

Retention Best Practices for Oregon Community Colleges

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Adapted from the Retention Best Practices Glossary (2004) developed by: Jem Spectar, Provost, Western Oregon University, Linda Reisser, Dean of Student Development, Portland Community College (Cascade Campus), and Diane Watson, Dean of Student Services, Linn-Benton Community College.

1. CURRICULAR INITIATIVES

_____ 1. A. *Learning Communities/Cohort Groups*

Examples: (1) classes designed for a cohort group in order to build supportive relationships within a particular program; (2) two or more classes linked by major or content, and planned collaboratively.

_____ 1. B. *First Term or First Year Experience*

Expanded orientation, or courses on college success offered throughout the first year.

_____ 1. C. *Embedding Study Skills in Specific Courses*

Study skills (note taking skills, test taking techniques, etc.) are integrated into classes, particularly those that have lower success rates.

_____ 1. D. *Curricular Innovations/Faculty Development*

Faculty are supported in designing curricular initiatives that increase student engagement and persistence. Faculty are encouraged to engage in professional development related to student retention.

_____ 1. E. *Career Pathways*

Career Pathways learning options are offered in an intensive, short-term format (3 or 6 months); they provide assistance and tools needed to make a successful career transition into the job market, and clear maps for returning for additional learning.

_____ 1. F. *Other:*

2. INSTITUTIONAL ASSISTANCE & ACADEMIC INTERVENTIONS

_____ 2. A. *Learning Centers*

Tutoring, writing/reading/math assistance, supplemental instruction, or learning activities are offered in a designated area, and/or online.

_____ 2. B. *Early Warning Systems*

A system of monitoring academic performance, proactively making contact with students in academic difficulty, and offering assistance through a variety of support services.

_____ 2. C. *Mandatory Assessment and Basic Skills Prerequisites*

Placement testing is required in reading, writing, and math for all entering degree-seeking students. Students must meet prerequisites for lower division collegiate transfer courses meeting a general education, distribution area obligation for AS, AAOT, AGS, or AAS degrees.

_____ 2. D. *Summer Bridge Programs*

Proactive assistance preceding the beginning of the school year (e.g., summer orientations, college success courses, brush-up workshops, group advising, community-building events, etc.); especially for "at risk" students.

_____ 2. E. *Developmental Programs*

Developmental programs for students who need additional skill development. Examples: supplemental instruction, tutoring, intensive math preparation, developmental courses in math, writing, reading, writing workshops, ESL courses, study skills sessions, etc.

_____ 2. F. *Other:*

3. STUDENT DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

_____ 3. A. *Mandatory Orientation/Special Workshops for New Students*

All new degree-seeking students are required to attend an orientation to the college. Special workshops are offered on library and technology usage, computer skills, etc.

_____ 3. B. *Mandatory Advising/ Degree Planning*

All new degree-seeking students are required to see an advisor to help them select courses, develop a plan for completing degrees or certificates, and/or a plan for transferring to another institution.

_____ 3. C. *One Stop Enrollment Services*

Enrollment services are located together, so that students can easily access enrollment services at entry. It generally is supported through cross-training.

_____ 3. D. *Peer Mentoring/Tutoring/Advising*

Students are selected, trained and monitored as they take an active part in helping their peers succeed and persist.

_____ 3. E. *Counseling and Support Groups*

Career counseling, personal counseling and referral, support groups, and personal development classes are offered by counselors

_____ 3. F. *Career Exploration/Student Employment Services*

Student access to career counseling, introductory courses or orientations to career/technical programs, and student employment services that assist with job hunting while they are enrolled

_____ 3. G. *Calling Campaigns; Person-to-Person Contact*

A system for contacting students by phone, email, or other means, in order to support their ongoing enrollment, use of campus resources, academic good standing, and success.

_____ 3. H. *Financial Aid Outreach*

Student access to financial aid application assistance through workshops, special events, or individualized assistance; workshops or classes on scholarship applications are offered; proactive strategies are in place to inform students about financial aid resources, eligibility requirements, and materials needed to complete their files.

_____ 3. I. *Other:*

4. CAMPUS CLIMATE

_____ 4. A. *Relationship-building Activities*

Programs that foster positive student relationships with faculty, advisors, staff members, and peers; building a sense of belongingness, motivation, and purpose.

_____ *4. B. Non-traditional Student Support*

Specific initiatives to support students who are “non-traditional” (e.g., returning adults, dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, first generation, etc.).

_____ *4. C. Co-curricular Activities/Student Life*

Leadership programs, clubs, and special events create a positive climate for remaining on campus (e.g., student government, clubs and student organizations, co-curricular activities, student lounges and study spaces, etc.).

_____ *4. D. Faculty Involvement*

Opportunities and rewards are intentionally provided for out-of-class student-faculty contact (e.g., faculty participating in orientation, advising student clubs, service learning, advising/mentoring).

_____ *4. E. Ceremonies, Traditions, and Special Events*

Institutional ceremonies and traditions strengthen communal bonds and deepen connections to the campus (e.g., shared traditions, barbecues, holiday celebrations, festivals, signature events, etc.).

_____ *4. F. Other:*

5. ELECTRONIC AND ONLINE TOOLS

_____ *5. A. Online Student Services*

Services such as admissions, registration, advising, orientation, financial aid information, email communication, etc., are provided online for students, and easy to navigate.

_____ *5. B. Degree Audit*

Students are able to monitor their progress and understand alternative options for degree completion through an online degree audit system.

_____ *5. C. Other:*

6. INSTITUTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ASSESSMENT

_____ *6. A. College-wide Retention Initiatives*

College leaders have made an explicit commitment to monitoring and improving retention; developing related goals, organizing and funding initiatives to attain those goals.

_____ *6.B. Systematic Assessment and Reviews*

Data about students' performance, engagement, satisfaction, etc., are collected, reviewed, organized and disseminated in clear and useful ways. Assessment is used to improve retention practices.

_____ *6.C. Other:*