

RETENTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION: FACULTY AND STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF
RETENTION PROGRAMS AND FACTORS IMPACTING ATTRITION RATES

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine faculty and student perceptions of what factors are contributing to drop-out rates in a Northern Indiana higher educational facility and to study whether or not the drop-out prevention programs that are in place are effective. Survey links were sent out to all adjuncts and some full-time faculty at a local community college. Survey links were also sent out to academic skills advancement students. Results indicated that faculty members are fulfilling their duties as instructors of higher educational facility and are willing to help those students who are in need of support. Results from the first t-test also indicated a disparity in the level to which students and faculty feel that the New Student Orientation is impacting student success as well as a lapse in the quality of academic advisory. Descriptive results indicated that both faculty and students agree that a computer literacy program should be implemented. Based on the results, educators believe that a review of academic advisory plans and an implementation of a computer literacy course along with the current New Student Orientation course must be a mandatory part of a student's academic plan within their first year as a new student. These qualitative and quantitative results provide insight into the impact of retention programs.

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Retention in Higher Education: Faculty and Student Perceptions of Retention Programs and Factors Impacting Attrition Rates

The successes and failures of the citizens in the United States of America are often attributed to, and measured by, the last level of achievement they attained in school. Employers offering job opportunities in more prestigious fields place considerable emphasis on previous education. Therefore, a student's level of education significantly impacts their level of success in the workforce. As of June 2010, unemployment rates have reached 9.6%, a rate which Americans have not seen in decades (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). Due to the staggering increase in the percentage of the labor force that is unemployed, many individuals are currently furthering their education in hopes of becoming more employable. These individuals will need to complete their programs without falling victim to the high attrition rates that schools are reporting today. The latest report from the Integrated Post-secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) tracked the progress of a three year associate degree track cohort at a local community college beginning in 2006. The report found that graduation rates decreased from 10% in 2006 to 8% in 2010 with that particular group (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, 2010). While this local community college has seen an increase in registration of approximately 19% in the last year, there has been an increase in drop-outs, transfers, and failures among students (Office of Institutional Research and Planning, 2010). One difficulty in evaluating retention rates is that it is necessary to distinguish between students that should truly be considered drop-outs and students that had no intention of remaining in an academic program through completion. Nonetheless, the current combination of higher enrollment and higher attrition suggests that schools are failing to adequately retain their students who intend to persist through graduation and raises the issue of identifying possible measures to reverse the current trend.

A possible approach would be to identify the cause of drop-outs and low graduation rates in order to implement an early preventative program that would increase the likelihood of success among more students. If the current low graduation rates are ignored, colleges face loss of funding and employment rates may remain dangerously high. The economy as a whole will continue to stagnate unless Americans are able to successfully complete the programs that will provide them with the skills employers are seeking. Evidence-based dropout prevention programs, if implemented appropriately, could increase graduation rates and help more individuals to succeed in their academic pursuits. Given the time sensitive nature of the poor retention rates in higher education, it is imperative that more attention be given to the types and quality of the preventative programs being implemented and to their level of success in preventing students from dropping out of their programs. To that end, this study examined the following related questions in relation to a specific program currently instituted at a two year community college.

Research Questions

What are faculty and student perceptions regarding the causes of the increase in dropout rates? What are faculty and student perceptions of factors that promote students to maintain their higher educational course track? What are faculty and student perception of the preventative programs in increasing graduation rates and decreasing the amount of drop-outs in higher education programs?

Literature Review

The high rate of dropouts within higher education can be attributed to a myriad of issues including attendance, socioeconomic status, and level of preparation. High dropout rates lead to a decrease in government funding for higher educational facilities and a decrease in the overall

self-motivation within students. Retention rates also contribute to the lack of highly trained and qualified individuals within the workforce. As recently as August 2010, the United States government reported 3.2 million jobs unfilled despite an unemployment rate of 9.6% (Bureau of Labor Statistics). These numbers indicate that there are 14.9 million unemployed Americans who lack the necessary qualifications to fill the available positions. A few months ago, the White House convened a summit on community colleges in hopes of addressing the gap between the skills currently possessed by the unemployed and the skills necessary to obtain one of these 3.2 million unfilled positions (The Washington Post, 2010). This move by the federal government can be expected to bring to the forefront the related issue of retention in higher education. Without improving retention rates in higher education, there will continue to be too few Americans qualified to fill the open positions.

When an individual attains successively higher levels of education, he or she faces a decreased likelihood of being unemployed. In August 2010, Americans age 25 and older experienced unemployment rates of 14% with less than a high school diploma, 10.3% with a high school diploma or equivalent, 8.7% with some college or an associate degree, and 4.6% with a bachelor's degree or higher (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). These statistics underscore the importance of improving retention rates in all institutions of higher education, including community colleges and four-year colleges.

Theories. As the issue of retention is explored in this research, it is important to provide an explanation of the academic theories and language related to retention. There are a variety of theories in relation to the intended meaning of the term “dropout,” and who should wear this label. A dropout is defined by comparing student outcome with student intent. It is only when students leave college before achieving their goals that they should be labeled a dropout

(Hagedorn, 2005). Retention is difficult to measure because distinguishing intent is often challenging.

Terminology. *Higher education* refers to education that is offered through colleges, universities, trade schools, and other facilities that may award degrees and certificates past the high school level. In reference to our research study, the terminology is applied to institutions and programs that serve college students. *Persistence* and *dropping out* are typically defined as two sides of the same coin. Persistence is staying in school until completing a degree or certificate program and dropping out is leaving school prematurely (Hagedorn, 2005). Dropping out is often seen in the field of retention research as a process rather than an event, with factors building and compounding overtime (Hammond, 2007). During our research, we looked at these terms as they relate to those students that are in the position to complete a college degree or certificate. *Attrition rate* is the diminution of students in numbers resulting from low retention rates (Hagedorn, 2005). This term is incorporated in the title of this research, as well as throughout various sections of this report to display the negative impact the increase in dropout rates has on higher education facilities. *Retention rate*, on the other hand, is the measure of students that persist in their academic program (Hagedorn, 2005). Institutions track retention rates to evaluate their success in helping students graduate. All five of the terms these terms will help to clarify the research presented here as research on retention is explored.

Historical Background. Educators have been systematically studying factors impacting retention in education and programs to improve retention rates since the early 1970s. Beginning with the creation of Tinto's Student Integration Model, which suggests that students who become socially integrated within their institution of higher learning are more likely to persist to completion, researchers have been trying to understand what drives student retention and what

institutions can do to improve retention rates (Tinto, 1975). Subsequent research further delved into the psychological state of the student, rather than sociological factors. Students who were identified as possessing strong intent to persist in their educational goals found higher levels of success in completing their degree programs (Bean, 1983). Persistence was found to be most prevalent in students who are actively involved in academic and extracurricular activities (Astin, 1984).

In addition to research on the activities and intentions of the student, there has also been research in the area of retention focused on the educational environment. Retention rates are higher at educational institutions that boast greater interaction between faculty members and students both inside and outside of the classroom (Endo and Harpel, 1982). These institutions created environments where the students felt more connected socially and academically with faculty and peers. When a shared learning environment is established, interpersonal connections blossom and student learning improves (Astin, 1987). As student learning improves, retention rates increase. Tinto has examined this phenomenon more closely in his research on learning communities in colleges. Even in nonresidential educational settings, where students tend to feel more isolation from their peers, learning communities can improve student performance, student persistence and thus, the retention rates of the higher education institutions (Tinto, 1997).

Overall, early research indicates that there is both an environmental and psychological component that must be taken into consideration when assessing retention rates and exploring methods of improvement.

Contemporary Context. More recent research indicates that there are other factors that impact retention rates in higher education and student persistence. Among the many reasons that adults are requiring further education and, thus, returning to school are the need to stay current

with technological advances, retraining due to unemployment rates in one's current field and below academic standard computer literacy skills. These returning students have ample motivation to complete their programs, however, somewhere along the way, they are facing challenges that they are unable to surmount. The direction of recent and ongoing research in retention shows that more specific factors are involved in regards to students dropping out. Goal commitment, demographic variables, social integration, and academic integration are identified as key factors affecting retention. Results often indicate that perception of outside factors, intrinsic motivation, and students' relationships with their instructors showed significant connections with students' levels of retention (Wang and Wu, 2004).

In May of 2006, the first Annual International Student Retention Conference was held in Las Vegas (Retention, 2006). A similar conference, EPI's Fall Retention Retreat, was held in Hilton Head, South Carolina in October of 2006. The purpose of both conferences was to provide evidence-based practices and strategies in higher educational institutions and inform about student tracking and monitoring. The goals of both conferences also included: giving tips on how to promote institutional change; implementation of program planning; strategies for keeping students with disabilities from dropping out, research, evaluation, and impact analysis; and best practices (Swail, 2006). After a discussion of the breadth and complexity of the issues related to student retention at all levels, the committee members decided to limit their initial efforts to the retention of undergraduate students (Improving Retention and Attrition, 2007). Although conference organizers were cautious about identifying a particular program as ideal, the two conferences came to similar conclusions. Both believed that a new student orientation or first year student program should be implemented, taking into consideration the individual institution's demographics, socioeconomic background and key factors in drop-out rates.

In those 2006 conferences, some of the programs that were shown to work in individual higher educational institutions were *Access for Success* and *Gear Up* (Retention 2006: Highlights, 2006). While these programs have been found to work across the nation, there are also programs developed by individual institutions that have found success as recently as 2009. The first year experience (FYE) program has been found to be successful at Western Michigan University (A Comprehensive Report on Retention Rates, 2009).

The *Access for Success* program has been implemented in 20 states and Puerto Rico. These states that are using this program represent 40% of the undergraduate population in the United States. Starting in 2007, the two main goals for this program were to: increase the number of college graduates in their states and to confirm that those graduates represent their states' high school graduates. According to their baseline reports, they have a secondary ongoing goal; to fill in the gaps of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). IPEDS only reports institutional graduation rates. If a student begins at one institution and transfers, then graduating from another institution, they are counted as non-graduates.

Access for Success' data uses many of these students who have fallen through the IPEDS cracks by measuring success throughout the entire system instead of an institution. Students who transfer between institutions within the same system and graduate are included in the data of graduation rate calculations. Therefore, the gaps that have been created by other research can be somewhat filled through their system. The program is essentially trying to close the gaps within access and success. For the 2009-10 school years, *Access for Success* programs are combining with the National Association of System Heads and The Education Trust to complete closing these gaps.

The first strategy is to build system capacity to lead change by using professional development and providing new students with the tools necessary to continue with their education. Secondly, the program will engage and mobilize campuses around data driven critical issues such as socioeconomic background and ethnicity. They will also focus on continuing data within institutions and their enrollment, managing costs and resources. The program will be focused on using enrollment management to increase campus diversity, redesigning curriculum like; developmental math courses, and decreasing degree in-completion. At the end of the school year they plan to reconvene with other educational professionals to decide on best practices for higher education retention (Engle, 2009).

The program, Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Program (*GEAR UP*), has been proven effective by a two year research on the perceptions about eventual graduation from a higher educational institution through their program. Research was done in participating West Virginia schools implementing services to high school students going into a higher educational institution, parents, and students in their first year of undergraduate school. After finding results for the growing dropout rates in America, the *GEAR UP* program decided to provide services such as: college visits, computer-assisted lab times, advising, cultural events, educational field trips, family events, job shadowing, mentoring, tutoring, and workshops for students and parents. The program collected a formal data report quarterly on surveys given to students and parents. According to the West Virginia school corporation, although the number of students who responded to the surveys decreased by 38 percent in year two, the results showed a significant increase in change. By the end of year two, the students' perceptions had changed significantly for the better on subjects like affordability of college and a career path that required post-secondary education. In the March 2010 quarterly report, findings showed that

since the implementation of the program there had been an increase of 62% on the perceptions of readiness for higher education (“GEAR UP Evaluation”, 2010).

The First Year Experience (*FYE*) program was instituted at Western Michigan University (WMU) beginning with the 2006-07 academic year (Bakerson, 2009). The program was designed to support students in reaching their academic goals. It includes a new student orientation, a four-day transition program in the residence halls, and a two-credit seminar. WMU hoped to improve retention amongst students by having them participate in the *FYE* program during their first year of higher education. The *FYE* program has had a statistically significant impact on improving retention, though more research is required to analyze the source of the program’s effectiveness. (Bakerson, 2009). Students who participated in the *FYE* program demonstrated a statistically significant increase in persistence than students who did not participate in the program.

Across the country, in the fall of 2007, six New York community colleges were awarded the opportunity to participate in the Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (*ASAP*) program. This program was developed to help students at community colleges have a successful experience. Students were chosen to participate based on economic status. The program based a big deal of emphasis on the relationship between academic advising and student success. “Full-time, dedicated *ASAP* advisers scheduled mandatory meetings with students twice a month to assist them with smooth transitions into four-year colleges or professional careers.” (Napolitano and Wu, 2010) The success of this program was noted when a student, after quitting college twice in the past, successfully graduated with a 3.3/4.0 GPA after having the advantage of the mandatory academic advising programs. With a focus on quality advising services that worked

continuously with students throughout their academic programs, *ASAP* was able to increase student persistence.

In 2004, Lumina Foundation for Education launched “Achieving the Dream: Community Colleges Count”, a national retention program aimed at improving success among local community college students. In particular, *Achieving the Dream* focused on low-income students and African American students. *Achieving the Dream* is now being implemented in more than 130 institutions in 24 states and the District of Columbia. The retention program uses student records and other data to examine students’ performance over time and to identify barriers to academic success. From there, community colleges develop intervention strategies such as: new student orientation, academic advisory, professional development, and academic success courses. Since 2004, an overall increase in enrollment, especially in the African American community has increased. Although it was anticipated that colleges would see measurable improvements over time, there was not an overall significance in results. Trends in student outcomes remained relatively unchanged for college-level introductory courses, grades, persistence, and completion of courses. The ongoing research will give their final results on the introductory courses in 2013 (Rutschow & Richburg-Hayes, 2011). Even though one goal was met, which was to enroll more students of diverse ethnicity, there are no significant results in retention. *Achieving the Dream* seeks to provide students with an opportunity to become acquainted with the resources necessary to succeed in hopes that students will be able to access those resources as needed during their academic career.

Studies have shown that more local colleges and universities are using web-based classroom management systems. Studies in the past showed no significance when comparing a more technology based classroom, with online involvement, to a traditional classroom setting

(Barry & Runyan, 1995). One study compares the achievement of students enrolled in two sections of a course for educators on teaching English as a Second Language. Participants consisted of 29 students enrolled in a web-based classroom setting and 31 students in a traditional classroom setting. Students in the online section of the course scored significantly lower than students in the traditional classroom setting. This finding suggests that students are still in need of basic computer literacy classes before entering a computer-based construct at a higher education facility (Thirunarayanan & Perez-Prado, 2001). Without some kind of training within the first year of college, students become frustrated and less motivated to complete their courses.

After examining existing programs being implemented across the country to improve student retention, this study has focused on a specific program currently in place at a community college. The retention program has been evaluated using faculty and student input to provide insight into the variables that are positively impacting retention in higher education.

Methods

The focus here was on faculty and student perceptions of factors contributing to the increase in attrition in higher education and the effectiveness of programs that are currently available to address this increase in attrition. In order to achieve the objective, students and faculty in higher education were surveyed to provide data about participation in higher education.

A convenience sample of students and faculty at a local community college in Northern Indiana was utilized. The students and faculty completed a self-report data collection instrument which was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively for trends related to retention in higher education. Student surveys focus on their personal experiences in higher education. Faculty

surveys focus on the retention intervention programs and instructional methods offered by the community college that employs them. The surveys aided in identifying key factors related to attrition and perceptions of student participation in higher education.

Participants

There are two surveys that were administered to a convenience sample. The convenience sample was divided into groups. The first group was made up of students over the age of 18 who are currently attending the Northern Indiana community college. The second group consisted of both adjunct and full time faculty currently teaching at the same institution.

Students. This sample consisted of students enrolled at a community college. These students are all high school graduates working towards the completion of a post-secondary degree or certificate. Students who are ages 18 and over were targeted. A majority of the students that participated are recognized as freshman. Demographics will not be a factor for the convenience sampling. A convenience sample of approximately 150 students who are enrolled in introductory reading, writing, and new student seminars were given an opportunity to take part in this study.

Faculty. This sample consisted of faculty members who are currently employed by the same local two year community college. Faculty members were included from multiple discipline areas. Approximately 200 adjunct and full-time faculty members from the North Central Indiana region were given the opportunity to participate in this study through completion of an online survey.

Data Collection

Two surveys were utilized in this study. Each sample group received a survey tailored to its particular position and program. Instrument one and two are online data collection surveys

for students and faculty. Surveys sent to students focused on their personal experiences in higher education. The surveys given to adjunct and full time faculty focused on the retention intervention programs and instructional methods at the community college.

Instrument One: Student Survey. This survey, located in Appendix A, was administered to the student sample. Due to formatting conversion, the survey may look slightly different than the actual web based survey. The web address is also listed before the survey in Appendix A. The survey consisted of questions regarding the students' college experiences and their perceptions about motivations for dropping out of school. Students completed the forced answer survey online at SurveyMonkey.com.

Instrument Two: Faculty Survey. This survey, located at Appendix B, was administered to the community college adjunct and staff sample. Due to formatting conversion, the survey may look slightly different than the actual web based survey. The web address is also listed before the survey in Appendix B. The survey consisted of questions regarding the faculty members' teaching experiences and their perceptions about the success of specific programs in place at the community college. Faculty members completed the forced answer survey online at SurveyMonkey.com.

Procedures

Approval for the administration of surveys was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at both the local two year community college and Indiana University South Bend. All parties were informed of the goals of this research, the content of the data instruments and the manner of administering the surveys through a study information sheet. The study information sheet contained information fully informing the subjects about the purpose of the study and their rights regarding participation in the study.

The subjects in this study were informed of their rights and the researchers proceeded with complete respect for the confidentiality of the subjects through the Study Information Sheet. All results were reported with all identifying information eliminated to ensure confidentiality for the subjects.

Adjunct, full-time faculty and student subjects were recruited via email. Instruments one and two were administered anonymously through an online survey site, SurveyMonkey.com. Through email, subjects were provided with the Student Information Sheet. The email given also clarified the subjects' opportunity to ask the researchers any questions regarding the study at any time via email. Along with the Study Information Sheet, the subjects were provided with the website link to the proper survey and a time frame within which to complete the survey. Subjects then completed the survey at their own time of convenience. The researcher received the subjects' anonymous responses directly from the survey website and analyzed the results to identify possible conclusions about retention in higher education. The data was maintained online through the SurveyMonkey.com website database. Once the data had been collected, the data was cleared from the database. Any hard copies of the data were destroyed upon completion of this research.

Data Analysis

Once the results of the survey were received, the information provided was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively for any trends or possible conclusions about retention in higher education. This study includes statistical analysis of most survey questions, as well as qualitative analysis of survey questions that allowed the subjects to editorialize their personal experiences and perceptions. The survey instruments provided a well-rounded view of teacher and student perceptions of retention in higher education by including adjunct and full time faculty

perspectives, and continuing student perspectives. Trends and conclusions identified while analyzing the data from this study helped in answering our research questions and also provided direction for further research on the topic of retention in higher education.

Results and Discussion

A student's persistence in the completion of a program of higher education could be the result of several variables. In order to identify variables that contribute to retention in higher education, both student and faculty surveys were closely reviewed. The results from the two surveys highlight student and faculty opinions on variables that may affect retention. The following tables depict the responses given to the surveys. The data is described in three sections. The first section includes the results and discussion of the faculty survey. The second section includes the results and discussion of the student survey. The third and final section compares the responses of faculty and students on three variables impacting retention in higher education.

The faculty survey was sent out to 200 faculty members at the two year higher education institution. There were 43 respondents, making the return rate of 21.5%. The Table 1 represents the two categories of faculty employment surveyed. Ninety-three percent of the faculty surveyed identified themselves as adjunct faculty. Seven percent of the faculty surveyed identified themselves as full time faculty.

Table 1

<i>Faculty category</i>		
Responses	Percentage %	Response count n
Adjunct Faculty	93.0	40
Full Time Faculty	7.0	3

The faculty survey respondents are representative of the distribution of adjunct and full time faculty members within the total population at the two year higher education institution. The responses provided to the questions detailed in the following tables therefore provide a representative picture of faculty opinions about variables impacting the retention of students at the college.

The following table illustrates the attitudes that the faculty at a two year community college has towards current year students' level of computer literacy. Faculty respondents were asked to respond to the statements provided about computer literacy with a level of agreement. Faculty (90.9%) expressed some level of agreement with the statement that their students are computer literate. More than half of the faculty also believes that students can create, copy and paste, save on a flash drive, and email a Microsoft Word document. The research also indicates that 89.4% of faculty members believe students would, nonetheless, benefit from a basic computer literacy class. Seventy-five percent of faculty disagree that students know how to submit work on Black Board, which is an online student website at the higher education institution, and 66.6% disagree to some extent that students know how to take tests on Black Board.

Table 2

Computer literacy

Responses	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)	Total % (n)
Students are computer literate	9.1 (1)	0.0 (0)	81.8 (9)	9.1 (1)	100.0 (11)
Students know how to log on to BB	20.0 (1)	20.0 (1)	40.0 (2)	20.0 (1)	100.0 (5)
Students know how to check grades in BB	33.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	66.7 (2)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (3)
Students know how to submit assignments on BB	0.0 (0)	75.0 (6)	25.0 (2)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (8)
Students know how to take a test on BB	33.3 (1)	33.3 (0)	0.0 (1)	33.3 (1)	100.0 (3)
Students know how to create a Microsoft Word document	0.0 (0)	20.0 (1)	60.0 (3)	20.0 (1)	100.0 (5)
Students know how to copy and paste within a Microsoft Word document	14.3 (1)	28.6 (2)	42.9 (3)	14.3 (1)	100.1 (7)
Students know how to save and email a Microsoft Word document from a flash drive	0.0 (0)	33.3 (2)	50.0 (3)	16.7 (1)	100.0 (6)
Students know how to use the online library system	18.8 (3)	43.8 (7)	37.5 (6)	0.0 (0)	100.1 (16)
Taking a basic computer literacy class would be beneficial	5.3 (1)	5.3 (1)	10.5 (2)	78.9 (15)	100.0 (19)

Note. BB is an abbreviation for Black Board. An error within the online survey for the faculty respondents prevented the respondents from using the levels of agreement (i.e. Strongly Agree, Agree, etc.) more than once. This limitation resulted in faculty respondents being unable to answer some questions and, thus, the *n* for questions within this table are less than the number of total faculty respondents.

The research indicates that faculty members believe that students have computer literacy skills in some areas, but are lacking in others. The majority feel that there is room for improvement so offering a computer literacy class at the institution would be beneficial to students. If, as the faculty indicates, students are lacking adequate computer literacy skills, this may help in explaining the gap discussed earlier between the number of unfilled jobs and the number of unemployed Americans (The Washington Post, 2010). Many jobs are going unfilled

because Americans lack the necessary qualifications and computer literacy is an essential skill in many of today's careers. Conclusions are difficult to draw from the data collected because of an unexpected limitation. The website through which faculty respondents accessed the survey experienced an error and would not allow all respondents to complete the full survey. This error resulted in the number of respondents for this table being low.

Table 3 illustrates the faculty responses on how the mandatory Student Success courses offered by the institution have impacted the students' educational success. Faculty members were asked to assess the impact of the Student Success courses on the following variables: student attendance, student success and student retention. Sixty-four percent of faculty strongly disagree, disagree or are neutral on whether student attendance has increased since the implementation of the Student Success courses. While 79.0% of the respondents feel that the courses are helping students to be successful, only 36.4% of the instructors agree retention has increased due to the mandatory Student Success courses.

Table 3

Mandatory student success courses

Responses	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree or Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)	Total % (n)
Student attendance has risen	8.0 (2)	28.0 (7)	28.0 (7)	20.0 (5)	16.0 (4)	100.0 (25)
Courses helping students to be successful	5.3 (1)	0.0 (0)	15.8 (3)	63.2 (12)	15.8 (3)	100.1 (19)
Retention has increased	3.0 (1)	18.2 (6)	42.4 (14)	36.4 (12)	0.0 (0)	99.8 (33)

Note. An error within the online survey for the faculty respondents prevented the respondents from using the levels of occurrence (i.e. Strongly disagree, Disagree, etc.) more than once. This limitation resulted in faculty respondents being unable to answer some questions and, thus, the *n* for questions within this table are less than the number of total faculty respondents. Total percentage may differ from 100% due to rounding.

While at least some respondents report that there are improvements in the attendance, success and retention, the majority of faculty respondents did not express strong belief that the mandatory Student Success courses had, as yet, shown an improvement in retention. It may take time to see a direct link between the courses and retention rates, but it could also be that the course itself is not meeting the needs of the students dropping out of the community college. One limitation of this survey is that faculty may not have access to school data about retention and are relying only on their own perceptions.

Table 4 represents faculty assessments of the relationship between student successes and mandatory academic advising. Of the faculty, 58.6 % agree that students are prepared with an individual academic plan. Thirty-nine percent agree that there has been an increase in retention since the mandatory academic advising was implemented, but of that 39.0% of respondents, only 37.6% agree that the increases in retention are related to academic advising. Of faculty, 74.4% believe that students understand their degree and academic requirements.

Table 4

Mandatory academic advising

Responses	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree or Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)	Total % (n)
Students prepared with individual academic plan	4.9 (2)	22.0 (9)	14.6 (6)	53.7 (22)	4.9 (2)	100.1 (41)
Increase in retention since implementation	2.4 (1)	29.3 (12)	29.3 (12)	36.6 (15)	2.4 (1)	100.0 (41)
If yes, increase related to academic advising	3.1 (2)	9.4 (3)	50.0 (16)	31.3 (10)	6.3 (2)	100.1 (32)
Students understand their degree and academic program requirements	2.6 (1)	12.8 (5)	10.3 (4)	71.8 (28)	2.6 (1)	100.1 (39)

Note. An error within the online survey for the faculty respondents prevented the respondents from using the levels of occurrence (i.e. Strongly disagree, Disagree, etc.) more than once. This limitation resulted in faculty respondents being unable to answer some questions and, thus, the *n* for questions within this table are less than the number of total faculty respondents. Total percentage may differ from 100% due to rounding.

The students at this local community college are exhibiting a positive benefit from the mandatory academic advising. It is important for students to persist that they remain committed to their goals, and academic advising helps students to identify what short-term goals will help lead them to their ultimate goal of graduation (Wang and Wu, 2004). It seems that the mandatory academic advising could contribute significantly over time towards improving retention rates.

The faculty survey also examined the frequencies in which faculty at this local community college engage in activities that encourage the success of their students. Less than 30% of respondents that seldom engage in the following activities to aid student success: send reminders of assignments, schedule appointments with students outside of class time, inform students of tutoring services and online library tutorials, utilize differentiated instruction and refer students to academic advisors (See Table 5).

Table 5

Frequency with which faculty engage in activities to encourage student success

Responses	0 (Does not apply) % (n)	1 (Seldom) % (n)	2 (Sometimes) % (n)	3 (Often) % (n)	Total % (n)
Send reminders of assignment and/or the attendance policy.	33.3 (2)	16.7 (1)	16.7 (1)	33.3 (2)	100.0 (6)
Post my lessons (PowerPoint, etc.) on BB for students.	0.0 (0)	36.4 (4)	9.1 (1)	54.5 (6)	100.0 (11)
Schedule appointments with my students outside of class.	25.0 (3)	25.0 (3)	33.3 (4)	16.7 (2)	100.0 (12)
Inform students of the tutoring facilities.	0.0 (0)	25.0 (1)	75.0 (3)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (4)
Inform students about online library tutorials.	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	33.3 (1)	66.7 (2)	100.0 (3)
Inform students about BB courses.	25.0 (1)	25.0 (1)	50.0 (2)	0.0 (0)	100.0 (4)
Encourage students to speak with academic advisors.	25.0 (1)	0.0 (0)	50.0 (2)	25.0 (1)	100.0 (4)
Utilize differentiated instruction with grades and assignments.	33.3 (2)	16.7 (1)	16.7 (1)	33.3 (2)	100.0 (6)
Encourage feedback from students for personal improvement.	0.0 (0)	22.2 (2)	44.4 (4)	33.3 (3)	99.9 (9)
Implement technology into the classroom.	7.1 (1)	7.1 (1)	35.7 (5)	50.0 (7)	99.9 (14)

Note. BB is an abbreviation for Black Board. An error within the online survey for the faculty respondents prevented the respondents from using the levels of occurrence (i.e. Seldom, Sometimes, etc.) more than once. This limitation resulted in faculty respondents being unable to answer some questions and, thus, the *n* for questions within this table are less than the number of total faculty respondents. Total percentage may differ from 100% due to rounding.

This table describes the individual instructional methods used by the faculty of this local community college. There are several methods within this survey that can be applied to help students become more successful. All of which should be done often. Research has shown that retention rates are higher where there is greater interaction between faculty members and students both inside and outside of the classroom (Endo and Harpel, 1982). Faculty members at the community college being studied have indicated that they are engaging in activities that will improve retention. These activities simply need to increase in frequency to see greater gains in

retention rates. These results are limited by the smaller number of respondents. It would be beneficial to assess the instructional methods used by a larger sampling of faculty members.

The faculty qualitative responses in the following tables show that within the implementation of the different aspects of the retention program, there is a high opinion that the New Student Orientation classes do help, but need to be made mandatory (Table 6). Also, there was a higher response by faculty members who thought that the academic advisory initiative is not directing the students in the proper direction (Table 7). Computer literacy is a great concern for faculty members, whether it is having students use a word document or use the online technology program, Black Board, within the classroom (Table 9).

Table 6

Faculty survey qualitative survey: New student orientation

Questions	Answers
<i>Observations about or teaching New Student Orientation</i>	“This needs to be mandatory for all students. Those students who have not taken it appear not to do as well.”
Explain what you think about New Student Orientation.	<p>“Some students don’t even have a computer at home.”</p> <p>“They have unrealistic views about how much time is needed outside of the classroom.”</p> <p>“Anything to help these newbies find out what college is all about is useful.”</p>

Table 7

Faculty survey qualitative survey: Academic advisory

Questions	Faculty Answers
<p><i>Academic Advisory</i></p> <p>Explain what you think about students and their academic program.</p>	<p>“There are many students that have not made a choice in their degree...”</p> <p>“90% of students in my classes in the fall 2010 and spring 2011 semesters did not know what an academic plan was...”</p> <p>“Many students I see have no major. They are not sure what field they are going to enter. They are in college because they cannot find a job... Rather, too many just want a degree without learning the skills needed...One student told me last week that he was going to be an accountant because he liked to count money.”</p> <p>“The academic requirements change often and the students end up taking classes that will not count for their major.”</p> <p>“...Many students are still confused about how to contact/talk to their advisors. I think they need an orientation review.”</p>

Table 8

Faculty survey qualitative survey: Retention program

Questions	Faculty Answers
<i>Retention Program</i>	
Explain how the Retention Program has a negative or positive affect on student success.	<p>“My experience is that about half the students disappear along the way. Those who come and really are open to the ideas really benefit.”</p> <p>“A student in week 12 told me that he didn’t know how to use Black Board.”</p> <p>“...students still don’t know technology, I still have to teach Word, and not many appear to use our library.”</p> <p>“...Maybe a workshop for some students would help.”</p>

Table 9

Faculty survey qualitative survey: Computer literacy and black board

Questions	Faculty Answers
<i>Computer Literacy</i>	
Do you think your students are computer literate? Explain:	<p>“Most of them can (and do) check their Facebook/email multiple times a day but cannot write in complete sentences or spell correctly.”</p>
<i>Black Board</i>	
Comment on your implementation of Black Board within the classroom:	<p>“As an adjunct I only use BB for grades and email.”</p> <p>“I know we were sent something to teach us how to use black board, but I don’t use it for anything other than grades.”</p>

Note. Black Board also appears abbreviated as BB.

Faculty members and students could benefit from the comments and suggestions of the staff at this local two year educational facility. Some of the faculty comments regarding computer literacy not only correlate with student responses, but they are consistent with earlier research (Thirunarayanan & Perez-Prado, 2001). Limitations for qualitative assessments of respondents would include the specifics as to which programs should be in place before entering their classroom and the denotation and connotations as to what computer literacy is. Despite the desire to become computer literate, an informal observation would indicate that there is a desperate need for students to come to class with the basic preparedness of writing an essay on a word document, navigate the web-based classroom management tools, and have basic research abilities. In comparison to faculty responses, in an informal observation, students indicated that they are fully competent in navigation of social navigational sites as well as sending and retrieving emails.

Informal observations would also indicate that there is a breakdown of communication within the advisory department for the implementation of academic planning. Frustration levels can be a determinant of retention. An informal observation of student communication brings concern to whether academic advisors are fully versed not only in what programs are available, but what is involved when taking college courses (*Table 7*).

Overall, the faculty surveys raise areas of concern with the retention program currently in place. Faculty members felt that students' needs in terms of academic planning are not being met. They also indicated that there is call for a reexamination of students' computer literacy skills. Modifications to New Student Orientation that include greater focus on academic program planning and computer literacy skills may positively impact student retention.

This second section presents and discusses the results of the survey administered to students at the two year higher education institution. Students were asked a series of questions about variables that impacted their success and persistence in their academic programs. Variables evaluated include academic advisors, instructors, financial stability, New Student Orientation, Student Success courses, making new friends, extracurricular activities, study groups and the Work-Study program. Student responses provide insight into the factors that impact students' persistence in their pursuit of higher education.

The student survey was sent out to 150 students at the two year higher education institution. There were 43 respondents to this survey, making the return rate of 28.7%. Approximately 41% of all student respondents at the two year higher education institution where the survey was administered were ages 18-21. The lowest percentage of 28% represented those respondents ages 22-30. Approximately 68% of student respondents identified themselves as white/Caucasian. One response counted for 3% of "other" category.

Table 10

Student demographics

	Percentage %	Response count n
Age		
18-21	41.0	16
22-30	28.2	11
31 +	30.8	12
Race		
White/Caucasian	68.4	26
Black/African American	28.9	11
Hispanic	0.0	0
Asian	0.0	0
Other	2.6	1

Note. Total percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

A majority of students who participated in the survey were 18-21 which is consistent with earlier results for a similar community college (Bakerson, 2009). The correlation between recent studies on unemployment rates and ages of students returning or beginning college is inconsistent (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). Also, showing an increase, was the enrollment of African American students which is also consistent with earlier results (Rutschow & Richburg-Hayes, 2011).

Table 11 addresses the impact of the New Student Orientation program implemented at the two year higher education institution to improve retention rates. Students were asked about academic skills that the students may have gained from the New Student Orientation program. In every category that the students evaluated the program, the majority of students had a positive response. More than 50% of students agreed to some extent that the program had a positive impact on the following variables that may impact retention: Black Board, the campus online library system, free tutoring program, other helpful resources, students' self-confidence in their ability to succeed and graduate, degree requirements, academic outlook. Of the respondents, 89.2%, also agreed or strongly agreed that they would graduate.

Table 11

New student orientation

Responses	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree or Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)	Total % (n)
Orientation helped you to learn about BB in order to use it	5.3 (2)	13.2 (5)	23.7 (9)	31.6 (12)	26.3 (10)	100.0 (38)
You learned about the campus online library system	5.3 (2)	5.3 (2)	5.3 (2)	47.4 (18)	36.8 (14)	100.0 (38)
You learned about our free tutoring program	2.8 (1)	8.3 (3)	5.6 (2)	47.2 (17)	36.1 (13)	100.0 (36)
You learned about other helpful resources	0.0 (0)	10.8 (4)	10.8 (4)	43.2 (16)	35.1 (13)	100.0 (37)
After orientation, you were more confident in your courses	2.6 (1)	21.1 (8)	18.4 (7)	31.6 (12)	26.3 (10)	100.0 (38)
The advising office helped with your course plan	10.8 (4)	8.1 (3)	16.2 (6)	40.5 (15)	24.3 (9)	100.0 (37)
You understand your specific degree requirements	2.6 (1)	13.2 (5)	5.3 (2)	50.0 (19)	28.9 (11)	100.0 (38)
You are confident that you will graduate	5.4 (2)	0.0 (0)	5.4 (2)	35.1 (15)	54.1 (20)	100.0 (37)
Your Success Course was helpful	2.6 (1)	5.3 (2)	21.1 (8)	50.0 (19)	21.1 (8)	100.0 (38)
Your life perspective changed for the better	2.6 (1)	5.3 (2)	23.7 (9)	39.5 (15)	28.9 (11)	100.0 (38)
Your scheduling issues made you want to quit school	32.4 (12)	40.5 (15)	5.4 (2)	10.8 (4)	10.8 (4)	100.0 (37)

Note. BB is an abbreviation for Black Board.

Previous research shows that goal commitment and academic integration are key factors impacting student persistence in higher education (Wang and Wu, 2004). The organization of the New Student Orientation is consistent with this research and the program includes aspects targeted at improving academic integration in hopes of improving retention. Student responses, see Table 11, indicate that the program is finding success in improving students' academic integration. Students indicated that the New Student Orientation had exposed them to Black

Board, the online library system, tutoring services, and academic advising. The New Student Orientation program focused on aspects academic integration and students' responses are consistent with feelings of improved academic integration.

In addition, the majority of students agreed to some extent that they would graduate, indicating that they have commitment to their educational goals. Wang and Wu identified goal commitment is a key factor impacting persistence. The 89.2% of students that expect to graduate are a positive indication that the retention program is positively correlated with student retention. A limitation of the survey results is that students could not specifically identify whether their confidence in their ability to graduate is a result of participating in the New Student Orientation. Nonetheless, students in this program do exhibit goal commitment which is a key factor in persistence.

Table 12 presents student opinions on variables that impact the students' persistence in higher education. Students were asked to evaluate their integration with Black Board that is utilized by their higher education institution. High levels of integration with technology could improve retention in higher education. Students overwhelmingly reported that they were capable of logging on, checking their grades, submitting assignments and taking tests on Black Board. Only one student reported having had any difficulty with Black Board. Slightly more students reported difficulty utilizing Microsoft Word, but still only as much as 10% of respondents reported difficulty. The more than 90% of remaining students indicated that they are able to create documents, copy and paste, save and email within Microsoft Word. When asked whether they believed computer literacy impacts students' persistence, 34.3% of students agreed or strongly agreed that students quit school due to a lack of computer skills.

Table 12

Variables impacting persistence

Responses	Strongly Disagree % (n)	Disagree % (n)	Neither Agree or Disagree % (n)	Agree % (n)	Strongly Agree % (n)	Total % (n)
Unemployment has been a deciding factor in academics	16.2 (6)	21.6 (8)	16.2 (6)	29.7 (11)	16.2 (6)	100.0 (37)
You are computer literate	5.4 (2)	16.2 (6)	13.5 (5)	32.4 (12)	32.4 (12)	100.0 (37)
You have received help for computer literacy issues	16.2 (6)	35.1 (13)	29.7 (11)	8.1 (3)	10.8 (4)	100.0 (37)
You know how to log on to BB	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	5.7 (2)	14.3 (5)	80.0 (28)	100.0 (35)
You know how to check your grades on BB	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	5.4 (2)	16.2 (6)	78.4 (29)	100.0 (37)
You know how to submit an assignment on BB	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.7 (1)	21.6 (8)	75.7 (28)	100.0 (37)
You know how to take a test on BB	0.0 (0)	2.8 (1)	2.8 (1)	19.4 (7)	75.0 (27)	100.0 (36)
You know how to create a Microsoft Word document	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	5.7 (2)	28.6 (10)	65.7 (23)	100.0 (35)
You learned about using Microsoft Word from your instructor	13.5 (5)	16.2 (6)	10.8 (4)	21.6 (8)	37.8 (14)	100.0 (37)
You know how to copy and paste within a Microsoft Word document	0.0 (0)	2.7 (1)	5.4 (2)	24.3 (9)	67.6 (25)	100.0 (37)
You know how to save a Microsoft Word document on to a flash drive	0.0 (0)	5.4 (2)	2.7 (1)	21.6 (8)	70.3 (26)	100.0 (37)
You know how to email a Microsoft Word document to yourself as an attachment	2.7 (1)	8.1 (3)	8.1 (3)	29.7 (11)	51.4 (19)	100.0 (37)
You know how to use the online library system	2.7 (1)	5.4 (2)	2.7 (1)	45.9 (17)	43.2 (16)	100.0 (37)
You could navigate the online library system effectively	2.7 (1)	5.4 (2)	5.4 (2)	45.9 (17)	40.5 (15)	100.0 (37)
A basic computer literacy class would be beneficial to you	21.6 (8)	18.9 (7)	16.2 (6)	16.2 (6)	27.0 (10)	100.0 (37)
You have dropped a class due to a lack of computer skills	59.5 (22)	27.0 (10)	5.4 (2)	0.0 (0)	8.1 (3)	100.0 (37)
Students quit school due to lack of computer skills	17.1 (6)	14.3 (5)	34.3 (12)	25.7 (9)	8.6 (3)	100.0 (35)
You will graduate	0.0 (0)	0.0	16.7 (6)	11.1 (4)	72.2 (26)	100.0 (36)

Note. BB is an abbreviation for Black Board.

Technology plays a significant role in higher education at the institution the students attend. Professors regularly incorporate Microsoft Word and Black Board into classroom assignments. Inability to properly utilize these electronic resources would be a significant barrier to persisting in an academic program. Persistence is most prevalent in students who are involved in academic activities (Astin, 1984). Student responses indicated that computer illiteracy, and thus, an inability to participate fully in the academic activities of the classroom, would contribute to their decision to drop out of a class (Table 12). The students' responses are consistent with prior research that indicates students that are not involved with academic activities are more likely to drop out of higher education programs.

Table 13 exhibits students' assessments of the extent to which certain variables impact their persistence in higher education. Students rated the impact of these variables on persistence on a scale of 1 to 5, with the higher numbers indicating greater impact. Students responded that persistence is most impacted by academic advisors, instructors and financial stability. Students felt that extracurricular activities, study groups and work-study programs had the least impact on persisting in higher education. Students were split on the impact of the New Student Orientation, Student Success Courses and making new friends.

Table 13

Extent to which the following variables impacted persistence

Responses	1 (<i>Insignificant</i>) % (n)	2 % (n)	3 % (n)	4 % (n)	5 (<i>Significant</i>) % (n)	Total % (n)
Academic advisors	26.3 (10)	2.6 (1)	23.7 (9)	26.3 (10)	21.1 (8)	100.0 (38)
Instructors	5.3 (2)	5.3 (2)	18.4 (7)	26.3 (10)	44.7 (17)	100.0 (38)
Financial stability	18.4 (7)	2.6 (1)	18.4 (7)	18.4 (7)	42.1 (16)	100.0 (38)
New Student Orientation	36.8 (14)	10.5 (4)	23.7 (9)	13.2 (5)	21.1 (8)	100.0 (38)
Student Success Courses	26.3 (10)	10.5 (4)	28.9 (11)	13.2 (5)	21.1 (8)	100.0 (38)
Making new friends	28.9 (11)	15.8 (6)	18.4 (7)	26.3 (10)	10.5 (4)	100.0 (38)
Extracurricular activities	57.9 (22)	10.5 (4)	15.8 (6)	7.9 (3)	7.9 (3)	100.0 (38)
Study groups	39.5 (15)	13.2 (5)	21.1 (8)	18.4 (7)	7.9 (3)	100.0 (38)
Work-Study program	59.5 (22)	5.4 (2)	13.5 (5)	13.5 (5)	8.1 (3)	100.0 (37)

Note. BB is an abbreviation for Black Board. The scale that appeared on the survey used the terms “A lot” to “not a lot”. For this table the variables are presented as ranging from a “significant” to an “insignificant” impact for clarity.

This data suggests that efforts to improve retention should focus on student relationships with faculty and staff. This is consistent with Tinto’s Student Integration Model and its suggestion that social integration aids in persistence (Tinto, 1975). Students with positive relationships with faculty and staff have greater social integration within their institution of higher education. These survey results are also consistent with research that has shown that retention rates are higher when there is greater interaction between students and faculty (Endo and Harpel, 1982). Students that have negative encounters with academic advisors and instructors may find their academic experiences more difficult to manage than other students and be more likely to drop out.

Institutions of higher education should focus their retention rate improvement efforts on building a high-quality faculty that engages with students, both inside and outside of the

classroom, and is committed to creating a positive learning environment for students. In addition, schools can evaluate their financial aid programs to ensure that they are meeting students' financial needs. Of students, 60.5% indicated that financial stability heavily impacts their persistence in higher education. Two students took the opportunity to comment further on financial aid, writing "financial aid is very bad" and indicating that there is "a problem with financial aid" (Table 15). The student survey reveals that relationships between students and staff and financial aid may be areas that can be targeted by institutions of higher education to improve retention.

Student responses indicate the level to which the variables discussed in the previous table helped to resolve student frustrations with their academic program (see Table 14). Of students, 43.2% responded that academic advisors did little to alleviate student frustrations. Students also indicated that instructors are factor most likely to help students resolve problems.

Table 14

Extent to which the following variables resolved frustrations with academic program

Responses	1 (<i>Not a lot</i>) % (n)	2 % (n)	3 % (n)	4 % (n)	5 (<i>A lot</i>) % (n)	Total % (n)
Academic advisors	43.2 (16)	2.7 (1)	21.6 (8)	21.6 (8)	10.8 (4)	100.0 (37)
Instructors	10.8 (4)	8.1 (3)	24.2 (9)	27.0 (10)	29.7 (11)	100.0 (37)
Financial stability	32.4 (12)	5.4 (2)	27.0 (10)	18.9 (7)	16.2 (6)	100.0 (37)
New Student Orientation	51.4 (19)	13.5 (5)	10.8 (4)	16.2 (6)	8.1 (3)	100.0 (37)
Student Success Courses	32.4 (12)	13.5 (5)	27.0 (10)	13.5 (5)	13.5 (5)	100.0 (37)
Making new friends	27.0 (10)	2.7 (1)	35.1 (13)	21.6 (8)	13.5 (5)	100.0 (37)
Extracurricular activities	48.6 (18)	8.1 (3)	24.3 (9)	13.5 (5)	5.4 (2)	100.0 (37)
Study groups	35.1 (13)	13.5 (5)	29.7 (11)	13.5 (5)	8.1 (3)	100.0 (37)
Work-Study program	56.8 (21)	10.8 (4)	16.2 (6)	5.4 (2)	10.8 (4)	100.0 (37)

Note. BB is an abbreviation for Black Board.

Students in higher education will find graduating from their academic program a difficult challenge indeed if they face obstacles along the way. Students indicated that the very people to whom they look to for assistance in the face of difficulty with their academic program do not help resolve their issues. This is a significant problem for institutions of higher education. Advisors should be the first line of defense against students dropping out. If the advisors do not provide the assistance needed, retention rates will suffer as a result. As discussed earlier, research shows that positive interaction between students and staff improves retention. Instructors and academic advisors are key variables impacting student persistence (Table 13). More students find instructors helpful with problems and find advisors unhelpful (Table 14). Higher education could narrow its focus to student relationships with academic advisors to improve retention rates. This data is limited by the fact that students could not respond to all possible areas that may affect their persistence. The student survey evaluated a limited scope of variables and there may be other significant variables impacting student persistence. An informal observation of an advantage of the timing of the survey, near the end of the semester, is that students who completed the survey had passed the deadline for dropping the course, and therefore were persisting in their pursuit of higher education. Their responses provide insight about what issues they have encountered and overcome in their progress toward program completion.

Participants had the option of commenting at the end of some survey questions. One of the questions asked students to explain how a specific class, New Student Orientation, could be improved (Table 15). A majority of the respondents felt that it should be a requirement to most students.

Table 15

Student Survey questions and answers concerning experiences with their higher academic education

Questions	Student Answers
<i>New Student Orientation</i>	
Explain how New Student Orientation can be improved.	<p>“Make it mandatory in the first semester, not optional as a later course.”</p> <p>“The class should have guest speakers that can relate to new college students.”</p> <p>“Courteous staff would help... staff that actually want to do their job and not send you to several others with no help.”</p>
<i>Classes in a Higher Educational Facility</i>	
Explain any situation as to why you chose to drop a particular class.	<p>“I believe that it would be helpful for students who are not computer savvy, that one day should be set aside for just learning how to use online tools.”</p> <p>“Most students that are older and do not use computers every day, they should be required to take a computer class.”</p> <p>“Financial aid is very bad.”</p> <p>“A problem within financial aid/advisory.”</p>

Curriculum developers and staff may find this research regarding possible retention initiatives both informative as well as discouraging in regards to their own affect on retention. These responses are consistent with earlier research (Wang and Wu, 2004). The responses suggest that there are still issues with financial aid, advisory and computer literacy issues (Tables 13 and 14). Students, overall, stated that they were computer literate (Table 11). However

faculty results showed that they saw room for improvement in students' computer literacy skills (Table 2). This conundrum may be due to the denotation of basic computer literacy. Faculty views computer literacy as being able to navigate an online library system, sending an email attachment, or completing a word document. Students may view computer literacy as posting on social networking sites or sending and retrieving emails.

In regards to students dropping their classes, qualitative responses show there is a breakdown in communication. Earlier research has shown a significant need for academic and financial aid advisory (Swail, 2006). The retention program implemented in this higher educational facility has not yet met its potential in these advisory areas.

The final section of results includes a comparison of student and faculty responses on two particular survey questions. Both student and faculty were asked to assess the impact of New Student Orientation on students' success in their courses, as well as whether or not students were prepared with an academic plan for completing the program.

The first *t*-test compared the student and faculty evaluations of the impact that New Student Orientation has on students' success in the courses. The *t*-test revealed a significant difference between how the students and the faculty rated the impact of New Student Orientation on students' success in their classes, $t(54.63) = 5.58, p = .00$. Equal variance was not met, so the *t*-test was adjusted accordingly. Even though equal variance was not met, the *t*-test is robust and was still used to analyze the data. The data indicates that faculty see a correlation between the New Student Orientation and student success ($M = 1.32, SD = .47$), but students ranged from neutral to agreeing that there is a correlation ($M = 2.42, SD = 1.16$).

The second *t*-test examined the relationship between student and faculty responses concerning whether the advising office is properly preparing students with an academic plan.

The *t*-test revealed no significant difference between student and faculty responses. Both groups averaged close to being neutral on the issue of whether the advising office properly prepared students with an academic plan.

Table 16

T-test results comparing student and faculty responses

	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>Impact of New Student Orientation on Students' Success in Courses</i>						
Students	41	2.42	1.16	5.58	53.63	.000
Faculty	38	1.32	0.47			
<i>Advising Office Prepared Students with Academic Plan</i>						
Students	40	2.40	1.26	-1.06	78.00	.291
Faculty	40	2.68	1.05			

Note. BB is an abbreviation for Black Board.

The first *t*-test shows that there is a disparity in the level to which students and faculty feel that the New Student Orientation is impacting student success (Table 16). Perhaps, given that students are new to the higher educational experience, they are unable to ascertain an impact, while the faculty, who have seen multiple freshman classes come through their classrooms, both with and without the benefit of an orientation, are able to ascertain a difference in the performance of their students since the implementation of the retention program.

The results above demonstrate that students and faculty see a lapse in the quality of the advising office (Table 16). Students do not feel that they have received a clear academic plan, which leaves them poorly prepared to meet the requirements of their academic program.

Students with strong intent to persist have a better chance of completing their academic program (Bean, 1983). Even a strong intent to persist, however, can be derailed by a lack of guidance on how to achieve completion. It is important that institutions of higher education ensure that they are providing students with the tools that they need in order to persist in their academic programs.

Conclusions

Students and faculty of the community college that was targeted provided constructive feedback on the effectiveness of the retention program implemented at their school. The program includes New Student Orientation, which introduces students to the school's web-based classroom management tool, mandatory Student Success courses and mandatory academic advising. The feedback from the faculty and the students revealed one area that is succeeding in helping students persist to graduation and two areas where improvement is necessary.

Student surveys indicated that the faculty is an area in which the school is finding success in improving student persistence. Students reported that instructors are the most significant factor in being able to persist in their academic program. Positive relationships are being formed between students and faculty, a factor that figures strongly in a school's retention rate (Endo and Harpel, 1982). The local community college and its faculty are to be commended for fostering an environment that promotes student persistence and should, over time, show an increase in retention rates.

While relationships between students and faculty are a positive revelation of this study, there are also areas that require attention. The surveys reveal that both groups feel that students have reasonable computer literacy skills, but that faculty can identify areas for improvement. These areas include submitting assignments and taking tests on Black Board. Perhaps the school

could reevaluate the effectiveness and presentation of those portions of the New Student Orientation. Faculty could also incorporate mini-lessons on the use of Black Board into their course curriculum so that students receive the information more than once. It is a shame for promising students to be prevented from persisting in their programs by a difficulty with utilizing the school's own web-based resource tools.

Another area that was noted for improvement was academic advising. Students expressed that they did not feel they were being given the guidance that they needed to be successful in their academic programs. Students reported that when they experienced challenges with their academics, the school advising office did not help to alleviate their frustrations. The college could incorporate regular and mandatory meetings between students and advisors that extend throughout the students' academic careers. This strategy has been shown to be effective in other programs directed at increasing retention rates, particularly amongst students shown to have difficulty persisting in higher education (Napolitano and Wu, 2010). Increased contact between academic advisors and students will also help to foster greater social integration for students in the academic community of their school, which is a factor shown to impact retention rates (Wang and Wu, 2004). Academic advising is an important tool for reaching students and helping them to meet their academic goals. If students do not recognize advisors as a valuable and effective tool for higher education, institutions of higher education are missing out on a key area which could positively impact student retention rates. Further research on specific areas that can be improved within the academic advising system would be highly beneficial to schools looking to increase student retention.

Faculty and student perceptions revealed useful information about the program and areas of improvement for increasing retention. The faculty and student surveys provided two

perspectives for assessing the quality of the retention program in place. Two- and four-year colleges can take away valuable insight into the factors that most impact student retention.

Improving student persistence in higher education is essential, not only for the students themselves, but for the entire American economy which currently reports very high unemployment. Education is a key factor in obtaining employment and the better educated the workforce, the stronger the American economy will become.

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Appendix A

Faculty Survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/JY9GWZ5>

Retention Improvement

1. IUSB STUDY INFORMATION SHEET: Faculty Perceptions of a Retention Interventi...

Study# 11001

Faculty Perceptions of a Retention Intervention Program:
You are invited to participate in a research study. We are conducting this research to find out if retention intervention programs are successful.

Information: If you agree to participate, please click on the "next" button below to begin your survey. The survey will ask you questions about your experiences as an instructor at IVY Tech in reference to the students in academic skills advancement and the goals set aside for them. You will also be asked about your individual instructional techniques. It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey. You are one of 200 students and staff being invited to participate in this study.

Risks: We do not anticipate any risks associated with this study.

Benefits: While there is no direct benefit to you for participating in this research, we hope to learn more about the effectiveness of the retention programs in general.

Confidentiality: All surveys will be anonymous. Although, we can't completely guarantee the confidentiality of your data while since it is on the internet, there will be no names or other identifiable information collected on the surveys.

Contact information: If you have any questions at any time about the study or the procedures you may contact one of the researchers, Malinda Mansfield (mmansfield3@ivytech.edu), Erin O'Leary (olearye@iusb.edu), or Shekieta Webb (swebb22@ivytech.edu). You may also contact our faculty sponsor Michelle Bakerson at 574-520-4391 (mbakerso@iusb.edu).

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the Indiana University South Bend Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Research Subjects, 1700 Mishawaka Ave., A247, South Bend, IN 46834, 574-520-4181, by e-mail at sbirb@iusb.edu.

Participation: Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or may stop the survey at any time by simply not hitting submit on the survey. However, once you do hit submit at the end of the survey you will not be able to withdraw from the study since it will not be possible to identify your data. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

Form Date: February 12, 2011

IUSB IRB
Approved: 2/14/11
Expires: 2/13/12

Retention Improvement

2. Retention Improvement at IVY Tech Community College

The purpose of this survey is to acquire information regarding the effectiveness of the retention improvement program implemented in the higher educational institution that you are a part of at this present time. Our goal as researchers is to collect data in order to prove whether or not these programs are working towards retention improvement. Although you are under no obligation to partake in this survey, feedback is greatly appreciated.

1. As an employee of this higher educational institution, which would you describe yourself as?

Adjunct Faculty

Full Time Faculty

Do you think that being adjunct or full time play a part in whether or not students drop out?

Retention Improvement

3. New Student Orientation

The following questions refer to the New Student Orientation that has been implemented as part of the retention improvement program.

1. Do you feel that the New Student Orientation was a contributing factor in student's completing their courses for the semester?

Yes

No

2. Since the retention improvement program was implemented, what approximate percentage of students do you feel have:

	Less than 25%	25%	50%	75%	Higher than 75%
Learned about Black Board before entering your classroom?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learned about Black Board before the program was implemented?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learned about on-line library before entering your classroom?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learned about on-line library before retention improvement?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Used the free tutoring available on campus?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taken advantage of the free tutoring before the program?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the space provided below you may choose to comment about New Student Orientation:

Retention Improvement

4. Mandatory Academic Advising

In regards to the implementation of the retention intervention program, specifically the Mandatory Academic Advising, answer "yes" or "no" to the following questions:

1. Answer whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or neither agree or disagree to the following statements regarding the implementation of the retention program: Would you say that:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree
Your students are prepared w/ an individual academic plan?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You have seen an increase in retention since implementation?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If yes, is the increase related to academic advising?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students understand their degree & program requirements?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the space provided below you may choose to comment about the subject above:

Retention Improvement

5. Mandatory Student Success Courses

Regarding the implementation of the Mandatory Student Success Courses (Life Skills & New Student Seminar), answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

1. Please check strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or neither agree nor disagree regarding the implementation of the retention program. Regarding the student success courses, do you feel that:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Your student attendance has risen?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The courses are helping students be successful?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retention has increased?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. If you answered "Strongly agree" or "agree" to the previous question, what approximate percentage do you feel retention has increased?

- Less than 10%
- 10-20%
- 21-30%
- More than 30%

In the space provided below you may choose to comment about the subject above:

Retention Improvement

6. Computer Literacy

These questions requires a response to computer literacy among students within the first week of classes at the beginning of the semester:

1. Since the implementation of the retention program, answer Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, or Strongly Agree to the following questions about computer literacy among your students. (BB refers to Black Board):

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Would you say that your students are computer literate?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you ever given instructions on a particular program?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do most of your students know how to log on to BB?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do most of your students know how to check grades in BB?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do your students know how to submit an assignment on BB?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do most of your students know how to take a test on BB?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do most of your students know how to create a Word document?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do your students know how to copy and paste within Word?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do your students know how to save a doc. onto a flash drive? Can your students email the document to themselves?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do your students know how to use the online library system?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Would a basic computer literacy class would be beneficial?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the space provided below you may choose to comment about the subject above:

Retention Improvement

7. Other

This set of questions asks about your teaching style in the classroom. Please answer honestly as your identity will be anonymous.

1. Rate the types of help that are used in your classroom to encourage students not to drop out? (Black Board will be represented as: BB)

	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Does Not Apply To Me
I send reminders of assignments and/or the attendance policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I post my lessons (power points etc...) on BB for students.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I make appointments with my students after class time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I inform students of the tutoring facilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I inform students about on-line library tutorials.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I inform students about BB classes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I encourage the students to speak with academic advisors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I use differentiated instruction with grades & assignments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I encourage feedback from students for personal improvement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do what is required of me and not much more.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I implement technology into the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In the space provided below you may choose to comment about the subject above:

Appendix B

Student Survey: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/J59WP5M>

Student Retention Research Survey

1. IUSB STUDY INFORMATION SHEET: Student Perceptions of a Retention Intervent...

Study# 11001

Student Perceptions of a Retention Intervention Program:
You are invited to participate in a research study. We are conducting this research to find out if retention intervention programs in general are successful or not according to the experiences of students.

Information: If you agree to participate, please click on the "next" button below to begin your survey. The survey will ask you questions about your experiences as a student with academic advisory, academic skills advancement courses, and your personal views on progression in higher education. It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete the survey. You are one of 200 students and staff bring invited to participate in this study.

Risks: We do not anticipate any risks associated with this study.

Benefits: While there is no direct benefit to you for participating in this research, we hope to learn more about the effectiveness of retention programs.

Confidentiality: All surveys will be anonymous. Although, we can't completely guarantee the confidentiality of your data while since it is on the internet, there will be no names or other identifiable information collected on the surveys.

Contact information: If you have any questions at any time about the study or the procedures you may contact one of the researchers, Malinda Mansfield (mmansfeld3@ivytech.edu), Erin O'Leary (oleanye@iusb.edu), or Shekieta Webb (swebb22@ivytech.edu). You may also contact our faculty sponsor Michelle Bakerson at 574-520-4301 (mbakerso@iusb.edu).

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the Indiana University South Bend Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Research Subjects, 1700 Mishawaka Ave., A247, South Bend, IN 46634, 574-520-4181, by e-mail at sbirb@iusb.edu.

Participation: Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or may stop the survey at any time by simply not hitting submit on the survey. However, once you do hit submit at the end of the survey you will not be able to withdraw from the study since it will not be possible to identify your data. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

Form Date: February 12, 2011

IUSB IRB
Approved: 2/14/11
Expires: 2/13/12

Student Retention Research Survey

2. Demographics

The first questions you will be asked to answer are regarding your age and ethnicity. The questions following demographic information will be questions referring to your experiences in higher education.

1. What is your age? If you are under 18, you will not be able to participate.

- 18-21
- 22-30
- 31 or over

2. Which ethnicity would you consider yourself?

- White/Caucasian
- Black/African American
- Latino/Hispanic
- Asian
- Pacific Island
- Prefer not to answer
- Other

You have an option in the space provided to explain if you chose "other":

Student Retention Research Survey

3. New Student Orientation/Life Skills

The following questions refer to your experience with the New Student Orientation meeting.

1. Please check strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or neither agree nor disagree about New Student Orientation, Mandatory Advising, and mandatory student success courses (IVYT 101 or IVYT 120). Black Board will be referred to as "BB". Do you feel that:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Orientation helped you to learn about BB in order to use it?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You learned about the campus online library system?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You learned about our free tutoring program?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You learned about other helpful resources?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After orientation, you were more confident in your courses?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The advising office helped with your course plan?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You understand your specific degree requirements?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You are confident that you will graduate?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Within your Success Course: it is/was helpful?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your life perspective changed for the better?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your scheduling issues made you want to quit school?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

You have an option in the space provided to explain how New Student Orientation can be improved?

Student Retention Research Survey

4. Other

These questions will ask you about personal decisions and experiences in your academic career.

1. Please check strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or neither agree nor disagree to each of the following questions. Black Board will be shown as "BB". Do you feel that:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Unemployment has been a deciding factor in academics?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You are computer literate?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You have received help for computer literacy issue?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You know how to log on to BB?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You know how to check your grades on BB?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You know how to submit an assignment on BB?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You know how to take a test on BB?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You know how to create a Word document (Microsoft Office)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You learned about using Word from your instructor?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You know how to copy and paste within a Word document?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You know how to save Word onto a flash drive?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You know how to email Word to yourself as an attachment?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You know how to use the online library system?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You could navigate the online library system effectively?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A basic computer literacy class would be beneficial to you?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You have dropped a class due to a lack of computer skills?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students quit school due to the lack of computer skills?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You will graduate?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Student Retention Research Survey

2. This section applies to your experiences with a higher educational facility. From a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "Not At All" to 5 being "A lot": How much has the following contributed to staying with your program?

	1	2	3	4	5
Academic Advisors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instructors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial Stability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Student Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Success Courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making New Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extracurricular Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work Study Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You have an option in the space provided, to comment on any specific situation where you chose to drop a particular class, or had the desire to.

3. This section applies to your experiences with a higher educational facility. From a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "Not At All" to 5 being "A lot": When you have felt frustrated, what has helped the most?

	1	2	3	4	5
Academic Advisors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Instructors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial Stability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
New Student Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student Success Courses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making New Friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extracurricular Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Study Groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work Study Program	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

In the space provided below you may choose to comment about the subject above:

Student Retention Research Survey

4. Please check strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or neither agree nor disagree in regards to your experiences in your academic program.

If you have ever dropped a class, which of the following factors contributed to your decision?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I received financial aid	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grades were dropping and I didn't ask for help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
grades were dropping and the teacher was unwilling to help	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I am not computer literate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had trouble with peers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I had trouble communicating with instructors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I didn't have time to get help for the issue I was having	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial Issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scheduling Issues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have never dropped a class	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I prefer not to answer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

You have an option in the space provided to comment about the question(s) above:

Student Retention Research Survey

5. Please check strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, or neither agree nor disagree to your personal experiences. If you have ever dropped out of a Higher Educational Facility before (not just a class, but your college) what factors contributed to your decision?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Grades were dropping	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am not computer literate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had trouble with peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had trouble communicating with instructors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I didn't have time to ask for help	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial circumstances	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was expelled for disciplinary issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was put on academic probation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have never dropped out of a Higher Educational Facility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I prefer not to answer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

You have an option in the space provided to comment about the question(s) above