

BEST PRACTICES FOR STUDENT RETENTION PROGRAMS

As competition between college and universities increases, keeping students happy and enrolled is more important than ever. Student attrition can have significant repercussions on campus life and the financial stability of an institution. To effectively increase retention rates, institutions must implement proactive programs to improve student experience during matriculation and throughout their time on campus.

THE COST OF ATTRITION

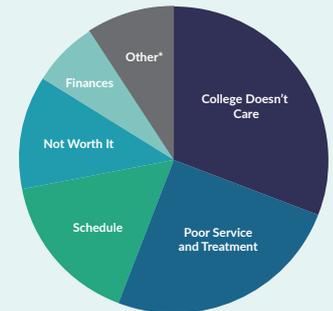
A study of 1,669 colleges and universities in the U.S. estimates student attrition is responsible for collective revenue losses of around \$16.5 billion per year. Publicly assisted universities averaged \$13.3 million per year in lost revenue, with private colleges / universities averaging \$8.3 million in losses per year.

WHY STUDENTS LEAVE

The four major reasons for student departure, accounting for 84% of all attrition, are:

1. College doesn't care,
2. Poor service and treatment,
3. Not worth it,
4. Schedule (not able to find courses)

REASONS WHY STUDENTS LEAVE HIGHER EDUCATION



RETENTION PROGRAMS

To effectively improve retention rates, universities and colleges must directly address the top two drivers of student departure – the perception that the institution does not care and students feel that they are receiving poor service or treatment. ACT reports that the highest rates of student departures occur during the first year of school, with a national average retention rate of **55% from first to second-year**. Therefore, effective programming around retention should begin as early as possible in the student's life cycle and focus on improving the student experience and providing students with strong support systems.

Key factors for successful retention programs include being:

1. STUDENT-CENTERED:

Ask students what they think they need before you build a program.

2. SOCIAL:

Promote active involvement and social integration. Often times, sociocultural acclimation is more difficult for students than the academic transition.

3. PROACTIVE:

Involve students as early as possible, before the students encounter problems that need reactive intervention.

4. INCLUSIVE:

Reach out to students and directly engage them to increase the benefits of the program. The more students that participate, the larger the impact will be.

5. PERSONALIZED:

Tailor or customize the program to meet the distinctive needs of each student. Recognize the students as individuals and make them feel significant.

6. COMPREHENSIVE:

Focus on the student entire experience by addressing both academic and non-academic factors affecting their success.

7. ONGOING:

Different challenges emerge at different stages of the college experience. Deliver a continuous program that provides students ongoing support.

8. DURABLE:

According to the "BIG PICTURE" you should build the program into the structure and annual budget of the institution. This ensures that the program has longevity and engages the entire student body.

9. COLLABORATIVE:

Cooperate and form alliances with different organizational units of the college. This increases the program's capacity and creates broad institutional support.

10. DATA-DRIVEN:

Use quantitative and qualitative data to prove program impact and value. More importantly, a data-driven approach enables continual improvement of program quality.

PRODUCED BY:



WEBPAGE:

www.shearwaterintl.com

AUTHORS:

Micajah Dudley
Program Development
micajah.dudley@shearwaterintl.com

James Lu Morrissey
Managing Director
james@shearwaterintl.com

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