faculty or teacher assistants who do not have office hours and typically arrive just before class begins. _____ Full-time faculty, at least those that schedule office hours, are available for quick meetings. However, there is usually a line outside their offices and it is difficult to get time to talk and still make the next class. _____ Our faculty are great, but because of union contract provisions they are not allowed to spend time outside the classroom with students unless they are compensated. _____ I feel sorry for our freshmen that build a class schedule without knowing which faculty are best. It takes them time to discover Rate-my-Professor.com to avoid faculty "gate-keeping" pit-falls. _____ We don't monitor grade distribution or ask faculty to meet with students other than office hours. We focus on providing classes, not social networks.	Our faculty are highly regarded in their fields, but do not teach freshmen classes. Grad students and adjunct (part-time faculty) teach our freshmen/sophomore classes. _____ To avoid tough instructors, the smart students quickly join a fraternity/sorority and get the inside scoop on which instructors and classes are the best. The Houses also have copies of previous tests. _____ Students don't get much opportunity to meet the "real" faculty, so they try to get internships and research oriented summer jobs that helps build their resume. _____ When campus events have an academic orientation the faculty usually make a presentation to a large audience. Interesting but not very personal. _____ Students come here for our reputation, not with an expectation that they will get to know the faculty or leave with a warm fuzzy feeling with anyone other than roommates.	We have implemented a first-year experience class that emphasizes college survivor skills. A faculty mentor, some would say "home" teacher, is assigned to the class and tries to be a coach/confidant. _____ While we know that some faculty are better teachers than others, we have not attempted to improve weak teachers by strengthening their skills. The students seem to know who the better faculty are and we allow over registration into those classes. _____ Some students have been successful in getting to know faculty socially. Usually that occurs after a student picks a major and the declared department organizes meet-and-greet events. _____ All students can get to know faculty and support staff by joining and participating in campus clubs and special support groups where faculty sponsors mentor/coach students. _____ Internships are reserved for graduate students.	Faculty exhibiting outstanding retention results are recognized at the annual graduation ceremony. Our faculty love their mentoring relationships with students. _____ High-risk freshmen, full-time and part-time, are clustered into faculty mentored community learning groups—no exceptions permitted. Before our students graduate, they are encouraged to participate in at least one high-impact project. _____ Faculty are evaluated primarily on their teaching skills when achieving tenure. _____ Full-time faculty are expected to mentor at least one freshman class a year and include at least two group social events with them during each term. _____ Students consider the faculty-student culture to be inclusive, informal and highly supportive. It is not unusual for students to maintain communication and relationships with faculty long after they graduate.	Our first-year program incorporates the structured community learning group culture for all, not just high-risk students. _____ All lower division classes are taught by full-time faculty. _____ Faculty mentors work hard to help develop students' study skills and incorporate college funded off-campus excursions to museums and cultural events for academic enrichment, and for building relationships. _____ Faculty tenure and compensation are determined by an instructor's commitment towards effective teaching—emphasizing a culture of excellence. _____ Once a student has been assigned to a faculty mentor, that relationship is expected to last until graduation. Faculty receive bonuses when their mentored students graduate. _____ Every student that graduates is expected to have participated in at least one lower and upper division high-impact practices activity.

Why Student Life?

Social Isolation

- The absence of sufficient <u>contact</u> with other members of a college proves to be the <u>single most important predictor</u> of eventual departure even after accounting for the independent effects of background, personality and academic ability.

- "To paraphrase the extensive work of researchers and their colleagues, voluntary withdrawal is much more a reflection of what occurs on campus after entry than it is of what has taken place before entry. And of that which occurs after entry, the <u>absence of contact with others prove to matter most</u>." (Pascarella and Terenzini)

Student Life—Monitoring Social Interactions

- The University of Arizona has been experimenting by tracking freshmen — the category of students most likely to drop out — as they <u>swipe their identification cards </u>to go to the library or gym, pay for a meal in the cafeteria or buy a sweatshirt in the bookstore.

- UA is measuring <u>social interaction</u>, determining how many people do students tend to hang out with for different activities, and is their hanging out dropping off week by week or getting stronger?

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Student Life—Predictive Analytics

- The UA findings are put into algorithms to predict who is in danger of not making it to sophomore year. "Most of the predictive-analytics people are looking at grades.

- A lot of times it's <u>not the grades</u> but whether they feel <u>comfortable and socially integrated</u>. If they are not socially integrated, they drop out." (Treaster)

Student Life—Data Mining

- Ball State University in Indiana monitors whether students are swiping in with their ID cards to campus-sponsored parties and events. When a <u>student's card-swipe patterns</u> suggest that a student stopped showing up for clubs or socials, a retention specialist will follow up with a call or an email to see how she's doing. (Blumenstyk, 2014)

- Connecting students with peers and faculty is the primary purpose of student life activities and strategies.

Student Life—Emotional Interventions

- The emotional health of college freshmen has declined to the lowest level since the American College Health Association (ACHA) started its annual survey of incoming students 35 years ago.

- The percentage of students who said their emotional health was above average fell to <u>52% from 64%</u> that was reported in 1985.

- One in twelve college students have made suicide plans at some point with 1.5 students out of every 100 have attempted the plan.

- Annually, 1,100 college students commit suicide according to ACHA.

College Assessment Tool
Student Life

Traditional Two points	Darwinism Four points	Equal Treatment Six points	Strategic Eight points	Model College Ten points
from the students' perspective . . .				
I had to work, so I didn't bother to attend the Saturday orientation. I understand it was basically introducing the key administrators to the new students. _____ This school has a large commuter population with no dorms. The college sponsors social functions like dances and even offers free bus transportation to several athletic events each season. Nobody shows up. Can't figure out why. _____ My classmates are older, many with parental responsibilities. For us, balance means having the energy at the end of the day to stay awake and prepare for classes. No time to develop relationships with faculty or other students. Life comes first, then studies. _____ The college campus is pretty, but not really built to encourage students to gather and relax. Administrative and business offices are clustered in a general area that is called a "Student Center"—open 9 to 5, M – F. Lots of lines when trying to get things done during registration. We can register on-line but the system is not easy to use and is often down or slow during busy times.	We had an orientation weekend when we heard presentations from faculty and advisors. No one recorded our attendance so a group of us took off after lunch we had a great time hanging out at the park. _____ Being connected to the grapevine is important. I am considering joining the Greek system. They have all the course exams on file, so I won't have to study if I join one. _____ I may not bother attending all my classes so I can focus on the social scene this semester. No one seems to be paying attention to what I am doing, anyway. _____ So many interesting things to do! I really enjoy the late-night discussions with my roommate and our new friends. It's hard to get up in the morning and attend classes, but college isn't only about study and lectures. Besides, I test best when under pressure and I will do great on exams because I cram well!	It was amazing how many people I met during freshman orientation week. We were broken into groups of 25 and given ample time and opportunities to get to know each other. Unfortunately, I don't see them around campus much so we have quickly become strangers again. _____ Even with lots of people around me, it has been difficult to make new friends. Everyone seems to be working, running families, or just trying to fit college into their lives. We seem to be anxiously lonely together. _____ I may be studying too hard, but I can't figure out who to talk to about it. I am still afraid to chat with any professor. They are so smart and I am afraid I will look dumb. I'm going to try and find my orientation leader to see if he has any ideas that will help me. _____ Wow! This place is really complicated. I am learning to hurry up and wait—lots of process lines. It's a first come, first served kind of place. But, heck, that's equality treatment. No one is special, everyone gets the same service. I think I'm learning the definition of bureaucracy--patience.	I am a shy person, but the orientation week made a difference. We continued to meet weekly with small groups led by our "home-class" instructor who also teaches our history class. He and his wife are hosting dinner at their home this weekend. We'll all be there, together! _____ All freshmen participated in a personality/behavior profile session during first-year-experience classes. We sometimes wear buttons that identify our profiles on campus so we can meet other people—it's a great conversation starter. _____ I really like our One-Stop Center. They help to get things done or make appointments for me. When I communicate directly on-line I always get responses quickly. _____ Each week, the college has a social activity. Based on the points I have accumulated for participating, I'm in the run to win a lap-top. _____ My roommate was not showing up and someone came to talk to her. She seems to be enjoying herself now that she is more active. I'm glad someone was watching her.	During our week-long orientation program, we were organized into community learning groups. My learning group mentor and her spouse have already invited us to a bowling, and pizza evening. More events scheduled. _____ I am extroverted and sometimes get too socially involved; forgetting I'm here to study. Fortunately, my mentor and college advisor assigned to me are helping improve my study habits. All is good _____ With the competition, I was afraid that I had made a mistake in going to this college. I got depressed, stopped studying and began to set myself up for failure. That didn't last long. Two of my teachers talked to me after their classes and assigned me to supportive study groups. They kept track of my homework assignments and let me know how I was doing. _____ In the beginning, my faculty mentor would check in with me regularly. Everyone here seems to know what I am doing and really cares that I am OK and doing well. I feel connected while also being given the room I need to explore and learn on my own.

Why Non-traditional Students?

"Ghost Students"

- The IPEDS definition of a "traditional" student is someone who attends college full-time and that articulates directly from high school to college—relevant when the enrollment statistics were first tracked nationally in the mid-1980s.

- According to the American Council on Education, about 61 percent of students at four-year colleges and 67 percent of students at two-year colleges are classified as non-traditional and, therefore, are not counted when calculating college graduation rates.

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Who Are Non-traditional Students?

- The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) defines <u>non-traditional</u> students as meeting <u>one of seven characteristics</u>:
  - delayed enrollment into postsecondary education;
  - attends college part-time;
  - works full time;
  - is defined as being financially independent (not supported by parents) for financial aid purposes;
  - has dependents other than a spouse;
  - is a single parent, and/or
  - does not have a high school degree.

Grad Rate an Adequate Indicator?

- Using the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) definition, <u>seventy-three percent </u>(73%) of college students are classified as "non-traditional."

- NODA, a nonprofit association of college professionals dedicated to improving student orientation, transition and retention <u>expanded the NCES definition </u>by including:

  - re-admitted and re-entry students;

  - commuters;

  - senior citizens; and

  - on-line/distance learners.

- In reality, we are tracking and accounting for only 27% of our colleges' students when graduation rates are used as an indicator of college performance and students' success.

Who are the Typical Non-traditional Students?

- Among students with only one nontraditional characteristic, <u>part-time attendance</u> is the most common (36%), followed by <u>full-time employment</u> (23%) and <u>delayed enrollment</u> (23%).

- Among students with more than <u>three nontraditional characteristics, having a dependent</u> is the most common (80%). (National Center for Educational Services; *2012 enrollment figures, Digest of Education Statistics, Table 303.70*)

- In summary, non-traditional students are typically <u>older single-parent adults, working full-time, while attending college part-time</u>.

Degree-to-Enrollment Ratio (DER)

There is a need to rethink how colleges calculate and compare student retention and graduation rates.

- One alternative is the <u>degree-to enrollment ratio</u> (DER).

- Unlike traditional graduation rates that do not adequately account for nontraditional students such as part-time students, transfers in and out and students taking limited courses for non-degree purposes, the DER ratio would provide valuable information on both enrollment trends as well as completion trends.

- This measure is gaining popularity as it has been used in the American Council on Education's Minorities in Higher Education Status Report (Ryu) as well as the Delta Cost Project's Trends in College Spending. (Cook)

College Assessment Tool
Non-traditional Students

Traditional Two points	Darwinism Four points	Equal Treatment Six points	Strategic Eight points	Model College Ten points
from the students' perspective . . . I had to work, so I didn't bother to attend the Saturday orientation. I understand it was basically introducing the key administrators to the new students. _____ This school has a large commuter population with no dorms. The college sponsors social functions like dances and even offers free bus transportation to several athletic events each season. Nobody shows up. Can't figure out why. _____ My classmates are older, many with parental responsibilities. For us, balance means having the energy at the end of the day to stay awake and prepare for classes. No time to develop relationships with faculty or other students. Life comes first, then studies. _____ The college campus is pretty, but not really built to encourage students to gather and relax. Administrative and business offices are clustered in a general area that is called a "Student Center"—open 9 to 5, M – F. Lots of lines when trying to get things done during registration. We can register on-line but the system is not easy to use and is often down or slow during busy times.	We had an orientation weekend when we heard presentations from faculty and advisors. No one recorded our attendance so a group of us took off after lunch we had a great time hanging out at the park. _____ Being connected to the grapevine is important. I am considering joining the Greek system. They have all the course exams on file, so I won't have to study if I join one. _____ I may not bother attending all my classes so I can focus on the social scene this semester. No one seems to be paying attention to what I am doing, anyway. _____ So many interesting things to do! I really enjoy the late-night discussions with my roommate and our new friends. It's hard to get up in the morning and attend classes, but college isn't only about study and lectures. Besides, I test best when under pressure and I will do great on exams because I cram well!	It was amazing how many people I met during freshman orientation week. We were broken into groups of 25 and given ample time and opportunities to get to know each other. Unfortunately, I don't see them around campus much so we have quickly become strangers again. _____ Even with lots of people around me, it has been difficult to make new friends. Everyone seems to be working, running families, or just trying to fit college into their lives. We seem to be anxiously lonely together. _____ I may be studying too hard, but I can't figure out who to talk to about it. I am still afraid to chat with any professor. They are so smart and I am afraid I will look dumb. I'm going to try and find my orientation leader to see if he has any ideas that will help me. _____ Wow! This place is really complicated. I am learning to hurry up and wait—lots of process lines. It's a first come, first served kind of place. But, heck, that's equality treatment. No one is special, everyone gets the same service. I think I'm learning the definition of bureaucracy--patience.	I am a shy person, but the orientation week made a difference. We continued to meet weekly with small groups led by our "home-class" instructor who also teaches our history class. He and his wife are hosting dinner at their home this weekend. We'll all be there, together! _____ All freshmen participated in a personality/behavior profile session during first-year-experience classes. We sometimes wear buttons that identify our profiles on campus so we can meet other people—it's a great conversation starter. _____ I really like our One-Stop Center. They help to get things done or make appointments for me. When I communicate directly on-line I always get responses quickly. _____ Each week, the college has a social activity. Based on the points I have accumulated for participating, I'm in the run to win a lap-top. _____ My roommate was not showing up and someone came to talk to her. She seems to be enjoying herself now that she is more active. I'm glad someone was watching her.	During our week-long orientation program, we were organized into community learning groups. My learning group mentor and her spouse have already invited us to a bowling, and pizza evening. More events scheduled. _____ I am extroverted and sometimes get too socially involved; forgetting I'm here to study. Fortunately, my mentor and college advisor assigned to me are helping improve my study habits. All is good _____ With the competition, I was afraid that I had made a mistake in going to this college. I got depressed, stopped studying and began to set myself up for failure. That didn't last long. Two of my teachers talked to me after their classes and assigned me to supportive study groups. They kept track of my homework assignments and let me know how I was doing. _____ In the beginning, my faculty mentor would check in with me regularly. Everyone here seems to know what I am doing and really cares that I am OK and doing well. I feel connected while also being given the room I need to explore and learn on my own. 71

Why Career Advising?

Post High School Skills

- By 2020, according to experts, <u>two-thirds of all jobs</u> will require at least some education and training beyond high school—versus <u>28 percent of jobs forty years ago</u>.

College Degree = Job/Career

- Gallup Polls show that …<u>2/3s</u> say reason for getting an education beyond high school is "<u>to get a good job</u>," and separate surveys of college freshmen at four-year colleges find that 88 percent of them say the same.

Source: <u>American Higher Education in Crisis</u>

Lack of College Support

College Support

- A consulting firm, Millennial Branding, surveyed over 4,000 students and found that 61 percent said <u>Career Services was "never" or "rarely" effective in helping them land a job</u>.

    "Is Your Student Prepared for Life?" Ben Carpenter, <u>NY Times</u>, August 31, 2014, Op-Ed.

Career Placement

- According to a recent poll conducted by AfterCollege (2014), an online entry-level job site, <u>83 percent of college seniors graduated without a job during spring, 2014</u>. Even when these young people finally do get jobs, the positions are often part time, low wage or not related to their career interests.

Not Guiding Enough Students to STEM Careers

- Burning Glass, a non-profit foundation, noted in a 2014 report that nearly <u>half of entry-level jobs </u>require bachelor's degree in <u>science, technology, engineering, and mathematics</u>.

- However, only about <u>29 percent </u>of undergraduates earn U.S. degrees in <u>STEM fields</u>.

- Findings are not unique to the U.S. job market as noted by an <u>Australian</u> survey that observed similar trends. It reported that <u>75 percent of the fastest growing occupations require STEM skills </u>and 70 percent of employers identify STEM employees as the most innovative. (Gardiner)

Internships/Apprenticeships

- 63% of college graduates who had completed a paid internship received a job offer within six months of graduation, compared to with 37% of those in an unpaid internship and 35% with no internship experiences. (Georgetown University – Center on Education and the Workforce)

- Workers with internship experiences will earn as much as $300,000 more in their lifetimes than those without the opportunity. (Olinsky and Ayres)

- Internships are an insignificant factor in U.S. higher education. Only 358,000 active registered apprentices were in the workplace during 2012—less than 7 percent of the number of apprenticeships in England when adjusted for population. (Center on American Progress)

What is the Fix?

Colleges should be doing a lot more to help, and here are some suggestions:

- *Colleges should provide career counseling and job search training starting on <u>day one</u>.*

- *Staff career services with <u>professionals who know</u> something about <u>the job market</u>.*

- *Improve outreach to the <u>small/medium employer market</u>.*

- *<u>Use technology</u> to bring students and potential employers together—e.g., virtual career fairs and video interviewing technology to schedule interview days for employers.*

- *<u>Enlist alumni</u> to assist, as many will be working for small and medium employers.*

- *Create <u>internship opportunities</u> for undergrads.*

- *<u>Evaluate colleges</u> based on published job placement statistics.*

- *Be open to innovative <u>third-party intermediaries</u> who know how to connect new grads and hiring companies.*

College Assessment Tool
Career Guidance

Traditional Two points	Darwinism Four points	Equal Treatment Six points	Strategic Eight points	Proactive Ten points
The Career Placement Center is a pretty simple operation where students get assistance in finding on-campus part-time jobs and meeting corporate recruiters when they come on campus. No one believes that the center is very helpful in finding a career related job. _____ There are several workshops available annually to help students prepare resumes and conduct mock interviews. The workshops fill quickly. _____ We don't have the staff to set up internships or even help find summer jobs. The center is pretty much a 9-month operation. Students use apps to do their job searches. _____ Other than landing a job through college scheduled interviews, most students are on their own after they graduate. _____ Job openings and on-campus recruiter information is typically posted on an electronic job board. Seniors are restricted to making appointments with only three companies each semester. _____ No information is collected to determine placement percentage of our graduates or satisfaction of employers with our graduates.	Our Career Placement department is very active. We have a variety of programs and courses available to help students get the information they decide is necessary to be successful. _____ In our environment, "You snooze, you lose." That means that we get our students everything they need, but they have to take the initiative and tell us what it is. _____ We have a terrific job fair program where some of the best national and regional firms come to our campus. However, the large number of graduating students makes it difficult to get more than one or two campus interviews. _____ Most of our students can get their summer internships through personal and family contacts. We're OK with the concept that summers are a time for travel and rest and don't encourage our students to apply for internships. _____ We don't worry about freshmen and sophomores changing their majors several times. It is a normal part of the exploration process. _____ Our college's reputation for excellence is the best career placement tool.	We put a lot of attention into helping our freshmen understand what opportunities each major degree provides. Our freshmen "survival" classes are mandated for all first-year students. They learn about career opportunities for each major degree and what is required academically to be successful. _____ During the "survival" classes, students take self-assessment tests and frequently visit local employers and faculty workshops where career information is provided. _____ We have an active summer internship placement program. Our alumni are aggressively active in providing summer (some paid) internships so that every student who applies can be accommodated. _____ The Career Center actively advises all students from freshmen to graduating seniors to make certain that career guidance is provided. Students are required to take resume preparation classes and mock job interviews. _____ We have not been able to place all students after they graduate. Since we don't track them, we assume that everyone either eventually gets a job or continues to grad school.	Many of our students come from low-income families and need our assistance to prepare for professional careers. We work closely with students that may need a little extra "polishing". This includes lessons in social etiquette, office protocols and work place dress standards. _____ We target high need students to make certain they obtain paid summer internships. They are matched with alumni who mentor them at their workplace. Most of our degrees require internships to graduate. _____ Students that participate in the Career Placement special programs persist and graduate at higher rates than previously recorded before the program was started. _____ We do a good job of championing our successful alumni. They let us know when a career achievement has been reached—e.g., promotion. We send a quarterly career oriented magazine to motivate our students that include alumni achievements. _____ We know our freshmen and what they need to do to graduate and get into a great career. We track and work with all of our students and later after they graduate to evaluate how they are doing.	The Career Placement Center believes that it is fundamental to the curriculum and the degree attainment process. _____ Freshman are profiled using personality assessment tools. We look for and guide students that may enjoy careers in high demand areas—e.g., STEM. _____ We track student progress as they investigate majors and provide coaching assistance as they seek information related to career opportunities. _____ Our college is heavily committed to integrate academics with internship experiences. Some students take a semester to obtain work skills although most students participate in summer internships. _____ Our students often need assistance in developing professional behavior skills that we provide through workshops. _____ Our alumni volunteer to help students gain experiences in new settings, often hosting a summer intern in their home. _____ Our retention and job placement rates are well above national norms.

Summary of College Created Barriers

- Inadequate Curriculum Strategies—Particularly for Academically Unprepared Students

- Inaccurate or Subjective Placement Exams

- Developmental Programs and Remedial Classes That Don't Work

- Passive Advising—Waiting Too Long to Assist Students in Academic Trouble

- Course Scheduling and Nontraditional Support Services Not Meeting the Needs of All Students

- Not Effectively Using Alternative Educational Modes of Instruction—on-line curriculum, internships, "stretch" classes

- Avoiding Cohort or Block Class Schedules That Would Reduce Time and Resource Wastage

- Availability of Classes—On-time Graduation Delayed

- Lack of Seamless Cooperation Between High Schools and Colleges

- Lack of Internships and "Workships" for Academic and Vocational Students

Summary of College Created Barriers (cont.)

- College is not Relevant to Students' Objectives—"Getting a job!" or Poor Student-to-Institutional Fit
  - Too academic and not "hands-on"—even in non-vocational disciplines
  - Unable to timely select a degree objective
  - frequently changes degrees resulting in wasted financial aid needed to graduate
- Lost credits when transferring between colleges
- Lack of structure to help students adapt socially, plan financially, pick degree majors properly and schedule classes strategically.
- Confusing Campus Processes and Unfriendly Environments for First-year Students
- Poorly Structured Learning Environment to Facilitate First-Year Students Success

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Score Sheet Summary Results

Ten high-impact control functions were presented as being viable areas for colleges to focus on for helping students succeed and graduate on time. To compile aggregated values from the completed College Assessment Tools, record scores from each of the ten preceding control points on the score sheet below. It is important to note that it is rare for a college to score all ten areas higher than the norm of 5 points. Remember, the point of this exercise is not to justify your current performance level, but to identify areas where focused improvement can result in higher student retention and graduation rates. Total the points and then review the interpretive narrative that follows.

Accumulative Score Sheet
College Assessment Tool
Student Retention and Graduation Rate Efforts

Control-Point Focus Area	2 pts	4 pts	6 pts	8 pts	10 pts
Institutional Research—Using Data to Improve Student Retention					
Predictive Modeling—Setting the Stage for Institutional Equilibrium					
Enrollment Management—Aligning the Institution for Success					
Financial Planning—Preparing Students for a Long-term Commitment					
Proactive Advising—Preempting Student Failure					
Curriculum Scheduling and Registration—Charting a Course for On-time Graduation					
Faculty Influence—Supporting a Culture of Academic Success					
Student Life—Creating a Success Environment					
Integrating the Non-traditional—"Ghost" Students					
Career Guidance—Supporting Degree Objectives					
Subtotal for Each Column					

Total Score _____

Bonus Points

Many colleges have implemented retention oriented best practices even when the overall philosophy may be oriented more towards processing students—e.g., enrollments, class scheduling, residential and parking, maintaining tutorial and library services, etc. The allocation of resources to address student needs, even if not proactively administered or available to all students, is an attempt to provide institutional assistance. Supporting retention related best-practices does matter regardless of the overall philosophy or resource and student support culture limitations at a college. Therefore, the above scores can be modified (up to ten "bonus" points) by identifying college practices that have implemented student support practices/resources to help their students succeed.

Retention Activities Currently Practiced at Selected College—Bonus Points

	Point
Community Learning Groups with assigned faculty mentors	
First-year experience program	
EOPS (Equal Opportunity Post-Secondary) programs	
Math, Engineering and Science (STEM) programs for minorities (MESA)	
Faculty mentoring programs	
Alumni mentoring	
Summer internships	
Milestone recognition events—before graduation	
Exit interviews for stop-out freshmen with follow-up procedures	
Division, program, course, instructor success indicators	
Regular review of success statistics by instructor, department, division, college-wide	
One-stop Center	
On-line advising and degree planning	
On-time financial aid awarding/distribution and budget planning	
Family orientation-including the development of a freshman to graduation budget	
Proactive advising vs. drop-in services for tutorial and assistance	
Mandatory daily attendance (on-line) with faculty follow-up	
Degree audit program with a target for number of credits to completion of degree	
List other programs or activities as appropriate	
-	
-	
Total bonus points not to exceed 10 points	
Add points from Self-Assessment Total	
TOTAL SCORE	

Interpreting Total Scores

Status Quo and Educational Darwinism

Total scores that fall below 40 points (Status Quo and Educational Darwinism) suggest that institutional processes dealing with volume related issues take precedence over a college's ability to respond to the individual needs of the students, particularly high-risk students. Students can still have a positive college experience, but at-risk students are often left to find extra support services on their own—even when remedial and tutorial programs are offered.

Equity Access and Services Available to All Students

Scores ranging between 40 and 60 (Equal Treatment) indicates that a college is already accomplishing many student retention efforts and is poised to move to the next level of performance. This should be considered positive evidence that the college is embracing a culture that wants to balance access with student success. Any of the ten areas that scored less than five points should be considered for improvement first. By focusing on the weaker areas, the college should be able to improve retention rates.

Interpreting Total Scores

Strategic and Proactive Colleges

Accumulated scores of 60 points or higher (Strategic Intervention and Proactive Colleges) signifies that a college is strongly oriented towards anticipating and meeting students' needs. The institution's opportunity for maintaining and improving graduation rates is high. Rather than spreading resources widely, colleges in this range typically look for the big impact or high return on investment opportunities. Taking into account which students can be successfully assisted to graduate on time, and then willingly committing resources (time and funds) to meet admitted students' needs, is what differentiates this category of colleges.

Implementing the C-PAM Model

Review (see Institutional Research)

- Analyzing system-steps to determine what's working, or not by using Deming's and Juran's quality-control model:

  - Breaking processes into measurable building blocks with targeted objectives; and

  - Quantifying performance against measurable standards—Control-Point Accountability Measurement (C-PAM) model.

- Assigning accountability to individuals.

  - NYC

Control-Point Accountability Measurement (C-PAM) Model

To implement the C-PAM model six sequential steps must be followed:

- Step #1 — Identify Control Points – Outcome Indicators;

- Step #2 — Define and Benchmark Success Indicators;

- Step #3 — Strategic Planning and Establishing Targets;

- Step #4 — Closing the Performance Gap – Developing Action Plans;

- Step #5 — Assign Accountability; and

- Step #6 — Monitor and Analyze Results.

C-PAM Success Matrix
Career Guidance

C-PAM Success Matrix Career Guidance					
Goal is to improve institutional graduation rates by providing career preparation activities that links students understanding of how obtaining a degree will facilitate their career objectives					
Control Points and *Success Indicators*	**Benchmark**	**Year 1 Target**	**Year 1 Results**	**Long Range Target**	**Accountability Assignment**
Degree/Career Alignment					
– *#/% of freshman that did not persist that had at least one contact with the career center*					
– *#/% of freshman that did persist that had at least one contact with the career center*					
– *#/% of degree programs with internship programs established*					
– *% of students (by academic year) that have completed the career profile assessment*					
Workplace Readiness					
– *% of students (by academic year) that are participating in a work-ready programs*					
– *% of students (by academic year) that are participating in an internship* – *paid* – *credits earned*					
– *% of students assigned an alumni career mentor*					
Career Placement Tracking					
- *% of internships resulting in full-time employment*					
- *% of graduated students that obtained their first post-graduating degree related job—within six months of graduating*					
- *% of above students that worked with the career center in their search process*					

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Conclusion

The colleges capable of understanding the difference between just providing services and proactive interaction, and are willing to implement changes that creates a more active partnership with their students, will survive and move ahead of the competition.

Question and Thoughts?

For more information about Finish-in-Four strategies check out the web site—finishinfour.com.

and

watch for the book, <u>Finish-in-Four: Why Students Don't Graduate and How to Fix It (working title)</u>, publishing pending, Austin McCauley, N.Y., 2018.

College Assessment Tool/Questionnaire

The following is the institutional research College Assessment Tool that describes five progressive levels of college-based commitments to improve student retention by using research to anticipate future students' needs and establish more effective support programs. After reviewing each profile column, select the description that best exemplifies the college you are evaluating. Each college scenario represents a progressively proactive campus culture. For instance, beginning from the left ("traditional") college that is more laisse faire, passive, or "build it and they will come." Each college to the right represents increasingly aggressive, proactive or customized approaches towards working with students. Don't select the college style that just offers services to the college you are comparing but is also most descriptive of how the faculty and staff interact with their students. Match at the selected college's culture as well as the types of services it provides.

If it is determined that there is a blending of two adjoining styles, split the difference and note the average score.

After you have selected the most appropriate college style, note the score (2 to 10) on the score sheet on the last page.

Partial College Assessment Tool
Key Student Success Areas

Traditional Two points	Darwinism Four points	Equal Treatment Six points	Strategic Eight points	Proactive College Ten points
Institutional Research				
We don't use research to analyze the college's students or institutional effectiveness. We focus primarily on getting students registered and into class. We take pride in our ability to make the college accessible to all students. _____ We have the typical array of remedial and tutorial programs at our college. We believe that we are addressing students' needs, although we have not analyzed what is working or not.	We find that major milestone indicators such as freshmen persistence and graduation rates provide adequate milestone benchmarks for assessing institutional effectiveness. _____ We don't believe there are any patterns of student behavior or college readiness that merit developing strategic initiatives. There are too many variables that impact students' decision to stay and graduate to categorize and develop customized responses.	We use historical data to assess which students are likely to have difficulty at our college. Developing "at-risk" profiles is helpful in determining what services and advising initiatives will be needed to assist students. _____ While we try to incorporate data metrics into our strategic planning process, we don't typically measure whether action plans and program changes have been effective.	Data driven decisions are important at our college. The data base we have developed encompasses all elements of student experiences—e.g., recruitment, admission, academic, financial, social and career preparation and placement. This provides the data to develop definitive parameters that can be used for creating predictive models. _____ We are using data metrics not only to improve operational effectiveness, but also to customize support for "acceptable risk" students and students that become at-risk after they enroll.	Our college has embraced data collection and use to a significant degree. While we have an institutional researcher, the users (e.g., department heads) have been educated to develop their own data driven reports to assess students, faculty and department operational effectiveness. _____ We believe that data is effective for helping faculty and staff to be innovative by providing clues or "trail-head" indicators for what is happening on campus. Data driven assessments and initiatives have been accepted because the metrics are used to help set standards, not dictate how standards are to be met.
Predictive Modeling				

Our efforts are directed towards finding new students to replace graduates and non-persisting freshmen. I don't remember if we have ever stopped and evaluated our retention, remedial or graduation results using numeric indicators. _____ We do regular strategic planning at our college, but don't assign responsibility for change or set numeric outcome expectations.	We believe that students' success is important and have established all the requisite student retention programs needed to help students. The effectiveness of these programs is never questioned nor are results measured. _____ It's not that there is an aversion to data, but the professional educators believe that experience and intuitive decision making provides better results than trying to push number driven processes into a change resistant culture.	We don't take the time to predefine at-risk students before they enroll because we consider them all to be ready for college. _____ Use of statistical information tends to focus on macro or organization-wide assessments (e.g., graduation rates, freshmen persistence rates, average SAT scores for freshmen class, etc.) and less on evaluating individual student or departmental retention issues.	Profiling admitted freshmen using quantifiable at-risk indicators is critical for program planning purposes. _____ Our college believes that data mining to predict student needs, monitor student behavior for intervention (in and outside the classroom) and to assess institutional performance is critical to student success.	Target expectations are quantified and progress towards improving retention related control points are communicated to the college's faculty, staff and students regularly. _____ Our college only enrolls freshmen that are college ready or are believed to be "acceptable-risk" students. Resources are dedicated to support certain categories of formerly at-risk students. The college will not enroll students that cannot be supported by the college.

Recruitment and Admissions

Our college has more students than available seats. Overflowing and perhaps underfunded. Recruiting more students is unlikely. _____ Our college's only focus is how to handle an overwhelming herd of new students each year. We are funded for seats filled, not for graduating them. _____ Many students don't fit the traditional student profile which makes using metrics to measure student needs or institutional effectiveness difficult.	Our college's enrollment is relatively easy because of regional/state loyalty, academic reputation, or strong alumni/family feeder population. _____ Our marketing image is based on positive factors like a winning athletic program, a fun Greek system, several highly-regarded faculty researchers, and many successful graduates. _____ While our student graduation rates are average, we are not concerned about replacing drop-outs because there seems to be an unlimited pool of prospective students.	Our college has a good student retention program, but recruiting is not connected to retention efforts. _____ Once our freshmen class is (admitted), we analyze the aggregate needs of the students and try to build a budget that provides equal access to services for all students. We have not considered building services and then targeting our recruiting to match our support abilities. .	The college annually compares its freshmen persistence rates to its recruitment strategies. _____ Information related to financial aid, the need to be academically ready and our proactive advising policies are communicated to prospective students at high school seminars and via personal web-addresses. This helps prospective students understand that on-time graduation has a high priority at the college.	Our college has a very strong strategic recruitment plan that links retention planning to specific targeted prospects. We focus on targeting and building relationships with high-risk prospects, often not desired by other colleges. We have programs to help them succeed. _____ Before expanding our recruitment to focus on first generation and other typical high-risk students, we determined whether we had the culture and resources to support them. We subsequently expanded the recruitment pool to meet our commitments.

Financial Planning

There are more applications for financial aid processing than we have staff available to provide one-on-one advising with students. We focus on two issues. Packaging all financial aid awards for distribution before classes begin and assuring that the college is protected against any potential liabilities. _____ It would be correct to state that the financial aid department is more of a processing and regulation compliance center than an advising source for student retention-oriented operation.	Our college develops relationships with local high school students by showing them how to apply for financial aid. We also provide a comprehensive web-site to assist transfer and adult learners as they prepare their FAFSAs (applications) for federal aid. _____ The college believes that each student has the responsibility to assess the adequacy of funding, including remaining financial aid each year. .	Adequate progress is monitored for financial aid students and a review of students' degree plans are conducted at the end of the junior year. Availability of remaining financial aid is not always assessed. _____ We are accessible, have staff to service students in need, but are not overly proactive in anticipating problems or intervening unless asked to by a student to help.	Every student with their family completes an enrollment-to-graduation budget under the direct supervision of a qualified staff assistant, whether financial aid is provided or not. We monitor and cross reference the student budget plan as well as the degree plan at least annually. _____ We direct our limited resources to address the anticipated financial needs of our salvageable high-risk students. Ongoing financial monitoring is provided, and freshmen college survival lectures/classes are mandatory.	Our fundamental philosophy is to verify that each student can obtain a degree without being surprised or stopped because of funding issues. This requires one-on-one counseling before classes begin and continues until graduation. _____ If a student experiences a change in program or an unexpected financial emergency, an assigned mentor is available to work through the problem with the student and family members.

Proactive Advising

Our college is providing many standard functions services and programs (e.g., financial aid, counseling, tutorial assistance, job center) to help students succeed, but do not consider ourselves to be intrusive advisors. We rely on students to ask us for help when they need it. _____ We do not profile "at-risk" students, but we do use college placement testing to identify students that need to take remedial courses. _____ We have a good reputation for making it possible to access our college's programs, but not	Our college is a strong advocate of, "Build it and they will come," advising. Programs for students needing assistance are available if they ask for help. We believe that learning to "take charge" is an important part of the college maturing process. _____ There is not enough staff to be proactive when students exhibit pre-drop-out behavior. Everyone is willing to help, but there is not an organized effort to intervene early when	Our freshmen are assigned to advisors who manage case-loads of between 750 to 1,000 students. Advisors rely on faculty referrals, attendance information and mid-term grades to identify students that may need assistance. It usually takes a semester/term before an at-risk student is identified and assisted. _____ We do better at identifying and helping new at-risk students than finding and supporting students that are	We pride ourselves on the strong data approach we use to analyze students who have succeeded and failed. Accumulated data over time has been helpful in determining what institutional barriers were removed to help students graduate. _____ We target our efforts at high return-on-investment students which is made possible by using the data to anticipate, identify and quickly respond to help students before issues become unresolvable. Our	We know what our students are doing! We achieve success with limited resources by using the swipe card method to determine if students are attending classes, eating regularly at the dining facilities, completing lab projects, spending time in the library and even working and attending the college's social events. _____ An advisor and faculty mentor guide each student until they graduate. A culture of faculty-student partnering often results in life-long relationships.

necessarily for getting to graduate on time.	student exhibit behavior that typically precedes dropping out.	having trouble after they begin classes.	average response time after identifying that a student is in trouble is about five days. .	

Most of our students register on-line using the college's degree requirements and course catalog as a guide. The degree requirements are difficult to understand especially for new students who are not familiar with terms and definitions. Many of our students have difficulty getting their required classes in the sequence needed to graduate on time. _____ While counselors are available to help, students must monitor their own academic progress.	It is hard to know if students take too many courses because most (part-time and full-time) don't graduate on time anyway. The reasons are too numerous or confusing to list or try to resolve. _____ Some students are unable to obtain classes because they are not offered every semester or are filled quickly. It often takes longer to graduate but the practice seems to be normal— so, we don't worry. _____ We believe that to succeed in college, like the real world, you must hustle to make it happen. You snooze, you lose.	Our college is more reactive than proactive when scheduling problems occur. The reality is that we are one semester out of sync when a student self-creates a poor class schedule. _____ We provide class scheduling guidance through degree planning seminars and computerized exception audits. _____ Freshmen and sophomores can take general education courses or declare a major. Most who declare a major before their junior year change their minds at least once— no one minds.	In addition to our computerized degree planning system, and an automated credit audit system that blocks students from taking classes outside the prescribed degree plan, advisors pre-review proposed class schedules via computer and sign-off on all students' class schedules before classes begin. _____ Even students that change majors have little trouble graduating on time because freshmen and sophomores are required to take the general education curriculum. Students explore different options through the elective process without losing credits when the upper division studies begin.	Our college strongly believes that cohort registration, especially for freshmen, creates the best environment for helping freshmen take the correct courses. _____ We require freshmen and sophomores to complete their general education courses before they declare a major. _____ If a student does not graduate within 120 credits, and a change in major has not occurred, the college picks up the excess tuition costs.

A large percentage of our classes are taught by part-time/adjunct faculty or teacher assistants who do not have office hours and typically arrive just before class begins. _____ I feel sorry for our freshmen that build a class schedule without knowing which faculty are best. It takes them time to discover Rate-my-Professor.com to	Our faculty are highly regarded in their fields, but do not teach freshmen classes. Grad students and adjunct (part-time faculty) teach our freshmen/sophomore classes. _____ Students come here for our reputation, not with an expectation that they will get to	We have implemented a first-year experience class that emphasizes college survivor skills. A faculty mentor, some would say "home" teacher, is assigned to the class and tries to be a coach/confidant. _____ Some students have been successful in getting to know	Faculty exhibiting outstanding retention results are recognized at the annual graduation ceremony. Our faculty love their mentoring relationships with students. _____ Full-time faculty are expected to mentor at least one freshman class a year and	Our first-year program incorporates the structured community learning group culture for all, not just high-risk students. _____ All lower division classes are taught by full-time faculty. _____ Once a student has been assigned to a faculty mentor, that relationship is expected to last until

avoid faculty "gate-keeping" pit-falls. _____ We don't monitor grade distribution or ask faculty to meet with students other than office hours. We focus on providing classes, not social networks.	know the faculty or leave with a warm fuzzy feeling with anyone other than roommates.	faculty socially. Usually that occurs after a student picks a major and the declared department organizes meet-and-greet events.	include at least two group social events with them during each term. _____ Students consider the faculty-student culture to be inclusive, informal and highly supportive. It is not unusual for students to maintain communication and relationships with faculty long after they graduate.	graduation. Faculty receive bonuses when their mentored students graduate.

Student Life

from the students' perspective . . .

This school has a large commuter population. The college sponsors social functions like dances and even offers free bus transportation to several athletic events each season. Nobody shows up. Can't figure out why. _____ My classmates are older, many with parental responsibilities. Balance means having the energy at the end of the day to stay awake and prepare for classes. No time to develop relationships with faculty or other students. Life comes first, then studies.	We had an orientation weekend when we heard presentations from faculty and advisors. No one recorded our attendance so a group of us took off after lunch we had a great time hanging out at the park. _____ I may not bother attending all my classes so I can focus on the social scene this semester. No one seems to be paying attention to what I am doing, anyway. _____ So many interesting things to do! I really enjoy the late-night discussions with my roommate and our new friends. It's hard to get up in the morning and attend classes, but college isn't only about study and lectures. Besides, I test best when under pressure and I will do great on exams because I cram well!	It was amazing how many people I met during freshman orientation week. We were broken into groups of 25 and given ample time and opportunities to get to know each other. Unfortunately, I don't see them around campus much so we have quickly become strangers again. _____ Even with lots of people around me, it has been difficult to make new friends. Everyone seems to be working, running families, or just trying to fit college into their lives. We seem to be anxiously lonely together. _____ Wow! This place is really complicated. I am learning to hurry up and wait—lots of process lines. It's a first come, first served kind of place. But, heck, that's equality treatment. No one is special, everyone gets the same service. I think I'm learning the	I am a shy person, but the orientation week made a difference. We continued to meet weekly with small groups led by our "home-class" instructor who also teaches our history class. He and his wife are hosting dinner at their home this weekend. We'll all be there, together! _____ All freshmen participated in a personality/behavior profile session during first-year-experience classes. We sometimes wear buttons that identify our profiles on campus so we can meet other people—it's a great conversation starter. _____ My roommate was not showing up and someone came to talk to her. She seems to be enjoying herself now that she is more active. I'm glad someone was watching her.	During our week-long orientation program, we were organized into community learning groups. My learning group mentor and her spouse have already invited us to a bowling, and pizza evening. More events scheduled. _____ I am extroverted and sometimes get too socially involved; forgetting I'm here to study. Fortunately, my mentor and college advisor assigned to me are helping improve my study habits. All is good _____ In the beginning, my faculty mentor would check in with me regularly. Everyone here seems to know what I am doing and really cares that I am OK and doing well. I feel connected while also being given the room I need to explore and learn on my own.

		definition of bureaucracy--patience.		

Non-Traditional Students

From the students' perspective . . .

My college has a mix of residential full-time students and commuter enrollments. Most of the commuters are evening, part-time and transfer students who work full-time. _____ Our college could be described as "bi-polar." The college operates to serve the full-time day students. The evening program is comprised of part-time faculty with few support services. _____ Common complaints from my friends include lack of parking, no evening child care, no office hours after 5:00 p.m. M-F, lost credits when transferring, too many holidays and too few courses during the evenings and summer.	My college doesn't cater to older students' social life. Many of my friends are commuter students with personal lives separate from the college's student life programs. They are disconnected. _____ To complete my degree, I must take some classes during the day because they are not offered in the evenings or weekends. This creates a problem if I cannot find on-line alternatives. Even then, I can only take a few credits outside my college to meet my degree requirements. _____ I wish I had gone to college right out of high school. The staff and faculty are nice, just not available to students like me. They go home while I'm just starting my evenings on campus. It's very lonely and hard.	My college makes an effort to provide all services to full-time and part-time students—day and evening. While the effort is appreciated, sometimes I wish that we part-time students could receive different kinds and levels of support—e.g., financial aid, evening child care, special weekend tutorials and labs, etc. _____ The social scene at campus is geared for the younger students. I can't imagine me or my friends showing up on campus with the "little-ones." _____ As a night student, I don't have any faculty that have evening office hours. Some part-time faculty come early to meet with students, but they don't know much more than us.	To accommodate working adults, my college developed a flexible fast track program that assures day and evening students get the same services, courses and schedules. Traditional winter/summer gaps have been eliminated making year-round learning a reality and early degree completion the norm. _____ Non-traditional students are clustered during their first term into groups to help develop supportive networks of peers. This has been particularly popular with single-parents, working students and part-time commuters.	I participated in an orientation program even though I had already completed my associate degree. I especially appreciated the one-on-one counseling session where my degree plan, financial aid and personal interests were discussed. _____ Even though I am only taking courses part-time, I will be meeting with some other students that started here as freshmen for dinner at my department dean's home next weekend. My spouse was also invited. _____ Students can get a degree by taking classes at night and weekends. The college offers "fast-track" degrees—completing four years of college in three years.

Career Guidance

The Career Placement Center is a pretty simple operation where students get assistance in finding on-campus part-time jobs and meeting corporate recruiters when they come on campus. No one believes that the center is very helpful in finding a career related job. _____ There are several workshops available annually to help students prepare resumes and conduct mock interviews. The workshops fill quickly.	We have a terrific job fair program where some of the best national and regional firms come to our campus. However, the large number of graduating students makes it difficult to get more than one or two campus interviews. _____ Most of our students can get their summer internships through personal and family contacts. We're OK with the concept that summers are a time for	Our freshmen "survival" classes are mandated for all first-year students. They learn about career opportunities for each major degree and what is required academically to be successful. _____ The Career Center actively advises all students from freshmen to graduating seniors to make certain that career guidance is provided. Students are	We know our freshmen and what they need to do to graduate and get into a great career. We track and work with all of our students and later after they graduate to evaluate how they are doing. _____ We work closely with students that may need a little extra "polishing". This includes lessons in social etiquette, office protocols and work place dress standards. _____	Freshman are profiled using personality assessment tools. We look for and guide students that may enjoy careers in high demand areas—e.g., STEM. _____ We track student progress as they investigate majors and provide coaching assistance as they seek information related to career opportunities. _____ Our college is heavily committed to integrate academics with internship experiences. Some students take a semester to

_____ We don't have the staff to set up internships or even help find summer jobs. The center is pretty much a 9-month operation. Students use apps to do their job searches.	travel and rest and don't encourage our students to apply for internships. _____ We don't worry about freshmen and sophomores changing their majors several times. It is a normal part of the exploration process.	required to take resume preparation classes and mock job interviews. _____ We have not been able to place all students after they graduate. Since we don't track them, we assume that everyone either eventually gets a job or continues to grad school.	We target high need students to make certain they obtain paid summer internships. They are matched with alumni who mentor them at their workplace. Most of our degrees require internships to graduate.	obtain work skills although most students participate in summer internships.

Analyzing the College Self-Assessment Scores

When comparing scores for each of the ten areas, it can be expected that a college would have a mix of high (proactive), average (equal treatment) and low (traditional) retention scores. However, the accumulative score for the ten high impact topics should also provide an accurate estimate of how supportive a college's overall culture is for maintaining and improving student retention.

Below is the tool summary score sheet on which each control-point score can be tallied. An interpretive analysis of aggregate scores that profiles college readiness for improving student success initiatives is also provided. The critical component of this process is not just to evaluate the selected college's overall retention capabilities as determined by an accumulated score, but to identify which of the ten assessed areas have the greatest promise for improving students' persistence and graduation rates. Even colleges with relatively high scores should find the tool helpful in determining which areas can be strengthened to provide continued positive student success results.

Score Sheet Summary Results

Ten student retention topics were presented as being viable areas for colleges to help students succeed and graduate on time. To compile aggregated values from the completed College Assessment Tools, record scores from each of the ten preceding assessment tools on the score sheet below. It is important to note that it is rare for a college to score all ten areas higher than the norm of 5 points. Remember, the point of this exercise is not to justify your current performance level, but to identify areas where focused improvement can result in higher student retention and graduation rates. Total the points and then review the interpretive narrative that follows.

<div align="center">

Accumulative Score Sheet
College Assessment Tool
Student Retention and Graduation Rate Efforts

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Control-Point Focus Area	2 pts	4 pts	6 pts	8 pts	10 pts
1. Institutional Research—Using Data to Improve Student Retention					
2. Predictive Modeling—Setting the Stage for Institutional Equilibrium					
3. Enrollment Management—Aligning the Institution for Success					
4. Financial Planning—Preparing Students for a Long-term Commitment					
5. Proactive Advising—Preempting Student Failure					

6. Curriculum Scheduling and Registration—Charting a Course for On-time Graduation					
7. Faculty Influence—Supporting a Culture of Academic Success					
8. Student Life—Creating a Success Environment					
9. Integrating the Non-traditional—"Ghost" Students					
10. Career Guidance—Supporting Degree Objectives					
Subtotal for Each Column					

Total Score _____

College Assessment Tool – Bonus Points

Many colleges have implemented retention oriented best practices even when the overall philosophy may be oriented more towards processing students—e.g., enrollments, class scheduling, residential and parking, maintaining tutorial and library services, etc. The allocation of resources to address student needs, even if not proactively administered or available to all students, is an attempt to provide institutional assistance. Supporting retention related best-practices does matter regardless of the overall philosophy or resource and student support culture limitations at a college. Therefore, the above scores can be modified (up to ten "bonus" points) by identifying college practices that have implemented student support practices/resources to help their students succeed.

Following is a sample list of student retention practices that have been successfully implemented at other colleges. From the list below, identify any practices that are also in place at the selected college or add to the list if appropriate. Claim one bonus point for each program that the selected college has incorporated into its student management program up to a maximum total of ten points.

After identifying actual institutional retention initiatives and programs that meet the five step criteria above, total the number of programs--up to ten points. Adjust the total number of points on the College Assessment Tool on the summary score sheet below.

College Assessment Tool
Retention Bonus Points

Retention Activity Currently Practiced at College	Point
Community Learning Groups with assigned faculty mentors	
First-year experience program	
EOPS (Equal Opportunity Post-Secondary) programs	
Math, Engineering and Science (STEM) programs for minorities (MESA)	
Faculty mentoring programs	
Alumni mentoring	
Summer internships	
Milestone recognition events—before graduation	
Exit interviews for stop-out freshmen with follow-up procedures	
Division, program, course, instructor success indicators	
Regular review of success statistics by instructor, department, division, college-wide	
One-stop Center	
On-line advising and degree planning	
On-time financial aid awarding/distribution and budget planning	
Family orientation-including the development of a freshman to graduation budget	
Proactive advising vs. drop-in services for tutorial and assistance	
Mandatory daily attendance (on-line) with faculty follow-up	
Degree audit program with a target for number of credits to completion of degree	
List other programs or activities as appropriate	
-	
-	
Total bonus points not to exceed 10 points	
Add points from Self-Assessment Total Above	
TOTAL SCORE	

The purpose of the accumulated scores is not to identify colleges that may have weak student retention programs, but what efforts would be required to shift towards a stronger student retention oriented culture. There may be excellent reasons why improving student support programs are not desired or possible—e.g., lack of resources, already high graduation rates, other priorities, resistant faculty or staff to change, satisfied with the current environment, etc.

The following are general interpretations of the scores generated by the College Assessment Tool.

Interpretation of Scores

Status Quo and Educational Darwinism

Total scores that fall below 40 points (Status Quo and Educational Darwinism) suggest that institutional processes dealing with volume related issues take precedence over a college's ability to respond to the individual needs of the students, particularly high-risk students. Students can still have a positive college experience, but at-risk students are often left to find extra support services on their own—even when remedial and tutorial programs are offered.

While colleges in this category are often large and perhaps open admission institutions with a substantial number of commuter-students—many with short duration commitments ("just passing through"). These institutions can also have select admissions standards where student competition is high but personalized mentoring is the exception. This category is not a reflection of academic excellence. Many academically outstanding flag-ship colleges and universities fall into this category. Colleges that foster a survival of the fittest culture, sometimes seen in small exclusive educational settings, also can be considered Darwinist and relatively unsupportive towards students' needs.

The (Status Quo) category of institution is not likely to dramatically improve its retention rates unless motivated by (external) factors that impact a college's (fiscal) survival or perhaps negatively impacts its reputation. Many institutions in this category believe they are student oriented because substantial resources have been dedicated to fund support activities. The difference is that these programs rely on students' initiative to seek them out and less on proactive or anticipatory institutional efforts to help at-risk students succeed. There is also little or no effort to evaluate whether the offered programs are making a difference.

Institutional change can best be accomplished by proving, through quantitative analysis, that there are broken processes and activities that negatively impacts graduation rates--e.g., poorly implemented remedial programs. Once a college accepts that improvement is desirable and can be measured by using quantifiable indicators, control points can be identified and used to hold individuals accountable for success—e.g., C-PAM model. Proving that there may be some college processes that are broken is politically dangerous, but a necessary motivator to neutralize the "culture keepers." This is especially true when change is attempted in institutions that believe process (access) over completion (student success) is the prime objective.

Equity Access and Services Available to All Students

Scores ranging between 40 and 60 (Equal Treatment) indicates that a college is already accomplishing many student retention efforts and is poised to move to the next level of performance. This should be considered positive evidence that the college is embracing a culture that wants to balance access with student success. Any of the ten areas that scored less than five points should be considered for improvement first. By focusing on the weaker areas, the college should be able to improve retention rates.

The term equal treatment is used because scores indicate that the college may have chosen to make its programs available to all students, not focusing resources on selected high-risk students.

If resources are finite, this approach may dilute the efforts to help at-risk student populations. Colleges in this category may consider shifting to a more proactive advising and intervention strategy that aggressively seeks out students most likely to drop out.

Scoring in this range also suggests that staff and faculty are ready to improve performance, but need evidence of what is not working. The control-point accountability measurement (C-PAM) model should be used to provide this information. Utilize the C-PAM model to motivate movement, quantify/define success and to help maintain a long-term momentum towards improving student retention.

Strategic and Proactive Colleges

Accumulated scores of 60 points or higher (Strategic Intervention and Proactive Colleges) signifies that a college is strongly oriented towards anticipating and meeting students' needs. The institution's opportunity for maintaining and improving graduation rates is high. Rather than spreading resources widely, colleges in this range typically look for the big impact or high return on investment opportunities. Taking into account which students can be successfully assisted to graduate on time, and then willingly committing resources (time and funds) to meet admitted students' needs, is what differentiates this category of colleges.

Some high retention colleges restrict enrollment of low risk students—accepting only top tier applicants. These are not the colleges that would merit high retention rankings when using the ten-chapter College Assessment Tool process. The champions in these higher self-assessment categories understand that admitting and graduating at-risk students is not a retention problem if proper planning and a willingness to proactively work with students before they get into academic trouble is achieved.

Colleges in this range (60 to 100 points) rarely need internal motivation for successful student retention efforts. These colleges are already motivated. Colleges that rank high on the College Assessment Tool are successfully intervening and assisting high risk students to achieve their goal(s). It's not about being the best in overall graduation rates that counts, but rather being the best at improving students' ability to succeed. Especially when compared to peer colleges that may treat at-risk students as "collateral damage"—i.e., freshmen needed to fill seats (and pay tuition) but not expected to persist past their first year.

Review each of the ten categories and note area scores that fall below five points. The lower scores identify areas where stronger efforts would provide the greatest return on resource (time and funding) investment.

Summary

This self-test is an excellent way for college stake holders do an evaluation of their institution. Staff, faculty and students may complete the College Assessment Tool. Obtaining input on what is believed could be improved can be based on:
- information provided in chapter (4 through 13) introductions;
- experiences and institutional processes that have proven to be helpful or hurtful to students' success; and

- what is known about other colleges that have implemented best practices in their strategic plans that resulted in improved student retention.

The College Assessment Tool can also work for families attempting to evaluate prospective colleges. Looking at colleges from ten different angles (recruitment-to-graduation) takes some of the mystique out of selecting a college. Parents and new students often comment about how difficult it is to understand the mechanics behind the "academics" when trying to figure out which college would be best. As Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz discovered, looking behind the curtain is very revealing. Discovering what is important helps to make the selection of a college more rational and less image or feelings oriented.

This chapter concludes the College Assessment Tool that has been presented in chapters 4 through 13 and was used as a means of comparing five college scenarios related to retention oriented practices and philosophies. Many colleges have found it useful to complete the tool every 6 to 12 months as an overview indicator of progress. Using the College Assessment Tool should be considered a high altitude "fly-by"; a determination of what is culturally considered important, but not used as a prescriptive determination of what is missing or should be improved. That should occur when using the C-PAM model.

The C-PAM model should be used to quantitatively analyze specific control points and supporting success indicators to help improve a college's enrollment management efforts. As noted, the College Assessment Tool's ranking of colleges depended on whether the institution's cultural emphasis was operational (getting students enrolled—access) as opposed to helping at-risk students graduate on time (student success). Obviously, both access and student success are important, but for retention purposes, the latter is prime.