Noel-Levitz Report on Undergraduate Trends in Enrollment Management

2011 Student Retention Practices at Four-Year and Two-Year Institutions

What's working in student retention at the undergraduate level? To find out, Noel-Levitz conducted a 71-item, Web-based poll in May of 2011 as part of the firm's continuing series of benchmark polls for higher education.

Highlights from the findings:

- The highest-ranked practices in 2011—across public and private, two-year and four-year campuses— included widely-used practices such as academic support and first-year-student programs as well as a few practices that were only used by about half or less of respondents.

- Honors programs and mandatory advising were among the top-ranked practices across institution types.

- Up to 55 percent of private college respondents, up to 73 percent of public university respondents, and up to 64 percent of two-year public college respondents reported using practices that the majority of respondents in their sector judged to be "minimally effective."

- Programs specifically designed for retaining online learners ranked among the least-used practices for four-year private and public institutions, despite the fact that 84 percent of respondents from four-year private institutions and 60 percent of respondents from four-year public institutions rated these programs "very effective" or "somewhat effective."

- Just over half of respondents reported that they identify effective practices primarily based on outcomes measures, with the rest reporting that they primarily use student feedback or informal feedback.

- Less than half of respondents reported having a current, written retention plan that they felt good about and less than half of respondents reported having a campuswide committee for student retention that they felt good about.

- The general trend in cohort graduation rates over the past three years showed stable or slightly increasing rates for the majority of institutions.

- Among the most significant retention issues facing colleges and universities across sectors, as identified by a final open-ended question on the poll, were: 1) underprepared or unmotivated students; and 2) respondents' desire for greater collaboration and agreement among faculty, staff, and senior administration regarding retention concerns.

Readers are encouraged to compare the findings in this report to the most and least effective practices on their campus. Additional benchmark reports can be found at www.noellevitz.com/BenchmarkReports.

Noel-Levitz®

Highlights

Appendix/Complete findings

Don't miss these findings

Findings color key

Four-year private institutions

Four-year public institutions

Two-year public institutions

About the rankings: *New and improved methodology*

To identify most and least effective practices for this 2011 study, as well as least-used practices, respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of 53 practices on the following scale:

○ Very effective ○ Somewhat effective ○ Minimally effective ○ Method not used

To report the findings as accurately as possible, the rankings in this report are, for the first time, based only on the relative effectiveness options that were chosen by respondents: very effective, somewhat effective, and minimally effective.

This approach of excluding the fourth response, method not used, allows emerging, less-frequently-used practices to be included in the top rankings—those practices that are rated very effective but which currently are not being used by the majority of institutions. For example, as reported on page 4, only 19 percent of respondents from public universities reported using a CRM (customer relationship management system). Yet among those respondents, 33 percent rated the practice "very effective," placing it on the list of the 10 most effective practices for that sector. For more information on this year's study, please see page 30.

Note: To identify the proportion of institutions using a particular method, we simply calculated the inverse of those who selected "Method not used."

Nine additional practices, focused solely on serving online learners, were also rated using the above scale and appear separately in the Appendix of this report.

10 most effective practices by institution type

The first three tables in this report show the 10 items that respondents from each institution type rated "very effective" most frequently among 53 items that were measured for their effectiveness. For rankings of all 53 items, please see the Appendix. To understand how the rankings were established, see page 2.
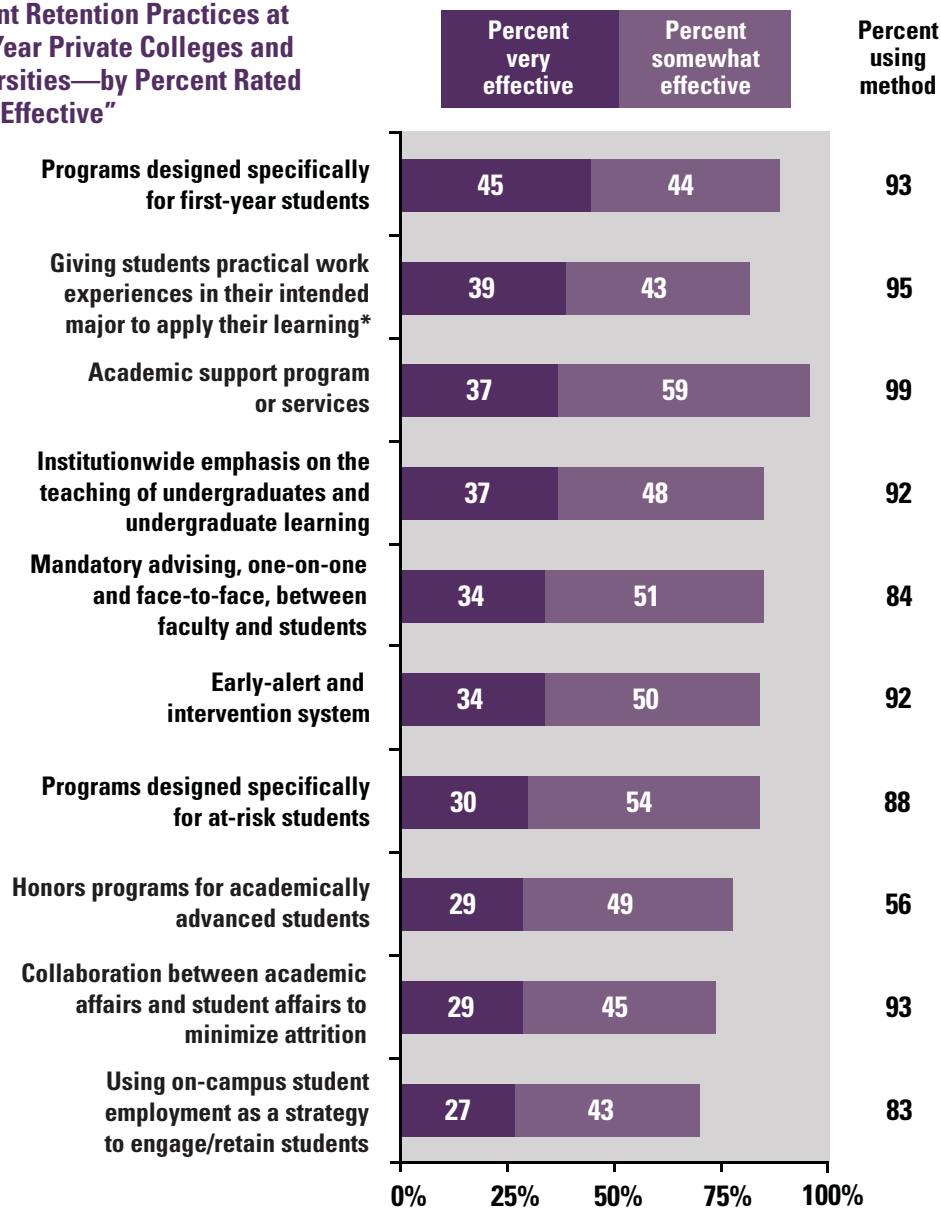
10 most effective practices at four-year private institutions

**Four-year
private
institutions**

**Mandatory
advising
and honors
programs
were given
high marks by
respondents
from all three
institution
types (four-
year private,
four-year
public,
and two-
year public
institutions).**

**See the
"Top-Ranked
Practices at
a Glance"
table on
page 29 of
the Appendix
to compare
the highest-
ranked
practices
across
sectors.**

Student Retention Practices at Four-Year Private Colleges and Universities—by Percent Rated "Very Effective"	Percent very effective	Percent somewhat effective	Percent using method
Programs designed specifically for first-year students	45	44	93
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major to apply their learning*	39	43	95
Academic support program or services	37	59	99
Institutionwide emphasis on the teaching of undergraduates and undergraduate learning	37	48	92
Mandatory advising, one-on-one and face-to-face, between faculty and students	34	51	84
Early-alert and intervention system	34	50	92
Programs designed specifically for at-risk students	30	54	88
Honors programs for academically advanced students	29	49	56
Collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs to minimize attrition	29	45	93
Using on-campus student employment as a strategy to engage/retain students	27	43	83

0%   25%   50%   75%   100%

Many of the highest-ranking practices identified by respondents from private colleges are well-known and widely used. However, in addition to showing which practices were ranked the highest, this table shows that one of these practices, honors programs for academically advanced students, was only being used by about half of the respondents (56 percent).

* The complete wording of this item on the poll was "Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major to apply their learning (e.g., internships, volunteer work, service learning, etc.)."
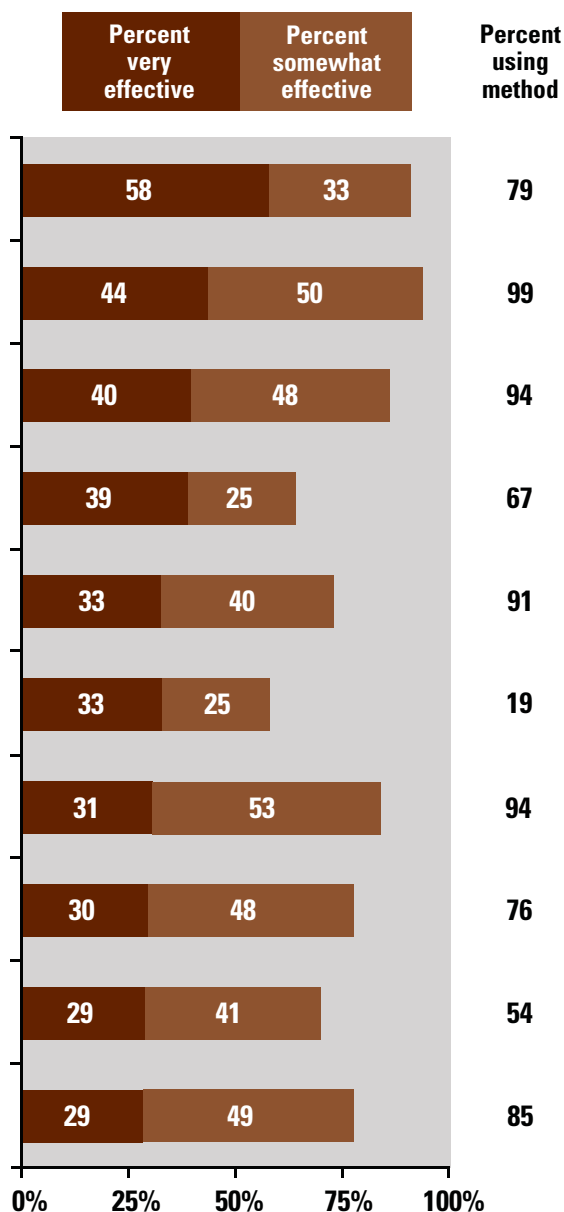
10 most effective practices at four-year public institutions

Four-year public institutions

Customer relationship management systems (CRMs) were only being used by 19 percent of respondents from public universities, but 68 percent of these respondents who were using a CRM rated their system "very effective" or "somewhat effective."

See the "Top-Ranked Practices at a Glance" table on page 29 of the Appendix to compare the highest-ranked practices across sectors.

Student Retention Practices at Four-Year Public Universities— by Percent Rated "Very Effective"

Practice	Percent very effective	Percent somewhat effective	Percent using method
Honors programs for academically advanced students	58	33	79
Academic support program or services	44	50	99
Programs designed specifically for first-year students	40	48	94
Programs designed specifically for conditionally admitted students	39	25	67
Programs designed specifically for at-risk students	33	40	91
Using a CRM (customer relationship management system) software application to help track and manage student retention	33	25	19
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major to apply their learning*	31	53	94
Mandatory advising, one-on-one and face-to-face, between faculty and students	30	48	76
Title III or Title V funding**	29	41	54
Learning communities	29	49	85

Many of the highest-ranking practices identified by respondents from public universities are well-known and widely used. However, in addition to showing which practices were ranked the highest, this table shows that two of these practices were only being used by about half or less of the respondents: using a CRM (customer relationship management system) to help track and manage student retention, used by 19 percent of respondents, and Title III or Title V funding, used by 54 percent of respondents.

* The complete wording of this item in the poll was "Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major to apply their learning (e.g., internships, volunteer work, service learning, etc.)."

**See the Appendix of this report for a list of areas commonly funded by Title III and Title V, shown on page 22.
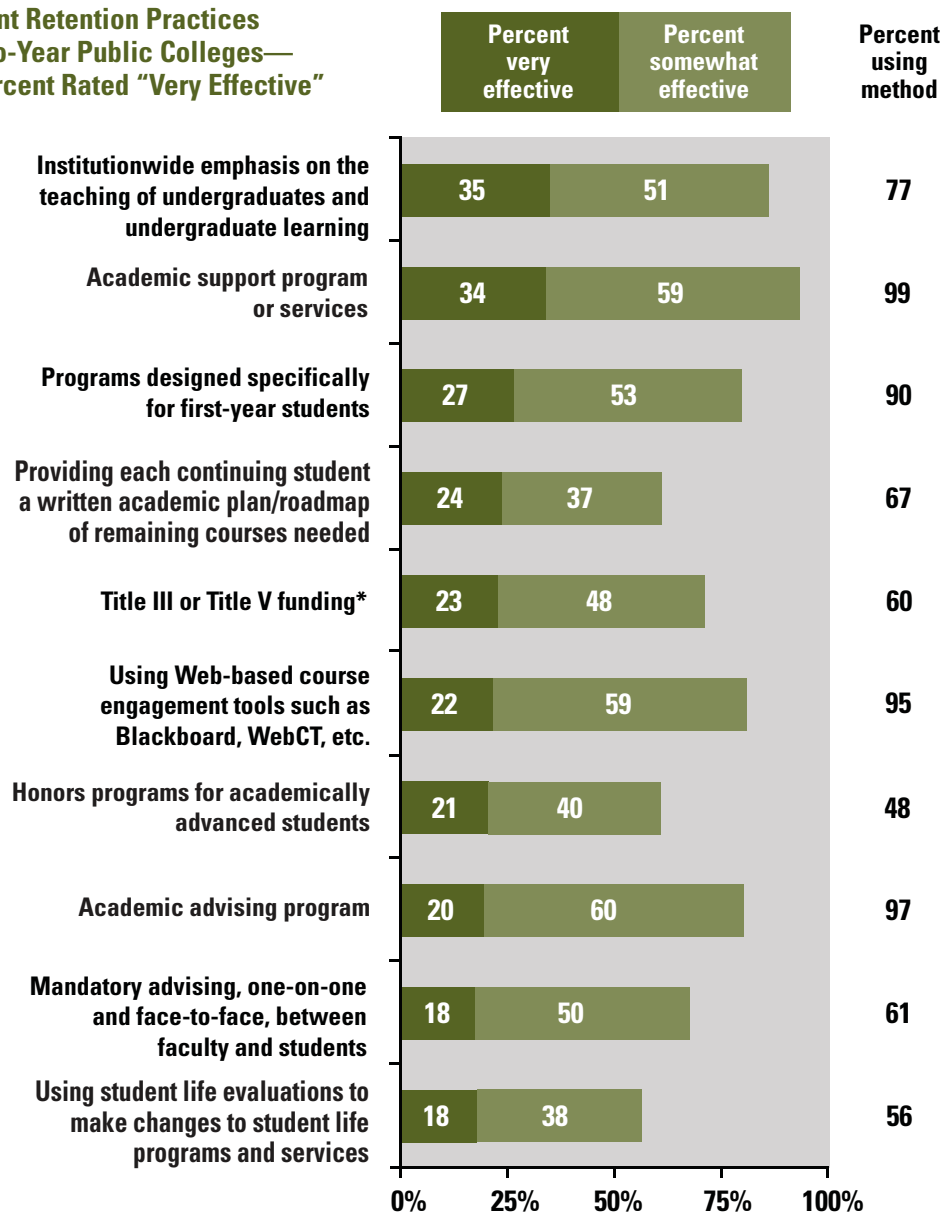
10 most effective practices at two-year public institutions

Respondents from two-year public colleges identified four practices in their list of 10 that were not identified by respondents from four-year institutions.

See the "Top-Ranked Practices at a Glance" table on page 29 of the Appendix to compare the highest-ranked practices across sectors.

Student Retention Practices at Two-Year Public Colleges— by Percent Rated "Very Effective"

Student Retention Practices	Percent very effective	Percent somewhat effective	Percent using method
Institutionwide emphasis on the teaching of undergraduates and undergraduate learning	35	51	77
Academic support program or services	34	59	99
Programs designed specifically for first-year students	27	53	90
Providing each continuing student a written academic plan/roadmap of remaining courses needed	24	37	67
Title III or Title V funding*	23	48	60
Using Web-based course engagement tools such as Blackboard, WebCT, etc.	22	59	95
Honors programs for academically advanced students	21	40	48
Academic advising program	20	60	97
Mandatory advising, one-on-one and face-to-face, between faculty and students	18	50	61
Using student life evaluations to make changes to student life programs and services	18	38	56

Many of the highest-ranking practices identified by respondents from two-year public colleges are well-known and widely used. However, in addition to showing which practices were ranked the highest, this table shows that two of these practices were only being used by about half of respondents: offering honor programs for academically advanced students, used by 48 percent of respondents, and using student life evaluations to make changes to student life programs and services, used by 56 percent of respondents.

* See the Appendix of this report for a list of areas commonly funded by Title III and Title V, shown on page 28.
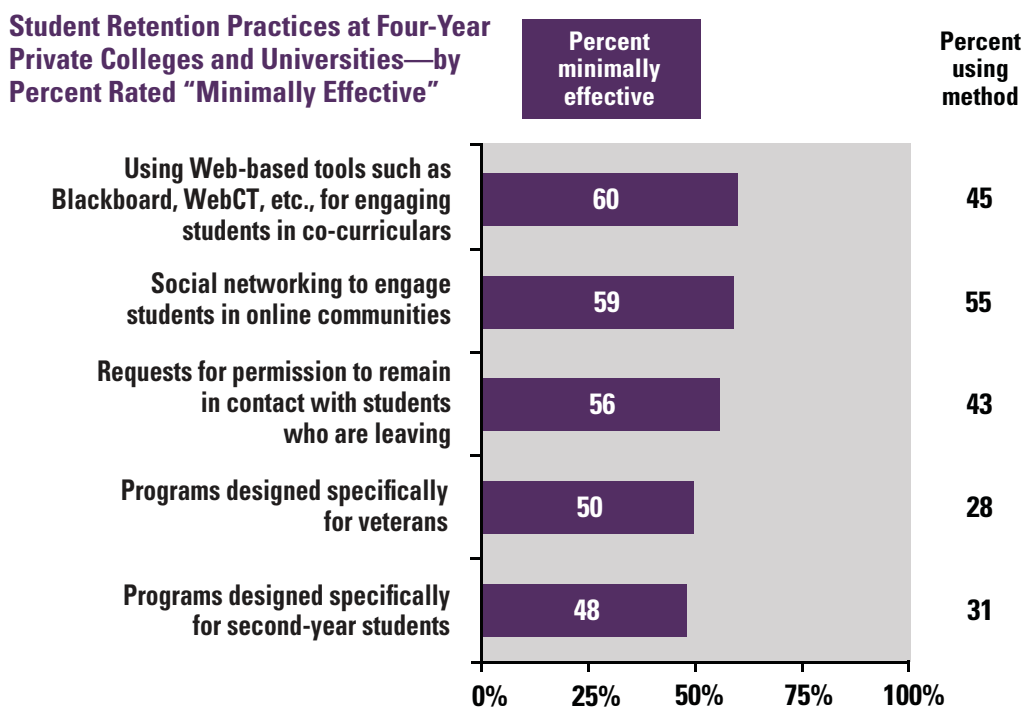
Five least-effective and five least-used practices

The following three tables show the five items that respondents from each institution type rated "minimally effective" most frequently among 53 items that were measured for their effectiveness, followed by the five items that respondents rated "method not used" most frequently.

Five *least-effective* practices at four-year private institutions

Social networking to engage students in online communities, a practice used by 55 percent of respondents from private colleges, was among the five least-effective practices for this sector.

Student Retention Practices at Four-Year Private Colleges and Universities—by Percent Rated "Minimally Effective"	Percent minimally effective	Percent using method
Using Web-based tools such as Blackboard, WebCT, etc., for engaging students in co-curriculars	60	45
Social networking to engage students in online communities	59	55
Requests for permission to remain in contact with students who are leaving	56	43
Programs designed specifically for veterans	50	28
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	48	31

In addition to showing the five least-effective practices, this table indicates that approximately half of respondents from four-year private colleges are using three practices that more than half of respondents identified as minimally effective. These included requests for permission to remain in contact with students who are leaving, used by 43 percent of respondents; using Web-based tools such as Blackboard, WebCT, etc., for engaging students in co-curriculars, used by 45 percent of respondents; and social networking to engage students in online communities, used by 55 percent of respondents.

Five *least-used* practices at four-year private institutions

Student Retention Practices at Four-Year Private Colleges and Universities—by Lowest Percent Using Method	Percent using method
Using a CRM (customer relationship management system) software application to help track and manage student retention	19.2%
Programs designed specifically for online learners*	19.4%
Programs designed specifically for veterans	28.1%
Programs designed specifically for adult/non-traditional students	30.2%
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	30.8%

Note that least-used is a very different rating than least-effective and may represent emerging opportunities.
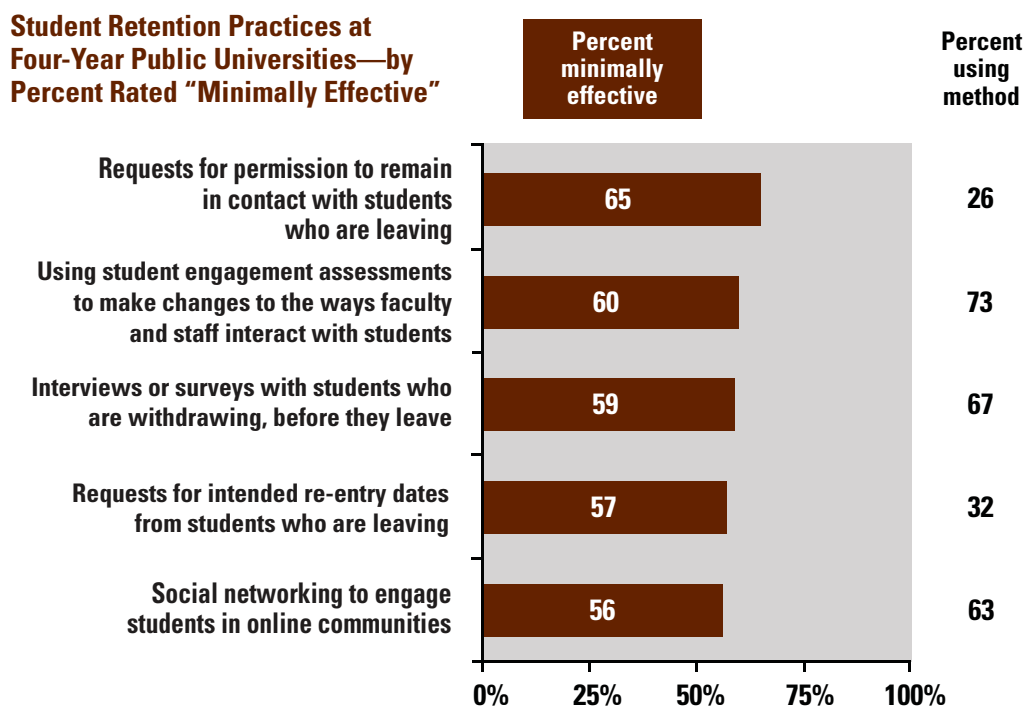
Even though only 19 percent of respondents from four-year private institutions reported offering programs designed specifically for online learners, 84 percent of these respondents rated these programs either "somewhat effective" or "very effective," as shown in the Appendix on page 13.

* Don't miss the detailed breakdown of practices for online learners on page 14 of the Appendix.

Five *least-effective* practices at four-year public institutions

"Using student engagement assessments to make changes to the ways faculty and staff interact with students" was rated among the least-effective practices by respondents from public universities despite being used by 73 percent of respondents from this sector.

Student Retention Practices at Four-Year Public Universities—by Percent Rated "Minimally Effective"

	Percent minimally effective	Percent using method
Requests for permission to remain in contact with students who are leaving	65	26
Using student engagement assessments to make changes to the ways faculty and staff interact with students	60	73
Interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing, before they leave	59	67
Requests for intended re-entry dates from students who are leaving	57	32
Social networking to engage students in online communities	56	63

Along with showing the five least-effective practices, this table indicates that approximately two-thirds of respondents from public universities are using three practices that more than half of respondents identified as minimally effective. These included social networking to engage students in online communities, used by 63 percent of respondents; interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing, used by 67 percent of respondents, and using student engagement assessments to make changes to the ways faculty and staff interact with students, used by 73 percent of respondents.

Five *least-used* practices at four-year public institutions

Student Retention Practices at Four-Year Public Universities—by Lowest Percent Using Method	Percent using method
Using a CRM (customer relationship management system) software application to help track and manage student retention	19.0%
Requests for permission to remain in contact with students who are leaving	26.2%
Programs designed specifically for online learners*	30.3%
Requests for intended re-entry dates from students who are leaving	31.8%
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	37.9%

Note that least-used is a very different rating than least-effective and may represent emerging opportunities.
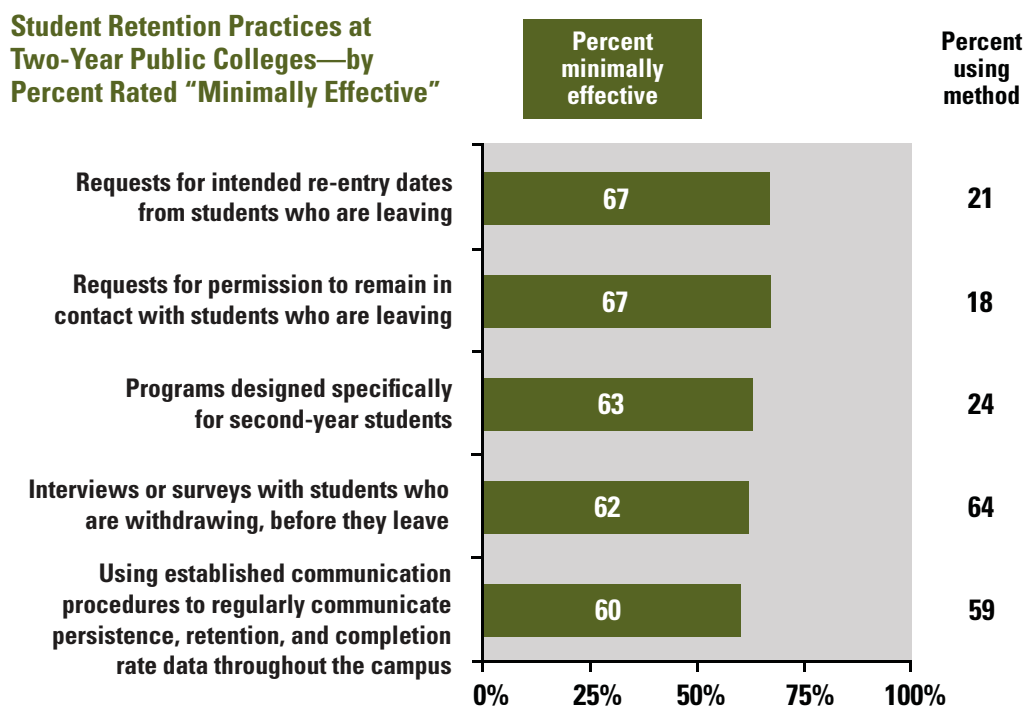
Even though only about one-third of respondents from four-year public universities reported offering programs designed specifically for online learners and second-year students, 60 percent of these respondents rated these programs either "somewhat effective" or "very effective," as shown in the Appendix on pages 18 and 19.

* Don't miss the detailed breakdown of practices for online learners on page 20 of the Appendix.

Five *least-effective* practices at two-year public institutions

Interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing were used by 64 percent of respondents from two-year public colleges, despite being rated among the five least-effective practices for this sector.

Student Retention Practices at Two-Year Public Colleges—by Percent Rated "Minimally Effective"	Percent minimally effective	Percent using method
Requests for intended re-entry dates from students who are leaving	67	21
Requests for permission to remain in contact with students who are leaving	67	18
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	63	24
Interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing, before they leave	62	64
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate persistence, retention, and completion rate data throughout the campus	60	59

In addition to showing the five least-effective practices, this table indicates that more than half of respondents from two-year public colleges are using two practices that most respondents identified as minimally effective. These included using established communication procedures to regularly communicate persistence data throughout the campus, used by 59 percent of respondents, and interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing, used by 64 percent of respondents.

Five *least-used* practices at two-year public institutions

Student Retention Practices at Two-Year Public Colleges—by Lowest Percent Using Method	Percent using method
Using a CRM (customer relationship management system) software application to help track and manage student retention	15.2%
Requests for permission to remain in contact with students who are leaving	18.2%
Requests for intended re-entry dates from students who are leaving	21.2%
Programs designed specifically for conditionally admitted students	22.0%
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	24.2%

Note that least-used is a very different rating than least-effective and may represent emerging opportunities.

Even though only 22 percent of respondents from two-year public colleges reported they had programs designed specifically for conditionally admitted students, 64 percent of these respondents indicated that these programs were "very effective" or "somewhat effective," as shown in the appendix on page 25.

Planning and leadership practices

This section highlights planning and leadership practices for student retention, including the primary type of data institutions use to determine their most and least effective practices and quality ratings for retention plans and committees. Recent trends in cohort graduation rates are also included in this section.

For additional and more complete data on these findings, please refer to the Appendix (four-year private institutions, see pages 14-16, four-year public institutions, see pages 20-22, two-year public institutions, see pages 26-28).

How colleges and universities determine their most and least effective practices for student retention

Primary Data for Identifying Effective Retention Practices:	Four-year private	Four-year public	Two-year public
Outcomes data	51.9%	64.1%	57.6%
Informal feedback mechanisms	30.2%	29.7%	29.3%
Student feedback data	17.8%	6.3%	13.1%

As shown above, more than half of colleges and universities nationwide indicated that they are primarily using outcomes data to determine their most and least effective retention practices, while about 30 percent of institutions primarily use informal feedback mechanisms and between 6 percent and 18 percent of institutions primarily use student feedback data.

Using outcomes data as the primary basis for identifying effective practices is the preferred approach that Noel-Levitz recommends to its consulting clients, and we encourage all campuses to adopt this standard.

For this item on the poll, respondents answered the question, "Of all the practices your campus is using to increase retention, how do you determine which are the most and least effective? (Please select one response)"
○ We rely primarily on student feedback data to determine levels of effectiveness
○ We rely primarily on outcomes data to determine levels of effectiveness
○ We rely primarily on informal feedback mechanisms to determine levels of effectiveness

Two of the most significant retention challenges facing campuses today

In response to an open-ended question on the poll that asked respondents to identify their single-biggest retention challenge, respondents identified a wide range of issues. However, two issues surfaced more frequently than others:

✓ Collaboration/Institutional Buy-In Issues

✓ Students' Academic Preparation and Motivation

The first issue included the desire of the respondents for more collaboration and agreement among faculty, staff, and senior administration regarding retention concerns. The second issue included the problem of serving underprepared and/or unmotivated students.

To see the top three issues identified by respondents from each sector, please refer to the Appendix (four-year private institutions, see page 16, four-year public institutions, see page 22, two-year public institutions, see page 28).

Quality and use of retention plans, ratings of retention leadership

Survey Items		Percent of respondents in agreement					
		Four-year private		**Four-year public**		**Two-year public**	
		Yes	**Yes, *and it's* of good or excellent quality***	**Yes**	**Yes, *and it's* of good or excellent quality***	**Yes**	**Yes, *and it's* of good or excellent quality***
My institution has a current, written retention plan to guide its efforts	2011	60.0%	33.8%	60.6%	43.9%	60.0%	27.0%
	2009	63.7%	33.9%	67.2%	36.1%	56.8%	27.2%
	2007	30.1%	NA	53.0%	NA	40.2%	NA
My institution has a position that has primary responsibility for leading and coordinating retention activities and for getting retention results	2011	75.4%	53.8%	67.7%	47.7%	69.7%	36.4%
	2009	76.2%	46.5%	70.0%	48.3%	55.7%	33.0%
	2007	58.5%	NA	56.1%	NA	44.9%	NA
My institution has a retention committee that leads and coordinates retention activities	2011	79.8%	49.6%	70.8%	46.2%	63.6%	29.3%
	2009	79.2%	45.3%	88.3%	53.3%	67.1%	34.1%
	2007	61.8%	NA	65.2%	NA	57.5%	NA

Less than half of respondents reported having a current, written retention plan that they rated good or excellent, and less than half rated their campuswide committee for student retention good or excellent. Findings from previous studies conducted by Noel-Levitz in 2009 and 2007 are included above for comparison.

For the items above, respondents were instructed to provide quality ratings using the following five-point scale:
○ Yes, but POOR quality   ○ Yes, FAIR quality   ○ Yes, GOOD quality   ○ Yes, EXCELLENT quality   ○ No (nonexistent)

* These percentages indicate the percentage of respondents who rated the quality of these items as "good" or "excellent" as opposed to "poor," "fair," or "no" (nonexistent).

Graduation rate trends

Cohort Graduation Rate Trend Over the Past Three Years:	**Four-year private**	**Four-year public**	**Two-year public**
Increased 10% or more	6.3%	0.0%	3.2%
Increased 5% to 9.9%	7.9%	10.9%	6.4%
Increased 1% to 4.9%	**28.3%**	**42.2%**	**33.0%**
Remained stable (within +/- 1%)	**44.9%**	**39.1%**	**47.9%**
Decreased 1% to 4.9%	11.0%	4.7%	7.4%
Decreased 5% to 9.9%	1.6%	3.1%	2.1%
Decreased 10% or more	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

For all sectors, the trend in cohort graduation rates over the past three years shows either stable or slightly increasing rates, with most institutions reporting changes in the range of -1 percent to 5 percent, as highlighted above.

Missed opportunity? Campuses that reported an increase in graduate rates also reported that they had a retention committee which was empowered to make decisions affecting multiple areas of campus, based on a separate cross-tab analysis of the above findings with the committee findings shown in the Appendix under Planning and Leadership Practices. This suggests that campuses that want to increase their graduation rates should consider forming or empowering campuswide retention committees.

For this item on the poll, respondents were instructed to "select one" from the above-listed seven options in response to the question, "What has been the general trend of your institution's cohort graduation rate during the past three years?"

Appendix: Complete findings by institution type

The following tables include the complete findings of this study, again color-coded with three colors:

Pages 11-16:

Four-year private institutions

Pages 17-22:

Four-year public institutions

Pages 23-28:

Two-year public institutions

NA notation: Please note that effectiveness ratings are unavailable (shown as "NA") in cases where most of the institutions in a sector do not use the stated practice.

Effectiveness of 53 Retention Practices for Four-Year Private Colleges and Universities—*Ordered by Percent Rated "Very Effective"*

Survey Items—Four-Year Private Institutions	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Minimally Effective	Very or Somewhat Effective	Institutions Using Method
Programs designed specifically for first-year students	44.6%	43.8%	11.6%	88.4%	93.1%
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major to apply their learning (e.g., internships, volunteer work, service learning, etc.)	38.7%	42.7%	18.5%	81.5%	95.4%
Academic support program or services	37.2%	58.9%	3.9%	96.1%	99.2%
Institutionwide emphasis on the teaching of undergraduates and undergraduate learning	36.7%	47.5%	15.8%	84.2%	92.3%
Mandatory advising, one-on-one and face-to-face, between faculty and students	34.3%	50.9%	14.8%	85.2%	84.4%
Early-alert and intervention system	33.6%	49.6%	16.8%	83.2%	91.5%
Programs designed specifically for at-risk students	30.1%	54.0%	15.9%	84.1%	87.6%
Honors programs for academically advanced students	29.2%	48.6%	22.2%	77.8%	55.8%
Collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs to minimize attrition	28.9%	44.6%	26.4%	73.6%	93.1%
Using on-campus student employment as a strategy to engage/retain students	27.4%	42.5%	30.2%	69.8%	82.8%
Setting measurable goals to improve the retention rate from term-to-term or year-to-year	26.2%	41.7%	32.0%	68.0%	79.2%
Providing each continuing student with a written academic plan/roadmap of remaining courses needed	25.8%	48.3%	25.8%	74.2%	68.5%
Tracking persistence and progression patterns of all students who matriculate	25.2%	52.1%	22.7%	77.3%	91.5%

Survey Items—Four-Year Private Institutions	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Minimally Effective	Very or Somewhat Effective	Institutions Using Method
Using student life evaluations to make changes to student life programs and services	24.3%	56.1%	19.6%	80.4%	82.9%
Programs designed specifically for conditionally admitted students	23.8%	52.4%	23.8%	76.2%	65.6%
Programs designed to increase students' success in courses with high withdrawal and/or failure rates	23.4%	45.5%	31.2%	68.8%	59.2%
Tracking retention rates for specific academic programs	22.9%	39.6%	37.5%	62.5%	73.8%
Tracking credit hours attempted versus completed for each term	22.7%	34.8%	42.4%	57.6%	50.8%
Academic advising program	22.5%	58.1%	19.4%	80.6%	99.2%
Financial aid and scholarships aimed at retention	21.4%	53.4%	25.2%	74.8%	79.2%
Using a CRM (customer relationship management system) software application to help track and manage student retention	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	60.0%	19.2%
Using Web-based course engagement tools such as Blackboard, WebCT, etc.	19.8%	55.4%	24.8%	75.2%	79.5%
Co-curricular programs aimed at retention	19.6%	56.5%	23.9%	76.1%	70.8%
Using student satisfaction assessments to make changes to minimize attrition	19.0%	52.9%	28.1%	71.9%	93.1%
Interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing, before they leave	18.6%	38.1%	43.4%	56.6%	86.9%
Statistical modeling to predict the likelihood of an incoming student persisting to degree completion	18.5%	46.2%	35.4%	64.6%	50.4%
Reviewing course sequences within academic programs to minimize attrition	18.2%	41.6%	40.3%	59.7%	59.7%
Programs designed specifically for adult/non-traditional students	17.9%	41.0%	41.0%	59.0%	30.2%
Programs designed specifically for students on probation	17.9%	51.9%	30.2%	69.8%	81.5%
Using student engagement assessments to make changes to the ways faculty and staff interact with students	17.5%	45.0%	37.5%	62.5%	62.5%
Learning communities	17.2%	39.7%	43.1%	56.9%	44.6%
Training in professional service skills for frontline staff, new employees, or student employees to make campus atmosphere student-centered	17.1%	50.0%	32.9%	67.1%	63.6%
Programs designed specifically for international students	16.7%	56.7%	26.7%	73.3%	47.2%
Development of faculty skills in instruction, advising, and student interaction	16.7%	48.1%	35.2%	64.8%	83.7%

Survey Items— Four-Year Private Institutions	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Minimally Effective	Very or Somewhat Effective	Institutions Using Method
Setting expectations for student engagement during hiring process for new faculty	16.7%	46.2%	37.2%	62.8%	60.9%
Using course grades and other learning outcomes measures to make changes to curricula to minimize attrition	16.0%	45.7%	38.3%	61.7%	62.8%
Programs designed specifically for online learners	16.0%	68.0%	16.0%	84.0%	19.4%
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate persistence, retention, and completion rate data throughout the campus	15.9%	42.0%	42.0%	58.0%	68.2%
Comprehensive plan for communicating with current students via e-mail, the Web, regular mail, etc.	15.5%	49.5%	35.1%	64.9%	75.8%
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate student satisfaction data throughout the campus	14.8%	42.0%	43.2%	56.8%	67.7%
Title III or Title V funding	14.0%	54.0%	32.0%	68.0%	39.4%
Research into what attracted and convinced students to enroll in order to keep promises and understand expectations	13.0%	43.5%	43.5%	56.5%	70.8%
Written plan to facilitate faculty/ student engagement	11.8%	47.1%	41.2%	58.8%	39.8%
Faculty mentor program to strengthen the skills of new, continuing, or adjunct faculty	11.8%	47.1%	41.2%	58.8%	54.0%
Required training program for adjunct faculty	11.5%	49.2%	39.3%	60.7%	47.7%
Programs designed specifically for transfer students	10.4%	52.2%	37.3%	62.7%	51.5%
Using financial literacy programs to assist students and parents with managing their personal finances	9.2%	44.6%	46.2%	53.8%	50.4%
Social networking to engage students in online communities	8.5%	32.4%	59.2%	40.8%	54.6%
Programs designed specifically for veterans	8.3%	41.7%	50.0%	50.0%	28.1%
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	7.5%	45.0%	47.5%	52.5%	30.8%
Using Web-based tools such as Blackboard, WebCT, etc., for engaging students in co-curriculars	6.9%	32.8%	60.3%	39.7%	44.6%
Requests for intended re-entry dates from students who are leaving	6.3%	52.5%	41.3%	58.8%	61.5%
Requests for permission to remain in contact with students who are leaving	5.5%	38.2%	56.4%	43.6%	42.6%

Effectiveness of Nine Practices for Online Learners at Four-Year Private Colleges and Universities—*Ordered by Percent Rated "Very Effective"*

Survey Items— Online Learner Programming	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Minimally Effective	Very or Somewhat Effective	Institutions Using Method
Faculty development and support in online technology and online teaching pedagogy	39.5%	39.5%	20.9%	79.1%	75.4%
Mandatory online interaction between faculty and students	39.0%	36.6%	24.4%	75.6%	68.3%
Technical support to address online connection issues	38.1%	42.9%	19.0%	81.0%	75.0%
Feedback mechanisms to identify program improvements for online learners	27.0%	37.8%	35.1%	64.9%	64.9%
Orientation program for online learners	20.5%	53.8%	25.6%	74.4%	66.1%
Student services geared to online learners, including registration and financial aid	20.5%	41.0%	38.5%	61.5%	66.1%
Faculty advisor assigned to each online learner	19.4%	58.1%	22.6%	77.4%	49.2%
Academic support services specifically for online learners	17.1%	51.4%	31.4%	68.6%	50.0%
Early-alert and intervention system for online learners	7.1%	42.9%	50.0%	50.0%	49.1%

Planning and Leadership Practices for Student Retention at Four-Year Private Colleges and Universities

Survey Items— Quality of Written Plan and Retention Leadership	Yes, but Poor Quality	Yes, Fair Quality	Yes, Good Quality	Yes, Excellent Quality	Institutions Using Method
My institution has a current, written retention plan to guide its efforts	6.9%	19.2%	25.4%	8.5%	60.0%
My institution has a position that has primary responsibility for leading and coordinating retention activities and for getting retention results	6.2%	15.4%	27.7%	26.2%	75.4%
My institution has a retention committee that leads and coordinates retention activities	10.1%	20.2%	27.1%	22.5%	79.8%

Respondents rated the quality of these items as "excellent," "good," "fair," "poor," or "no"/nonexistent.

Planning and Leadership Practices for Student Retention at Four-Year Private Colleges and Universities, *Continued*

Annual Updating of Written Retention Plan	Percent yes
Do you create or update your retention plan annually? (Yes/No)	49.0%

Empowerment of Retention Committee	Percent yes
Is the retention committee empowered to make decisions that affect multiple areas of campus? (Yes/No)	41.1%

General Trend of Cohort Graduation Rate Over Past Three Years	Percent in agreement
Increased 10% or more	6.3%
Increased 5% to 9.9%	7.9%
Increased 1% to 4.9%	28.3%
Remained stable (within +/- 1%)	44.9%
Decreased 1% to 4.9%	11.0%
Decreased 5% to 9.9%	1.6%
Decreased 10% or more	0.0%

For this item, respondents were instructed to "select one" from the above-listed seven options in response to the question, "What has been the general trend of your institution's cohort graduation rate during the past three years?"

In addition, the following instructions were included:
4-year institutions: This is first-time, full-time freshmen who completed a four-year degree within five or six years.
2-year institutions: This is first-time, full-time freshmen who completed a two-year degree within two or three years.

Primary Method For Determining Most and Least Effective Practices	Percent in agreement
We rely primarily on outcomes data to determine levels of effectiveness	51.9%
We rely primarily on informal feedback mechanisms to determine levels of effectiveness	30.2%
We rely primarily on student feedback data to determine levels of effectiveness	17.8%

For this item, respondents were instructed to "select one" of the three options listed above in response to the question, "Of all the practices your campus is using to increase retention, how do you determine which are the most and least effective?"

Planning and Leadership Practices for Student Retention at Four-Year Private Colleges and Universities, *Continued*

Biggest Retention Challenges	Percent in agreement
Economy/Finances/Affordability	30.8%
Collaboration/Institutional Buy-in Issues	15.4%
Students' Academic Preparation and Motivation	14.3%

For this item (the only open-ended item in this study), respondents answered the open-ended question, "Overall, what is the single-biggest retention challenge facing your institution today?" The most prevalent themes appear above.

Areas Supported by Title III or Title V Funding at Four-Year Private Colleges and Universities

Areas of Title III/Title V Funding	Percent in agreement
Retention initiatives	6.9%
Technology integration into the classroom	6.9%
Advising initiatives	6.2%
Developmental education	6.2%
Faculty development	5.4%
Learning community development	3.1%
Upgrades to student information systems	2.3%
Other areas not mentioned above	1.5%

For this item, respondents were instructed to "Choose all that apply" from the above-listed eight areas in response to the question, "If you receive Title III or Title V funding, please indicate the area(s) your grant supports."

Effectiveness of 53 Retention Practices for Four-Year Public Universities—
Ordered by Percent Rated "Very Effective"

Survey Items— Four-Year Public Institutions	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Minimally Effective	Very or Somewhat Effective	Institutions Using Method
Honors programs for academically advanced students	57.7%	32.7%	9.6%	90.4%	78.8%
Academic support program or services	43.8%	50.0%	6.3%	93.8%	98.5%
Programs designed specifically for first-year students	40.3%	48.4%	11.3%	88.7%	93.9%
Programs designed specifically for conditionally admitted students	38.6%	25.0%	36.4%	63.6%	66.7%
Programs designed specifically for at-risk students	33.3%	40.0%	26.7%	73.3%	90.9%
Using a CRM (customer relationship management system) software application to help track and manage student retention	33.3%	25.0%	41.7%	58.3%	19.0%
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major to apply their learning (e.g., internships, volunteer work, service learning, etc.)	30.6%	53.2%	16.1%	83.9%	93.9%
Mandatory advising, one-on-one and face-to-face, between faculty and students	30.0%	48.0%	22.0%	78.0%	75.8%
Title III or Title V funding	29.4%	41.2%	29.4%	70.6%	54.0%
Learning communities	29.1%	49.1%	21.8%	78.2%	84.6%
Using Web-based course engagement tools such as Blackboard, WebCT, etc.	29.0%	51.6%	19.4%	80.6%	93.9%
Early-alert and intervention system	27.6%	44.8%	27.6%	72.4%	89.2%
Collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs to minimize attrition	27.1%	35.6%	37.3%	62.7%	90.8%
Institutionwide emphasis on the teaching of undergraduates and undergraduate learning	25.0%	58.3%	16.7%	83.3%	90.9%
Academic advising program	24.2%	68.2%	7.6%	92.4%	100.0%
Requests for permission to remain in contact with students who are leaving	23.5%	11.8%	64.7%	35.3%	26.2%
Tracking credit hours attempted versus completed for each term	23.5%	47.1%	29.4%	70.6%	52.3%
Providing each continuing student with a written academic plan/roadmap of remaining courses needed	23.5%	43.1%	33.3%	66.7%	79.7%
Tracking retention rates for specific academic programs	23.2%	60.7%	16.1%	83.9%	84.8%

Survey Items—Four-Year Public Institutions	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Minimally Effective	Very or Somewhat Effective	Institutions Using Method
Tracking persistence and progression patterns of all students who matriculate	22.8%	57.9%	19.3%	80.7%	86.4%
Financial aid and scholarships aimed at retention	21.8%	54.5%	23.6%	76.4%	87.3%
Comprehensive plan for communicating with current students via e-mail, the Web, regular mail, etc.	21.2%	46.2%	32.7%	67.3%	81.3%
Using student life evaluations to make changes to student life programs and services	21.2%	36.5%	42.3%	57.7%	80.0%
Using on-campus student employment as a strategy to engage/retain students	21.1%	54.4%	24.6%	75.4%	86.4%
Requests for intended re-entry dates from students who are leaving	19.0%	23.8%	57.1%	42.9%	31.8%
Programs designed specifically for international students	18.2%	54.5%	27.3%	72.7%	66.7%
Programs designed specifically for students on probation	18.0%	40.0%	42.0%	58.0%	75.8%
Using Web-based tools such as Blackboard, WebCT, etc., for engaging students in co-curriculars	17.9%	35.9%	46.2%	53.8%	60.9%
Using student satisfaction assessments to make changes to minimize attrition	16.7%	42.6%	40.7%	59.3%	83.1%
Programs designed to increase students' success in courses with high withdrawal and/or failure rates	16.3%	42.9%	40.8%	59.2%	76.6%
Setting measurable goals to improve the retention rate from term-to-term or year-to-year	16.1%	62.5%	21.4%	78.6%	84.8%
Training in professional service skills for frontline staff, new employees, or student employees to make campus atmosphere student-centered	15.7%	52.9%	31.4%	68.6%	78.5%
Co-curricular programs aimed at retention	13.0%	59.3%	27.8%	72.2%	83.1%
Development of faculty skills in instruction, advising, and student interaction	12.5%	50.0%	37.5%	62.5%	84.8%
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate persistence, retention, and completion rate data throughout the campus	12.2%	36.7%	51.0%	49.0%	75.4%
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	12.0%	48.0%	40.0%	60.0%	37.9%
Statistical modeling to predict the likelihood of an incoming student persisting to degree completion	11.8%	47.1%	41.2%	58.8%	51.5%

Survey Items—Four-Year Public Institutions	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Minimally Effective	Very or Somewhat Effective	Institutions Using Method
Using course grades and other learning outcomes measures to make changes to curricula to minimize attrition	10.8%	37.8%	51.4%	48.6%	57.8%
Programs designed specifically for veterans	10.0%	45.0%	45.0%	55.0%	61.5%
Written plan to facilitate faculty/student engagement	9.7%	45.2%	45.2%	54.8%	47.0%
Using financial literacy programs to assist students and parents with managing their personal finances	9.3%	44.2%	46.5%	53.5%	67.2%
Programs designed specifically for adult/non-traditional students	9.1%	63.6%	27.3%	72.7%	50.0%
Setting expectations for student engagement during hiring process for new faculty	8.3%	50.0%	41.7%	58.3%	56.3%
Faculty mentor program to strengthen the skills of new, continuing, or adjunct faculty	8.0%	50.0%	42.0%	58.0%	76.9%
Social networking to engage students in online communities	7.3%	36.6%	56.1%	43.9%	63.1%
Research into what attracted and convinced students to enroll in order to keep promises and understand expectations	7.0%	41.9%	51.2%	48.8%	68.3%
Interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing, before they leave	6.8%	34.1%	59.1%	40.9%	66.7%
Programs designed specifically for transfer students	6.5%	56.5%	37.0%	63.0%	69.7%
Reviewing course sequences within academic programs to minimize attrition	5.7%	60.0%	34.3%	65.7%	54.7%
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate student satisfaction data throughout the campus	4.5%	45.5%	50.0%	50.0%	67.7%
Using student engagement assessments to make changes to the ways faculty and staff interact with students	4.2%	35.4%	60.4%	39.6%	72.7%
Programs designed specifically for online learners	0.0%	60.0%	40.0%	60.0%	30.3%
Required training program for adjunct faculty	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	50.0%	43.1%

Effectiveness of Nine Practices for Online Learners at Four-Year Public Universities—*Ordered by Percent Rated "Very Effective"*

Survey Items— Online Learner Programming	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Minimally Effective	Very or Somewhat Effective	Institutions Using Method
Technical support to address online connection issues	31.6%	36.8%	31.6%	68.4%	84.4%
Faculty development and support in online technology and online teaching pedagogy	28.6%	45.7%	25.7%	74.3%	79.5%
Student services geared to online learners, including registration and financial aid	20.0%	44.0%	36.0%	64.0%	56.8%
Early-alert and intervention system for online learners	18.2%	27.3%	54.5%	45.5%	48.9%
Faculty advisor assigned to each online learner	17.6%	47.1%	35.3%	64.7%	37.0%
Feedback mechanisms to identify program improvements for online learners	13.8%	31.0%	55.2%	44.8%	64.4%
Mandatory online interaction between faculty and students	13.3%	53.3%	33.3%	66.7%	66.7%
Academic support services specifically for online learners	11.1%	44.4%	44.4%	55.6%	56.3%
Orientation program for online learners	7.7%	50.0%	42.3%	57.7%	57.8%

Planning and Leadership Practices for Student Retention at Four-Year Public Universities

Survey Items— Quality of Written Plan and Retention Leadership	Yes, but Poor Quality	Yes, Fair Quality	Yes, Good Quality	Yes, Excellent Quality	Institutions Using Method
My institution has a current, written retention plan to guide its efforts	6.1%	10.6%	24.2%	19.7%	60.6%
My institution has a position that has primary responsibility for leading and coordinating retention activities and for getting retention results	9.2%	10.8%	15.4%	32.3%	67.7%
My institution has a retention committee that leads and coordinates retention activities	10.8%	13.8%	15.4%	30.8%	70.8%

Respondents rated the quality of these items as "excellent," "good," "fair," "poor," or "no"/nonexistent.

Planning and Leadership Practices for Student Retention at Four-Year Public Universities, *Continued*

Annual Updating of Written Retention Plan	Percent yes
Do you create or update your retention plan annually? (Yes/No)	57.1%

Empowerment of Retention Committee	Percent yes
Is the retention committee empowered to make decisions that affect multiple areas of campus? (Yes/No)	53.6%

General Trend of Cohort Graduation Rate Over Past Three Years	Percent in agreement
Increased 10% or more	0.0%
Increased 5% to 9.9%	10.9%
Increased 1% to 4.9%	42.2%
Remained stable (within +/- 1%)	39.1%
Decreased 1% to 4.9%	4.7%
Decreased 5% to 9.9%	3.1%
Decreased 10% or more	0.0%

For this item, respondents were instructed to "select one" from the above-listed seven options in response to the question, "What has been the general trend of your institution's cohort graduation rate during the past three years?"

In addition, the following instructions were included:
4-year institutions: This is first-time, full-time freshmen who completed a four-year degree within five or six years.
2-year institutions: This is first-time, full-time freshmen who completed a two-year degree within two or three years.

Primary Method For Determining Most and Least Effective Practices	Percent in agreement
We rely primarily on outcomes data to determine levels of effectiveness	64.1%
We rely primarily on informal feedback mechanisms to determine levels of effectiveness	29.7%
We rely primarily on student feedback data to determine levels of effectiveness	6.3%

For this item, respondents were instructed to "select one" of the three options listed above in response to the question, "Of all the practices your campus is using to increase retention, how do you determine which are the most and least effective?"

Planning and Leadership Practices for Student Retention at Four-Year Public Universities, *Continued*

Biggest Retention Challenges	Percent in agreement
Economy/Finances/Affordability	20.4%
Collaboration/Institutional Buy-in Issues	22.2%
Students' Academic Preparation and Motivation	14.8%

For this item (the only open-ended item in this study), respondents answered the open-ended question, "Overall, what is the single-biggest retention challenge facing your institution today?" The most prevalent themes appear above.

Areas Supported by Title III or Title V Funding at Four-Year Public Universities

Areas of Title III/Title V Funding	Percent in agreement
Technology integration into the classroom	13.6%
Developmental education	12.1%
Retention initiatives	12.1%
Advising initiatives	10.6%
Upgrades to student information systems	9.1%
Faculty development	7.6%
Learning community development	1.5%
Other areas not mentioned above	0.0%

For this item, respondents were instructed to "Choose all that apply" from the above-listed eight areas in response to the question, "If you receive Title III or Title V funding, please indicate the area(s) your grant supports."

Effectiveness of 53 Retention Practices for Two-Year Public Colleges—
Ordered by Percent Rated "Very Effective"

Survey Items— Two-Year Public Institutions	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Minimally Effective	Very or Somewhat Effective	Institutions Using Method
Institutionwide emphasis on the teaching of undergraduates and undergraduate learning	35.1%	50.6%	14.3%	85.7%	77.0%
Academic support program or services	33.7%	59.2%	7.1%	92.9%	99.0%
Programs designed specifically for first-year students	26.7%	53.3%	20.0%	80.0%	90.0%
Providing each continuing student with a written academic plan/ roadmap of remaining courses needed	23.9%	37.3%	38.8%	61.2%	67.0%
Title III or Title V funding	23.3%	48.3%	28.3%	71.7%	60.0%
Using Web-based course engagement tools such as Blackboard, WebCT, etc.	22.1%	58.9%	18.9%	81.1%	95.0%
Honors programs for academically advanced students	20.8%	39.6%	39.6%	60.4%	48.0%
Academic advising program	19.6%	59.8%	20.6%	79.4%	97.0%
Mandatory advising, one-on-one and face-to-face, between faculty and students	18.3%	50.0%	31.7%	68.3%	61.2%
Using student life evaluations to make changes to student life programs and services	18.2%	38.2%	43.6%	56.4%	56.1%
Using on-campus student employment as a strategy to engage/retain students	17.6%	55.3%	27.1%	72.9%	85.0%
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major to apply their learning (e.g., internships, volunteer work, service learning, etc.)	17.4%	57.0%	25.6%	74.4%	86.0%
Tracking retention rates for specific academic programs	17.3%	54.3%	28.4%	71.6%	82.7%
Faculty mentor program to strengthen the skills of new, continuing, or adjunct faculty	17.2%	43.8%	39.1%	60.9%	64.6%
Tracking credit hours attempted versus completed for each term	16.9%	44.6%	38.5%	61.5%	65.7%
Learning communities	15.7%	25.5%	58.8%	41.2%	51.5%
Comprehensive plan for communicating with current students via e-mail, the Web, regular mail, etc.	15.5%	40.5%	44.0%	56.0%	85.7%
Programs designed specifically for veterans	15.2%	34.8%	50.0%	50.0%	46.5%
Programs designed specifically for at-risk students	14.4%	52.2%	33.3%	66.7%	90.0%
Programs designed specifically for international students	14.3%	53.6%	32.1%	67.9%	28.0%

Survey Items—Two-Year Public Institutions	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Minimally Effective	Very or Somewhat Effective	Institutions Using Method
Setting expectations for student engagement during hiring process for new faculty	14.3%	44.6%	41.1%	58.9%	57.1%
Early-alert and intervention system	14.1%	59.8%	26.1%	73.9%	92.0%
Co-curricular programs aimed at retention	14.0%	45.6%	40.4%	59.6%	57.6%
Using student satisfaction assessments to make changes to minimize attrition	13.5%	43.8%	42.7%	57.3%	89.0%
Programs designed specifically for adult/non-traditional students	12.8%	34.0%	53.2%	46.8%	47.0%
Research into what attracted and convinced students to enroll in order to keep promises and understand expectations	12.5%	31.3%	56.3%	43.8%	48.5%
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate student satisfaction data throughout the campus	12.3%	30.1%	57.5%	42.5%	75.3%
Financial aid and scholarships aimed at retention	12.2%	53.7%	34.1%	65.9%	82.8%
Training in professional service skills for frontline staff, new employees, or student employees to make campus atmosphere student-centered	12.2%	46.3%	41.5%	58.5%	82.0%
Reviewing course sequences within academic programs to minimize attrition	11.9%	44.8%	43.3%	56.7%	67.7%
Social networking to engage students in online communities	11.8%	30.9%	57.4%	42.6%	68.7%
Collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs to minimize attrition	11.4%	47.7%	40.9%	59.1%	88.0%
Setting measurable goals to improve the retention rate from term-to-term or year-to-year	11.0%	46.6%	42.5%	57.5%	73.7%
Development of faculty skills in instruction, advising, and student interaction	10.2%	45.5%	44.3%	55.7%	88.0%
Required training program for adjunct faculty	10.0%	36.7%	53.3%	46.7%	60.0%
Using Web-based tools such as Blackboard, WebCT, etc., for engaging students in co-curriculars	9.8%	41.0%	49.2%	50.8%	62.2%
Tracking persistence and progression patterns of all students who matriculate	9.1%	55.8%	35.1%	64.9%	78.6%
Written plan to facilitate faculty/student engagement	9.1%	31.8%	59.1%	40.9%	44.9%
Using student engagement assessments to make changes to the ways faculty and staff interact with students	8.3%	43.1%	48.6%	51.4%	72.0%

Survey Items—Two-Year Public Institutions	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Minimally Effective	Very or Somewhat Effective	Institutions Using Method
Using course grades and other learning outcomes measures to make changes to curricula to minimize attrition	7.9%	43.4%	48.7%	51.3%	76.8%
Programs designed to increase students' success in courses with high withdrawal and/or failure rates	7.6%	45.5%	47.0%	53.0%	66.7%
Programs designed specifically for transfer students	7.4%	48.1%	44.4%	55.6%	27.0%
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate persistence, retention, and completion rate data throughout the campus	6.9%	32.8%	60.3%	39.7%	59.2%
Statistical modeling to predict the likelihood of an incoming student persisting to degree completion	6.7%	40.0%	53.3%	46.7%	30.3%
Using a CRM (customer relationship management system) software application to help track and manage student retention	6.7%	40.0%	53.3%	46.7%	15.2%
Programs designed specifically for online learners	6.0%	42.0%	52.0%	48.0%	50.0%
Programs designed specifically for students on probation	5.6%	45.8%	48.6%	51.4%	72.0%
Requests for intended re-entry dates from students who are leaving	4.8%	28.6%	66.7%	33.3%	21.2%
Programs designed specifically for conditionally admitted students	4.5%	59.1%	36.4%	63.6%	22.0%
Interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing, before they leave	3.2%	34.9%	61.9%	38.1%	63.6%
Using financial literacy programs to assist students and parents with managing their personal finances	1.6%	45.3%	53.1%	46.9%	64.0%
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	0.0%	37.5%	62.5%	37.5%	24.2%
Requests for permission to remain in contact with students who are leaving	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	33.3%	18.2%

Effectiveness of Nine Practices for Online Learners at Two-Year Public Colleges—*Ordered by Percent Rated "Very Effective"*

Survey Items—Online Learner Programming	Very Effective	Somewhat Effective	Minimally Effective	Very or Somewhat Effective	Institutions Using Method
Faculty development and support in online technology and online teaching pedagogy	36.4%	41.6%	22.1%	77.9%	95.1%
Technical support to address online connection issues	32.9%	35.5%	31.6%	68.4%	93.8%
Mandatory online interaction between faculty and students	30.5%	45.8%	23.7%	76.3%	73.8%
Orientation program for online learners	16.9%	32.3%	50.8%	49.2%	81.3%
Student services geared to online learners, including registration and financial aid	16.7%	36.7%	46.7%	53.3%	75.0%
Academic support services specifically for online learners	14.8%	55.7%	29.5%	70.5%	73.5%
Faculty advisor assigned to each online learner	14.6%	43.9%	41.5%	58.5%	50.6%
Feedback mechanisms to identify program improvements for online learners	12.1%	44.8%	43.1%	56.9%	72.5%
Early-alert and intervention system for online learners	6.8%	45.8%	47.5%	52.5%	74.7%

Planning and Leadership Practices for Student Retention at Two-Year Public Colleges

Survey Items—Quality of Written Plan and Retention Leadership	Yes, but Poor Quality	Yes, Fair Quality	Yes, Good Quality	Yes, Excellent Quality	Institutions Using Method
My institution has a current, written retention plan to guide its efforts	8.0%	25.0%	17.0%	10.0%	60.0%
My institution has a position that has primary responsibility for leading and coordinating retention activities and for getting retention results	7.1%	26.3%	25.3%	11.1%	69.7%
My institution has a retention committee that leads and coordinates retention activities	9.1%	25.3%	19.2%	10.1%	63.6%

Respondents rated the quality of these items as "excellent," "good," "fair," "poor," or "no"/nonexistent.

Planning and Leadership Practices for Student Retention at Two-Year Public Colleges, *Continued*

Annual Updating of Written Retention Plan	Percent yes
Do you create or update your retention plan annually? (Yes/No)	47.3%

Empowerment of Retention Committee	Percent yes
Is the retention committee empowered to make decisions that affect multiple areas of campus? (Yes/No)	45.8%

General Trend of Cohort Graduation Rate Over Past Three Years	Percent in agreement
Increased 10% or more	3.2%
Increased 5% to 9.9%	6.4%
Increased 1% to 4.9%	33.0%
Remained stable (within +/- 1%)	47.9%
Decreased 1% to 4.9%	7.4%
Decreased 5% to 9.9%	2.1%
Decreased 10% or more	0.0%

For this item, respondents were instructed to "select one" from the above-listed seven options in response to the question, "What has been the general trend of your institution's cohort graduation rate during the past three years?"

In addition, the following instructions were included:
4-year institutions: This is first-time, full-time freshmen who completed a four-year degree within five or six years.
2-year institutions: This is first-time, full-time freshmen who completed a two-year degree within two or three years.

Primary Method For Determining Most and Least Effective Practices	Percent in agreement
We rely primarily on informal feedback mechanisms to determine levels of effectiveness	29.3%
We rely primarily on student feedback data to determine levels of effectiveness	13.1%
We rely primarily on outcomes data to determine levels of effectiveness	57.6%

For this item, respondents were instructed to "select one" of the three options listed above in response to the question, "Of all the practices your campus is using to increase retention, how do you determine which are the most and least effective?"

Planning and Leadership Practices for Student Retention at Two-Year Public Colleges, *Continued*

Biggest Retention Challenges	Percent in agreement
Students' Academic Preparation and Motivation	21.3%
Collaboration/Institutional Buy-in Issues	14.7%
Strategic Planning/Data Analysis	13.3%

For this item (the only open-ended item in this study), respondents answered the open-ended question, "Overall, what is the single-biggest retention challenge facing your institution today?" The most prevalent themes appear above.

Areas Supported by Title III or Title V Funding at Two-Year Public Colleges

Areas of Title III/Title V Funding	Percent in agreement
Retention initiatives	31.0%
Technology integration into the classroom	25.0%
Faculty development	24.0%
Developmental education	24.0%
Advising initiatives	17.0%
Upgrades to student information systems	15.0%
Learning community development	10.0%
Other areas not mentioned above	3.0%

For this item, respondents were instructed to "Choose all that apply" from the above-listed eight areas in response to the question, "If you receive Title III or Title V funding, please indicate the area(s) your grant supports."

Top-Ranked Practices at a Glance: A Side-by-Side Comparison of the 10 Practices Rated "Very Effective" Most Frequently by the Three Institution Types in This Study

	Four-year private		Four-year public		Two-year public
1.	Programs designed specifically for first-year students	1.	Honors programs for academically advanced students	1.	Institutionwide emphasis on the teaching of undergraduates and undergraduate learning
2.	Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major to apply their learning (e.g., internships, volunteer work, service learning, etc.)	2.	Academic support program or services	2.	Academic support program or services
3.	Academic support program or services	3.	Programs designed specifically for first-year students	3.	Programs designed specifically for first-year students
4.	Institutionwide emphasis on the teaching of undergraduates and undergraduate learning	4.	Programs designed specifically for conditionally admitted students	4.	Providing each continuing student with a written academic plan/roadmap of remaining courses needed
5.	Mandatory advising, one-on-one and face-to-face, between faculty and students	5.	Programs designed specifically for at-risk students	5.	Title III or Title V funding
6.	Early-alert and intervention system	6.	Using a CRM (customer relationship management system) software application to help track and manage student retention	6.	Using Web-based course engagement tools such as Blackboard, WebCT, etc.
7.	Programs designed specifically for at-risk students	7.	Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major to apply their learning (e.g., internships, volunteer work, service learning, etc.)	7.	Honors programs for academically advanced students
8.	Honors programs for academically advanced students	8.	Mandatory advising, one-on-one and face-to-face, between faculty and students	8.	Academic advising program
9.	Collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs to minimize attrition	9.	Title III or Title V funding	9.	Mandatory advising, one-on-one and face-to-face, between faculty and students
10.	Using on-campus student employment as a strategy to engage/retain students	10.	Learning communities	10.	Using student life evaluations to make changes to student life programs and services

In most cases, the top-ranking practices were identified by more than one sector. For example, using Title III or Title V funding was a top-ranked practice for both four-year and two-year public institutions. (Title III and Title V funding was also rated "very effective" or "somewhat effective" by 68 percent of respondents from four-year private institutions, as shown on page 13.)

Responding institutions

Representatives from 296 colleges and universities participated in Noel-Levitz's national electronic poll of undergraduate student retention practices. The poll was e-mailed to provosts as well as academic affairs and student affairs officers at all accredited, two-year and four-year, degree-granting U.S. institutions. Respondents included 130 four-year private institutions, 66 four-year public institutions, and 100 two-year public institutions. The poll was completed between April 27 and May 11, 2011. Below is a list of institutions that participated.

Four-year private institutions
AIB College of Business (IA)
Alderson-Broaddus College (WV)
Anderson University (SC)
Appalachian Bible College (WV)
Arkansas Baptist College (AR)
Ashland University (OH)
Atlanta Christian College (GA)
Atlantic Union College (MA)
Avila University (MO)
Azusa Pacific University (CA)
Belhaven University (MS)
Bethel College (IN)
Biola University (CA)
Cabarrus College of Health Sciences (NC)
California College of the Arts (CA)
California Lutheran University (CA)
Capitol College (MD)
Cardinal Stritch University (WI)
Carroll College (MT)
Centenary College of Louisiana (LA)
Central Methodist University (MO)
Charleston Southern University (SC)
Chester College of New England (NH)
Clarkson University (NY)
Coe College (IA)
College of St. Joseph (VT)
Columbia Southern University (AL)
Corcoran College of Art and Design (DC)
Cornell College (IA)
Crown College (MN)
Culinary Institute of America (NY)
DeSales University (PA)
Elmhurst College (IL)
Excelsior College (NY)
Franciscan University of Steubenville (OH)
Fresno Pacific University (CA)
Geneva College (PA)
Georgian Court University (NJ)
Goldfarb School of Nursing at Barnes-Jewish College (MO)
Good Samaritan College of Nursing and Health Science (OH)
Grand View University (IA)
Hannibal-LaGrange University (MO)
Holy Names University (CA)
Immaculata University (PA)
Indiana Institute of Technology (IN)
Jacksonville University (FL)
Judson College (AL)
Juniata College (PA)
Kentucky Christian University (KY)
Keuka College (NY)
La Salle University (PA)
Laboure College (MA)
LaGrange College (GA)
Lenoir-Rhyne University (NC)
Life Pacific College (CA)
Lindsey Wilson College (KY)

Loras College (IA)
Lourdes College (OH)
Loyola University New Orleans (LA)
Lubbock Christian University (TX)
Lynchburg College (VA)
Manhattanville College (NY)
Martin Methodist College (TN)
McKendree University (IL)
Menlo College (CA)
Mercy College of Northwest Ohio (OH)
Methodist College of Nursing (IL)
Midland University (NE)
Milwaukee School of Engineering (WI)
Montreat College (NC)
Morehouse College (GA)
Mountain State University (WV)
New England Institute of Technology (RI)
North Central University (MN)
Northwest Nazarene University (ID)
Northwestern College (MN)
Oklahoma Christian University (OK)
Otis College of Art and Design (CA)
Patten University (CA)
Peirce College (PA)
Philadelphia Biblical University (PA)
Pikeville College (KY)
Polytechnic Institute of New York University (NY)
Providence Christian College (CA)
Queens University of Charlotte (NC)
Randolph-Macon College (VA)
Ranken Technical College (MO)
Robert Morris University (PA)
Roberts Wesleyan College (NY)
Rochester Institute of Technology (NY)
Roosevelt University (IL)
Saint John's University (MN)
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (IN)
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota (MN)
Schreiner University (TX)
Southeastern University (FL)
Southern Nazarene University (OK)
Southwestern Assemblies of God University (TX)
Spring Arbor University (MI)
St. Ambrose University (IA)
St. Edward's University (TX)
St. John Fisher College (NY)
St. Mary's University (TX)
Susquehanna University (PA)
Temple Baptist College (OH)
Texas Wesleyan University (TX)
The Art Institute of Fort Worth (TX)
Thomas College (ME)
Thomas More College (KY)
Tiffin University (OH)
Trinity Christian College (IL)
Union College (KY)

University of Dallas (TX)
University of Mobile (AL)
University of Saint Francis (IN)
University of Saint Mary (KS)
University of Sioux Falls (SD)
University of St. Thomas (TX)
Villa Maria College (NY)
Virginia Intermont College (VA)
Walden University (MN)
Walsh University (OH)
Western Technical College (TX)
Westminster College (MO)
Whitworth University (WA)
William Jessup University (CA)
William Penn University (IA)
William Woods University (MO)
York College (NE)
York College of Pennsylvania (PA)

Four-year public institutions
Arkansas Tech University (AR)
California State University, East Bay (CA)
Central Michigan University (MI)
Colorado State University (CO)
Coppin State University (MD)
Eastern Kentucky University (KY)
Eastern Washington University (WA)
Elizabeth City State University (NC)
Emporia State University (KS)
Fort Hays State University (KS)
Georgia State University (GA)
Grand Valley State University (MI)
Indiana University Bloomington (IN)
Indiana University East (IN)
Indiana University of Pennsylvania (PA)
Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IN)
Lamar University (TX)
Langston University (OK)
Louisiana State University (LA)
Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College (LA)
Louisiana State University at Alexandria (LA)
Mayville State University (ND)
Missouri University of Science & Technology (MO)
Missouri Western State University (MO)
Montana Tech of The University of Montana (MT)
Morgan State University (MD)
Nicholls State University (LA)
North Georgia College & State University (GA)
Northern Illinois University (IL)
Olympic College (WA)
Oregon Institute of Technology (OR)
Penn State Berks (PA)

Penn State Schuylkill (PA)
Pittsburg State University (KS)
Rogers State University (OK)
Shepherd University (WV)
Southeastern Oklahoma State University (OK)
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (IL)
Southern Polytechnic State University (GA)
State University of New York College at
    Oswego (NY)
Texas Tech University (TX)
Texas Woman's University (TX)
The City University of New York School of
    Professional Studies (NY)
The Ohio State University Mansfield
    Campus (OH)
The University of Iowa (IA)
The University of Memphis (TN)
The University of Texas at Dallas (TX)
The University of Virginia's College at
    Wise (VA)
University of Alabama at Birmingham (AL)
University of Alaska Southeast (AK)
University of Central Florida (FL)
University of Houston - Victoria (TX)
University of Maine at Fort Kent (ME)
University of Minnesota Duluth (MN)
University of New Hampshire (NH)
University of North Carolina at Charlotte (NC)
University of Pittsburgh (PA)
University of South Florida (FL)
University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (TN)
University of Tennessee at Martin (TN)
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point (WI)
Utah State University (UT)
West Texas A & M University (TX)
West Virginia University Institute of
    Technology (WV)
Western Kentucky University (KY)
Youngstown State University (OH)

Two-year public institutions
Bainbridge College (GA)
Bay de Noc Community College (MI)
Big Bend Community College (WA)
Brunswick Community College (NC)
Calhoun Community College (AL)
Carl Sandburg College (IL)
Central Arizona College (AZ)
Central New Mexico Community
    College (NM)
Central Ohio Technical College (OH)
Central Texas College (TX)
Chattahoochee Technical College (GA)
Clark College (WA)
Clark State Community College (OH)
Clatsop Community College (OR)
Cleveland State Community College (TN)
Clinton Community College (NY)
Clovis Community College (NM)
Community College of Allegheny County (PA)
Davidson County Community College (NC)
Eastern Wyoming College (WY)
Eastfield College of the Dallas County
    Community College District (TX)
Edgecombe Community College (NC)
El Centro College (TX)
Erie Community College City Campus (NY)
Estrella Mountain Community College (AZ)

Fond du Lac Tribal and Community
    College (MN)
Forsyth Technical Community College (NC)
Gateway Technical College (WI)
Grays Harbor College (WA)
H. Lavity Stoutt Community College (VI)
Hennepin Technical College (MN)
Highland Community College (IL)
Hinds Community College (MS)
Hudson Valley Community College (NY)
Indian Hills Community College (IA)
Iowa Lakes Community College (IA)
Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana-
    Southwest (IN)
Jefferson Community College (NY)
Kennebec Valley Community College (ME)
Kent State University Trumbull Campus (OH)
Kishwaukee College (IL)
Lake Region State College (ND)
Lake Superior College (MN)
Luzerne County Community College (PA)
Metropolitan Community College (MO)
Mid-Plains Community College (NE)
Midland College (TX)
Monroe County Community college (MI)
Mount Wachusett Community College (MA)
Nash Community College (NC)
New Mexico Junior College (NM)
New Mexico State University at
    Alamogordo (NM)
New Mexico State University at
    Carlsbad (NM)
Nicolet Area Technical College (WI)
North Central State College (OH)
North Hennepin Community College (MN)
Northeast Community College (NE)
Northeast Iowa Community College (IA)
Northland Community and Technical
    College (MN)
Northwest College (WY)
Ogden-Weber Applied Technology
    College (UT)
Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical
    College (SC)

Ouachita Technical College (AR)
Phoenix College (AZ)
Rend Lake College (IL)
Rock Valley College (IL)
San Antonio College (TX)
San Jacinto College District (TX)
San Juan College (NM)
Sauk Valley Community College (IL)
Scottsdale Community College (AZ)
Seminole State College (OK)
Shelton State Community College (AL)
South Central College (MN)
South Florida Community College (FL)
South Georgia College (GA)
South Plains College (TX)
South Puget Sound Community
    College (WA)
Southeastern Illinois College (IL)
Southeastern Technical College (GA)
Southwestern Community College (NC)
Spoon River College (IL)
Texarkana College (TX)
Texas State Technical College Waco (TX)
Texas State Technical College West
    Texas (TX)
Trenholm State Technical College (AL)
University of Akron-Wayne College (OH)
University of Hawaii Leeward Community
    College (HI)
University of Wisconsin Fox Valley (WI)
Volunteer State Community College (TN)
Wake Technical Community College (NC)
Wayne Community College (NC)
Weatherford College (TX)
Western Nevada College (NV)
Western Technical College (WI)
Westmoreland County Community
    College (PA)
Williston State College (ND)
Wiregrass Georgia Technical
    College (GA)
Wisconsin Indianhead Technical
    College (WI)
Wytheville Community College (VA)

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Questions about this report?

We hope you found this report to be helpful and informative. If you have questions or would like additional information about the findings, please contact Timothy Culver, Noel-Levitz vice president, at 1-800-876-1117 or tim-culver@noellevitz.com.

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A trusted partner to higher education, Noel-Levitz focuses on strategic planning for enrollment and student success. Our consultants work side by side with campus executive teams to facilitate planning and to help implement the resulting plans.

For more than 20 years, we have conducted national surveys to assist campuses with benchmarking their performance. This includes benchmarking student retention practices and outcomes, marketing/recruitment practices, monitoring student and campus usage of the Web and electronic communications, and comparing institutional budgets and policies. There is no charge or obligation for participating and responses to all survey items are strictly confidential. Participants have the advantage of receiving the findings first, as soon as they become available.

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