



2019 Effective Practices for Student Success, Retention, and Completion Report

Effective practices for two-year and four-year
undergraduate colleges and universities,
as rated by campus officials

Research sponsor



STUDENT SUCCESS



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13 Population-Specific Programs for Student Success/Retention/Completion (Ordered by Percent Rated "Very Effective" in 2019)

FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS							
PROGRAM	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Programs designed specifically for first-year students (e.g., orientation for first-year students, a first-year experience program)	94%	96%	42%	47%	11%	89%	93%
Honors programs for academically advanced students	78%	61%	41%	49%	9%	91%	79%
Programs designed specifically for adult/nontraditional students	38%	51%	27%	41%	32%	68%	83%
Programs designed specifically for veterans	37%	38%	25%	40%	35%	65%	57%
Programs for first-generation students	52%	48%	22%	44%	35%	65%	71%
Programs designed specifically for online learners	32%	39%	20%	54%	26%	74%	65%
Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk academically	86%	82%	17%	58%	25%	75%	82%
Programs designed specifically for under-represented populations	68%	58%	16%	58%	26%	74%	76%
Programs designed specifically for international students	67%	54%	14%	59%	27%	73%	65%
Programs designed specifically for transfer students	63%	56%	12%	46%	42%	58%	68%
Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk for reasons other than academics	66%	62%	9%	54%	37%	63%	65%
Programs for part-time students	21%	27%	9%	32%	59%	41%	43%
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	28%	41%	3%	43%	53%	47%	69%

FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS							
PROGRAM	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Honors programs for academically advanced students	91%	78%	46%	47%	7%	93%	95%
Programs designed specifically for first-year students (e.g., orientation for first-year students, a first-year experience program)	96%	85%	38%	53%	10%	90%	96%
Programs designed specifically for veterans	79%	78%	27%	44%	29%	71%	86%
Programs for first-generation students	75%	67%	27%	52%	21%	79%	67%
Programs designed specifically for under-represented populations	84%	85%	25%	51%	24%	76%	83%
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	33%	23%	20%	28%	52%	48%	50%
Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk academically	91%	85%	19%	50%	31%	69%	61%
Programs designed specifically for adult/nontraditional students	45%	48%	18%	32%	50%	50%	46%
Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk for reasons other than academics	71%	59%	15%	40%	45%	55%	69%
Programs designed specifically for online learners	51%	67%	13%	45%	42%	58%	50%
Programs for part-time students	31%	30%	13%	30%	57%	43%	25%
Programs designed specifically for international students	73%	78%	13%	58%	29%	71%	76%
Programs designed specifically for transfer students	72%	63%	11%	56%	33%	67%	53%

TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS							
PROGRAM	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Honors programs for academically advanced students	61%	64%	51%	38%	10%	90%	87%
Programs designed specifically for veterans	69%	56%	32%	43%	25%	75%	60%
Programs designed specifically for first-year students (e.g., orientation for first-year students, a first-year experience program)	91%	92%	29%	47%	24%	76%	76%
Programs designed specifically for adult/nontraditional students	33%	39%	29%	29%	43%	57%	43%
Programs designed specifically for international students	45%	33%	24%	59%	17%	83%	75%
Programs designed specifically for under-represented populations	63%	56%	23%	45%	33%	68%	80%
Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk for reasons other than academics	56%	54%	22%	44%	33%	67%	68%
Programs for first-generation students	51%	56%	22%	53%	25%	75%	60%
Programs designed specifically for transfer students	36%	25%	17%	48%	35%	65%	78%
Programs designed specifically for online learners	50%	53%	16%	41%	44%	56%	58%
Programs for part-time students	31%	28%	15%	35%	50%	50%	40%
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	22%	14%	14%	36%	50%	50%	60%
Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk academically	70%	78%	13%	58%	29%	71%	68%

13 Online Learner Practices for Success/Retention/Completion

(Ordered by Percent Rated "Very Effective")

FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS							
PRACTICE	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Faculty advisor assigned to each online learner	45%	53%	38%	46%	16%	84%	82%
Mandatory training program for online faculty	59%	67%	38%	46%	17%	83%	82%
Mandatory online interaction between faculty and online learners	55%	69%	38%	42%	20%	80%	88%
Faculty development and support in online technology and online teaching pedagogy	68%	78%	36%	42%	22%	78%	87%
Mandatory academic advising for online learners	44%	50%	31%	53%	17%	83%	92%
Orientation program or course for online learners	59%	67%	28%	40%	32%	68%	88%
Student services geared to online learners, including registration and financial aid	56%	69%	27%	58%	16%	84%	85%
Student satisfaction assessment to identify program improvements for online learners	61%	65%	22%	53%	24%	76%	88%
Technical support to address online connection issues	71%	84%	21%	59%	21%	79%	90%
Intentional post-enrollment communications at key intervals to impact online learner success/retention/completion	42%	55%	21%	44%	35%	65%	70%
Congratulating, alerting, and nudging system (early-alert system) for online learners	54%	49%	20%	50%	30%	70%	75%
Academic support services specifically for online learners	52%	67%	16%	61%	23%	77%	64%
Online readiness assessment for incoming students	35%	47%	4%	64%	32%	68%	61%

FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS							
PRACTICE	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Mandatory training program for online faculty	63%	59%	33%	43%	25%	75%	85%
Faculty development and support in online technology and online teaching pedagogy	80%	95%	31%	39%	29%	71%	71%
Technical support to address online connection issues	78%	95%	24%	56%	20%	80%	76%
Mandatory academic advising for online learners	45%	32%	21%	55%	24%	76%	86%
Student services geared to online learners, including registration and financial aid	50%	50%	13%	44%	44%	56%	73%
Student satisfaction assessment to identify program improvements for online learners	73%	68%	13%	32%	55%	45%	53%
Intentional post-enrollment communications at key intervals to impact online learner success/retention/completion	41%	32%	12%	50%	38%	62%	57%
Congratulating, alerting, and nudging system (early-alert system) for online learners	58%	48%	11%	41%	49%	51%	60%
Faculty advisor assigned to each online learner	46%	55%	10%	67%	23%	77%	58%
Mandatory online interaction between faculty and online learners	63%	59%	10%	50%	40%	60%	46%
Academic support services specifically for online learners	52%	65%	9%	50%	41%	59%	60%
Online readiness assessment for incoming students	39%	50%	8%	44%	48%	52%	36%
Orientation program or course for online learners	59%	59%	8%	39%	53%	47%	54%



TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS							
PRACTICE	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Mandatory training program for online faculty	58%	77%	43%	43%	13%	87%	88%
Mandatory online interaction between faculty and online learners	60%	65%	42%	42%	16%	84%	90%
Faculty development and support in online technology and online teaching pedagogy	86%	84%	37%	37%	27%	73%	88%
Mandatory academic advising for online learners	40%	29%	35%	35%	30%	70%	67%
Technical support to address online connection issues	87%	87%	33%	33%	33%	67%	67%
Online readiness assessment for incoming students	36%	58%	25%	25%	50%	50%	61%
Faculty advisor assigned to each online learner	31%	26%	21%	21%	57%	43%	88%
Intentional post-enrollment communications at key intervals to impact online learner success/retention/completion	27%	32%	21%	21%	57%	43%	70%
Orientation program or course for online learners	57%	68%	21%	21%	58%	42%	43%
Academic support services specifically for online learners	50%	74%	21%	21%	58%	42%	74%
Student satisfaction assessment to identify program improvements for online learners	66%	77%	21%	21%	59%	41%	63%
Congratulating, alerting, and nudging system (early-alert system) for online learners	59%	71%	19%	19%	62%	38%	59%
Student services geared to online learners, including registration and financial aid	50%	61%	18%	18%	64%	36%	58%

31 General Strategies and Tactics for Student Success/Retention/Completion (Ordered by Percent Rated "Very Effective")

FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS							
STRATEGY	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major (e.g., internships, volunteer work, experiential learning, service learning)	94%	92%	50%	40%	10%	90%	92%
Summer bridge program	37%	28%	45%	38%	18%	83%	82%
Academic support (e.g., learning center, math lab, tutoring)	99%	96%	41%	55%	5%	95%	96%
Advising by professional staff, one-on-one	77%	73%	39%	55%	6%	94%	89%
Providing each student with an academic plan/roadmap of courses	86%	87%	37%	44%	19%	81%	80%
Mandatory first-year experience or orientation course	83%	89%	36%	46%	18%	82%	89%
Advising specifically for students approaching graduation to ensure they are on track	65%	78%	36%	50%	14%	86%	84%
Faculty advising, one-on-one	92%	95%	34%	51%	15%	85%	83%
Training residence hall staff to recognize at-risk students	78%	74%	33%	50%	17%	83%	76%
Providing career services during students' first year to help students see the connection between coursework and careers	82%	66%	30%	51%	19%	81%	77%
Student success coaching (internal)	79%	70%	28%	54%	18%	82%	76%
Providing career services during students' second year to help students see the connection between coursework and careers	79%	75%	28%	51%	21%	79%	73%
Congratulating, alerting, and nudging system (early-alert system)	85%	84%	26%	59%	15%	85%	86%
Using on-campus student employment as a strategy to engage/retain students	80%	80%	26%	45%	29%	71%	75%
Peer mentoring	73%	73%	21%	55%	24%	76%	79%
Learning communities	45%	52%	20%	47%	33%	67%	60%



General Strategies and Tactics for Four-Year Private Institutions (cont.)

FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS							
STRATEGY	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Supplemental Instruction	62%	50%	19%	51%	30%	70%	79%
Individualized academic recovery plan for students on probation or suspension	90%	91%	19%	61%	19%	81%	85%
Student life program supporting student success	87%	78%	18%	56%	26%	74%	72%
Financial aid and scholarships aimed at retention	57%	59%	15%	65%	21%	79%	81%
Providing guided pathways with fewer course options to keep students moving to graduation	47%	57%	14%	50%	36%	64%	64%
Intentional post-enrollment communications at key intervals to impact student retention	74%	71%	14%	63%	23%	77%	77%
Required developmental education courses (not co-requisite models, traditional delivery)	61%	73%	10%	58%	31%	69%	72%
Interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing, before they leave	91%	82%	8%	55%	37%	63%	62%
Use of social media to engage students post enrollment	69%	86%	8%	48%	44%	56%	52%
Student success coaching (outsourced)	35%	14%	8%	53%	39%	61%	64%
Financial literacy programs to assist students and parents with managing their personal finances	58%	57%	6%	54%	40%	60%	64%
Communication plan for recruit-back purposes for students who have left	53%	63%	5%	45%	50%	50%	58%
Required developmental education courses (not corequisite models, traditional delivery)	72%	81%	11%	63%	26%	74%	77%
Financial literacy programs to assist students and parents with managing their personal finances	69%	78%	10%	54%	37%	63%	62%
Use of social media to engage students post enrollment	73%	93%	6%	57%	37%	63%	52%
Co-requisite remedial courses designed to accelerate the developmental completion pathway	5%	*	0%	80%	20%	80%	*
Digital diaries	6%	*	0%	50%	50%	50%	*
Digital diaries	10%	*	0%	27%	73%	27%	*

*practice not polled in 2017

FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS							
STRATEGY	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Academic support (e.g., learning center, math lab, tutoring)	100%	100%	44%	49%	7%	93%	96%
Advising by professional staff, one-on-one	95%	93%	44%	45%	11%	89%	96%
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major (e.g., internships, volunteer work, experiential learning, service learning)	93%	96%	43%	49%	9%	91%	69%
Mandatory first-year experience or orientation course	61%	70%	37%	46%	17%	83%	89%
Providing career services during students' second year to help students see the connection between coursework and careers	75%	85%	36%	34%	30%	70%	57%
Advising specifically for students approaching graduation to ensure they are on track	69%	89%	35%	56%	10%	90%	75%
Providing each student with an academic plan/roadmap of courses	83%	93%	35%	52%	13%	87%	88%
Summer bridge program	63%	56%	34%	51%	15%	85%	67%
Financial aid and scholarships aimed at retention	73%	81%	33%	45%	22%	78%	68%
Providing career services during students' first year to help students see the connection between coursework and careers	79%	81%	32%	47%	20%	80%	50%
Using on-campus student employment as a strategy to engage/retain students	88%	85%	32%	47%	21%	79%	78%
Supplemental Instruction	80%	78%	31%	51%	19%	81%	81%
Student success coaching (internal)	79%	74%	27%	59%	14%	86%	90%
Providing guided pathways with fewer course options to keep students moving to graduation	65%	70%	24%	49%	27%	73%	68%
Learning communities	76%	78%	23%	46%	32%	68%	62%
Peer mentoring	76%	78%	21%	61%	18%	82%	81%



General Strategies and Tactics for Four-Year Public Institutions (cont.)

FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS							
STRATEGY	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Student life program supporting student success	81%	89%	20%	66%	15%	85%	71%
Individualized academic recovery plan for students on probation or suspension	88%	93%	20%	62%	18%	82%	64%
Faculty advising, one-on-one	88%	93%	20%	56%	24%	76%	60%
Congratulating, alerting, and nudging system (early-alert system)	86%	85%	20%	55%	25%	75%	87%
Student success coaching (outsourced)	58%	4%	19%	60%	21%	79%	100%
Intentional post-enrollment communications at key intervals to impact student retention	68%	78%	18%	62%	20%	80%	67%
Digital diaries	8%	*	17%	67%	17%	83%	*
Training residence hall staff to recognize at-risk students	72%	70%	15%	57%	28%	72%	68%
Digital badging	11%	*	13%	63%	25%	75%	*
Corequisite remedial courses designed to accelerate the developmental completion pathway	11%	*	13%	50%	38%	63%	*
Communication plan for recruit-back purposes for students who have left	65%	67%	13%	46%	42%	58%	44%
Interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing, before they leave	69%	67%	12%	40%	48%	52%	56%
Required developmental education courses (not corequisite models, traditional delivery)	72%	81%	11%	63%	26%	74%	77%
Financial literacy programs to assist students and parents with managing their personal finances	69%	78%	10%	54%	37%	63%	62%
Use of social media to engage students post enrollment	73%	93%	6%	57%	37%	63%	52%

*practice not polled in 2017

TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS							
STRATEGY	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Academic support (e.g., learning center, math lab, tutoring)	100%	97%	55%	42%	3%	97%	91%
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major (e.g., internships, volunteer work, experiential learning, service learning)	89%	94%	46%	28%	26%	74%	82%
Student success coaching (outsourced)	86%	17%	45%	40%	15%	85%	100%
Advising by professional staff, one-on-one	98%	100%	43%	49%	8%	92%	92%
Providing each student with an academic plan/roadmap of courses	91%	76%	40%	50%	10%	90%	73%
Summer bridge program	39%	36%	40%	48%	12%	88%	54%
Advising specifically for students approaching graduation to ensure they are on track	61%	77%	38%	46%	15%	85%	74%
Mandatory first-year experience or orientation course	59%	67%	35%	46%	19%	81%	75%
Providing career services during students' second year to help students see the connection between coursework and careers	77%	75%	33%	45%	22%	78%	63%
Digital diaries	5%	*	33%	33%	33%	67%	*
Using on-campus student employment as a strategy to engage/retain students	84%	86%	33%	26%	41%	59%	71%
Providing guided pathways with fewer course options to keep students moving to graduation	72%	75%	30%	52%	17%	83%	74%
Financial aid and scholarships aimed at retention	70%	64%	27%	49%	24%	76%	70%
Supplemental Instruction	72%	61%	26%	61%	13%	87%	64%
Faculty advising, one-on-one	81%	78%	25%	42%	33%	67%	64%



General Strategies and Tactics for Two-Year Public Institutions (cont.)

TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS							
STRATEGY	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Required developmental education courses (not corequisite models, traditional delivery)	95%	92%	25%	49%	26%	74%	76%
Student success coaching (internal)	67%	72%	23%	51%	26%	74%	77%
Learning communities	45%	46%	21%	45%	34%	66%	50%
Training residence hall staff to recognize at-risk students	19%	25%	17%	67%	17%	83%	100%
Intentional post-enrollment communications at key intervals to impact student retention	72%	53%	15%	54%	30%	70%	58%
Peer mentoring	41%	50%	15%	54%	31%	69%	78%
Student life program supporting student success	69%	66%	14%	59%	27%	73%	74%
Digital badging	11%	*	14%	14%	71%	29%	*
Congratulating, alerting, and nudging system (early-alert system)	83%	94%	13%	60%	26%	74%	50%
Individualized academic recovery plan for students on probation or suspension	81%	75%	13%	54%	33%	67%	74%
Financial literacy programs to assist students and parents with managing their personal finances	70%	75%	11%	53%	36%	64%	59%
Communication plan for recruit-back purposes for students who have left	47%	53%	10%	33%	57%	43%	42%
Interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing, before they leave	44%	61%	7%	36%	57%	43%	45%
Use of social media to engage students post enrollment	73%	97%	6%	40%	53%	47%	49%
Corequisite remedial courses designed to accelerate the developmental completion pathway	8%	*	0%	40%	60%	40%	*

*practice not polled in 2017

31 Management Practices for Optimizing Student Success/Retention/Completion (Ordered by Percent Rated "Very Effective")

FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS							
PRACTICE	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Institution-wide emphasis on the teaching of undergraduates and undergraduate learning	89%	*	36%	39%	25%	75%	*
Using retention software to help track and manage student retention	52%	46%	36%	36%	29%	71%	81%
Using an incoming student assessment to identify students' needs	64%	58%	34%	37%	29%	71%	82%
Identifying courses that are more difficult or less difficult to complete	86%	82%	33%	48%	19%	81%	88%
Assessing what's important to your currently enrolled students to help ensure their satisfaction and success	83%	94%	30%	47%	22%	78%	77%
Tracking persistence and progression patterns, term by term, for all students who matriculate	94%	82%	30%	55%	15%	85%	88%
Tracking retention rates for specific academic programs	86%	82%	28%	56%	16%	84%	88%
Title III or Title V funding	45%	46%	28%	32%	40%	60%	69%
Statistical modeling to predict the likelihood of an incoming student persisting to degree completion	58%	54%	27%	39%	34%	66%	81%
Reviewing course sequences within academic programs to address attrition	80%	71%	26%	46%	27%	73%	78%
Using retention data to shape recruitment strategies	74%	76%	26%	47%	27%	73%	88%
Identifying courses with high withdrawal and/or failure rates	84%	84%	25%	55%	20%	80%	80%
Using student satisfaction assessment data to make changes to address attrition	89%	91%	25%	47%	27%	73%	87%
Setting measurable goals to improve the retention rate from term-to-term or year-to-year	87%	80%	24%	46%	29%	71%	83%
Monitoring student usage of academic support services	90%	86%	23%	56%	22%	78%	65%
Peer mentoring	76%	78%	21%	61%	18%	82%	81%

Management Practices for Four-Year Private Institutions (cont.)

FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS							
PRACTICE	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Using a Learning Management System (LMS) to monitor academic progress and identify at-risk students	70%	63%	22%	45%	33%	67%	72%
Development of faculty skills in instruction, advising, and student interaction	91%	*	22%	37%	40%	60%	*
Setting measurable goals for college completion rates	83%	80%	22%	48%	30%	70%	75%
Building agreement among faculty, staff, and administration regarding retention and college completion concerns	79%	*	21%	46%	33%	67%	*
Using student life evaluations to make changes to student life programs and services to address attrition	80%	78%	21%	55%	24%	76%	74%
Benchmarking performance against peer institutions (e.g., retention and completion rates)	83%	86%	20%	43%	37%	63%	66%
Using student engagement data to make changes to the ways faculty and staff interact with students to address attrition	66%	*	19%	35%	46%	54%	*
Setting measurable goals for credit hours or courses completed	57%	60%	19%	39%	42%	58%	66%
Tracking credit hours attempted versus completed for each term	72%	71%	19%	56%	25%	75%	76%
Tracking rates of academic probation	77%	83%	18%	51%	31%	69%	76%
Training in professional service skills for front-line staff, new employees, or student employees to make campus atmosphere student-centered	64%	63%	18%	40%	43%	57%	74%
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate persistence, retention, and completion rate data throughout the campus	79%	73%	17%	36%	48%	52%	71%
Required training program for adjunct faculty	51%	*	16%	31%	53%	47%	*
Research into what attracted and convinced students to enroll in order to keep promises and understand expectations	71%	60%	16%	47%	38%	62%	72%
Faculty mentor program to strengthen the skills of new, continuing, or adjunct faculty	66%	65%	14%	58%	28%	72%	65%

*practice not polled in 2017

FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS							
PRACTICE	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Identifying courses with high withdrawal and/or failure rates	91%	89%	44%	44%	12%	88%	96%
Tracking persistence and progression patterns, term by term, for all students who matriculate	85%	93%	39%	42%	19%	81%	92%
Using retention software to help track and manage student retention	69%	56%	37%	47%	16%	84%	87%
Tracking retention rates for specific academic programs	89%	96%	33%	45%	22%	78%	88%
Identifying courses that are more difficult or less difficult to complete	92%	85%	32%	51%	17%	83%	91%
Statistical modeling to predict the likelihood of an incoming student persisting to degree completion	64%	78%	31%	46%	23%	77%	90%
Title III or Title V funding	62%	64%	31%	44%	24%	76%	63%
Research into what attracted and convinced students to enroll in order to keep promises and understand expectations	70%	81%	31%	42%	27%	73%	52%
Using an incoming student assessment to identify students' needs	58%	70%	30%	37%	33%	67%	68%
Reviewing course sequences within academic programs to address attrition	80%	85%	30%	32%	38%	62%	78%
Setting measurable goals for college completion rates	85%	89%	30%	52%	19%	81%	92%
Tracking credit hours attempted versus completed for each term	83%	85%	27%	52%	21%	79%	83%
Training in professional service skills for front-line staff, new employees, or student employees to make campus atmosphere student-centered	70%	88%	27%	42%	31%	69%	50%
Using a Learning Management System (LMS) to monitor academic progress and identify at-risk students	68%	63%	26%	44%	30%	70%	88%
Using retention data to shape recruitment strategies	80%	96%	25%	54%	20%	80%	88%
Peer mentoring	76%	78%	21%	61%	18%	82%	81%

Management Practices for Four-Year Public Institutions (cont.)

FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS							
PRACTICE	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Tracking rates of academic probation	89%	89%	25%	51%	24%	76%	79%
Setting measurable goals to improve the retention rate from term-to-term or year-to-year	89%	100%	25%	55%	19%	81%	89%
Setting measurable goals for credit hours or courses completed	73%	81%	24%	51%	25%	75%	91%
Assessing what's important to your currently enrolled students to help ensure their satisfaction and success	81%	81%	23%	43%	34%	66%	64%
Monitoring student usage of academic support services	89%	93%	22%	49%	28%	72%	72%
Institution-wide emphasis on the teaching of undergraduates and undergraduate learning	88%	*	22%	46%	32%	68%	*
Building agreement among faculty, staff, and administration regarding retention and college completion concerns	81%	*	21%	36%	43%	57%	*
Benchmarking performance against peer institutions (e.g., retention and completion rates)	83%	81%	21%	53%	26%	74%	55%
Using student satisfaction assessment data to make changes to address attrition	77%	85%	21%	41%	38%	62%	61%
Using student life evaluations to make changes to student life programs and services to address attrition	77%	80%	19%	45%	36%	64%	65%
Faculty mentor program to strengthen the skills of new, continuing, or adjunct faculty	65%	74%	16%	33%	51%	49%	55%
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate persistence, retention, and completion rate data throughout the campus	77%	85%	16%	52%	33%	67%	52%
Development of faculty skills in instruction, advising, and student interaction	81%	*	15%	55%	30%	70%	*
Required training program for adjunct faculty	47%	*	11%	49%	40%	60%	*
Using student engagement data to make changes to the ways faculty and staff interact with students to address attrition	66%	*	10%	59%	31%	69%	*

*practice not polled in 2017

TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS							
PRACTICE	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Title III or Title V funding	78%	76%	53%	33%	14%	86%	73%
Institution-wide emphasis on the teaching of undergraduates and undergraduate learning	75%	*	35%	33%	31%	69%	*
Tracking persistence and progression patterns, term by term, for all students who matriculate	84%	89%	35%	50%	15%	85%	78%
Using retention software to help track and manage student retention	49%	44%	33%	40%	27%	73%	44%
Setting measurable goals for college completion rates	89%	86%	32%	54%	14%	86%	74%
Identifying courses that are more difficult or less difficult to complete	81%	78%	29%	50%	21%	79%	82%
Identifying courses with high withdrawal and/or failure rates	83%	89%	29%	46%	25%	75%	72%
Setting measurable goals to improve the retention rate from term-to-term or year-to-year	94%	86%	28%	50%	22%	78%	65%
Tracking credit hours attempted versus completed for each term	86%	69%	27%	49%	24%	76%	68%
Tracking retention rates for specific academic programs	91%	81%	26%	55%	19%	81%	79%
Setting measurable goals for credit hours or courses completed	76%	58%	25%	42%	33%	67%	62%
Using an incoming student assessment to identify students' needs	48%	58%	23%	53%	23%	77%	57%
Reviewing course sequences within academic programs to address attrition	78%	86%	22%	59%	18%	82%	71%
Benchmarking performance against peer institutions (e.g., retention and completion rates)	86%	83%	22%	53%	25%	75%	63%
Using retention data to shape recruitment strategies	81%	75%	21%	52%	27%	73%	70%



Management Practices for Two-Year Public Institutions (cont.)

TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS							
PRACTICE	Percentage using		Very effective	Somewhat effective	Minimally effective	Very or somewhat effective	
	2019	2017				2019	2017
Development of faculty skills in instruction, advising, and student interaction	81%	*	21%	54%	25%	75%	*
Monitoring student usage of academic support services	89%	74%	21%	51%	28%	72%	65%
Tracking rates of academic probation	77%	81%	20%	47%	33%	67%	48%
Training in professional service skills for front-line staff, new employees, or student employees to make campus atmosphere student-centered	86%	*	20%	44%	35%	65%	*
Building agreement among faculty, staff, and administration regarding retention and college completion concerns	70%	*	20%	42%	38%	62%	*
Using a Learning Management System (LMS) to monitor academic progress and identify at-risk students	68%	67%	19%	49%	33%	67%	54%
Using student satisfaction assessment data to make changes to address attrition	86%	89%	19%	43%	39%	61%	69%
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate persistence, retention, and completion rate data throughout the campus	71%	69%	18%	47%	36%	64%	52%
Required training program for adjunct faculty	66%	*	17%	43%	40%	60%	*
Statistical modeling to predict the likelihood of an incoming student persisting to degree completion	41%	36%	15%	42%	42%	58%	54%
Assessing what's important to your currently enrolled students to help ensure their satisfaction and success	79%	83%	14%	48%	38%	62%	60%
Faculty mentor program to strengthen the skills of new, continuing, or adjunct faculty	48%	58%	13%	39%	48%	52%	57%
Using student life evaluations to make changes to student life programs and services to address attrition	62%	64%	13%	36%	51%	49%	74%
Research into what attracted and convinced students to enroll in order to keep promises and understand expectations	59%	64%	8%	46%	46%	54%	43%
Using student engagement data to make changes to the ways faculty and staff interact with students to address attrition	56%	71%	6%	53%	42%	58%	52%

*practice not polled in 2017

Quality Ratings for Three Leadership Practices (Ordered by Percent Rated "Excellent Quality")

FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS								
PRACTICE	Percentage using		Excellent quality	Good quality	Fair quality	Poor quality	Excellent or good quality	
	2019	2017					2019	2017
Individual position within your institution charged with leading and coordinating activities for getting results in the areas of student success/retention/completion	84%	89%	38%	34%	27%	1%	72%	59%
Committee to lead and coordinate efforts for student success/retention/completion	93%	89%	15%	55%	25%	5%	70%	65%
Written plan to guide effort aimed at student success/retention/completion	75%	76%	11%	44%	37%	9%	55%	48%

FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS								
PRACTICE	Percentage using		Excellent quality	Good quality	Fair quality	Poor quality	Excellent or good quality	
	2019	2017					2019	2017
Individual position within your institution charged with leading and coordinating activities for getting results in the areas of student success/retention/completion	89%	85%	36%	36%	22%	6%	72%	56%
Written plan to guide effort aimed at student success/retention/completion	79%	81%	24%	44%	27%	5%	68%	48%
Committee to lead and coordinate efforts for student success/retention/completion	88%	85%	23%	47%	29%	2%	70%	70%

TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS								
PRACTICE	Percentage using		Excellent quality	Good quality	Fair quality	Poor quality	Excellent or good quality	
	2019	2017					2019	2017
Individual position within your institution charged with leading and coordinating activities for getting results in the areas of student success/retention/completion	86%	86%	28%	39%	30%	4%	67%	50%
Committee to lead and coordinate efforts for student success/retention/completion	88%	78%	14%	54%	16%	16%	68%	39%
Written plan to guide effort aimed at student success/retention/completion	78%	92%	8%	59%	29%	4%	67%	44%

General Trend of Cohort Graduation Rate Over Past Three Years

Four-year institutions: First-time, full-time freshmen who completed a four-year degree within six years.

Two-year institutions: First-time, full-time freshmen who completed a two-year degree within three years.

TREND	FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS		FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS		TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	
	2019	2017	2019	2017	2019	2017
Increased 10 percentage points or more	2.9%	1.3%	4.2%	0.0%	4.7%	0.0%
Increased 5 to 9.9 percentage points	9.6%	6.6%	6.9%	7.4%	9.4%	27.3%
Increased 1 to 4.9 percentage points	33.7%	43.4%	36.1%	33.3%	32.8%	27.3%
Remained stable (within +/- 1 percentage points)	43.3%	36.8%	37.5%	48.1%	42.2%	42.4%
Decreased 1 to 4.9 percentage points	9.6%	6.6%	11.1%	11.1%	10.9%	3.0%
Decreased 5 to 9.9 percentage points	1.0%	2.6%	2.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Decreased 10 percentage points or more	0.0%	2.6%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Practice of Annually Creating or Updating a Written Plan

Respondents indicated if they create or update a plan annually to guide student success, retention, and completion efforts.

Yes, we create or update this plan annually.

Four-year private institutions



2019... **49%**

2017... **51%**

Four-year public institutions



2019... **55%**

2017... **67%**

Two-year public institutions



2019... **55%**

2017... **54%**

Role of Committees

Respondents who had a committee were asked to choose the best response from the three options below to describe the role of their committee for student success, retention, and completion.

COMMITTEE ROLE	FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS		FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS		TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	
	2019	2017	2019	2017	2019	2017
The committee gathers and shares information that affects multiple areas of campus.	33%	31%	19%	16%	27%	11%
The committee is charged to make recommendations that affect multiple areas of campus.	48%	45%	64%	56%	51%	86%
The committee is empowered to make decisions that affect multiple areas of campus.	19%	24%	17%	28%	22%	4%

Chief Retention Officer Reports to Which Office?

Respondents were asked to choose the best response from the five options below for the reporting responsibility of their chief officer (or top officer in charge of initiatives for student success/retention/completion).

OFFICE	FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS		FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS		TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	
	2019	2017	2019	2017	2019	2017
Academic affairs	32%	47%	28%	31%	15%	19%
Enrollment management	15%	12%	15%	15%	15%	3%
President	20%	21%	18%	19%	18%	19%
Student affairs	21%	13%	18%	19%	38%	47%
Other*	11%	8%	21%	15%	15%	13%

*Other responses included: split responsibilities between two vice presidents; academics and student development; no retention officer; reports to president "with dotted line to the provost"; dean of the school; multi-layered across all divisions; enrollment management within student affairs; CEO; student services; and executive vice president.

Influence of Performance-Based Funding?

Respondents were asked to indicate if their institutions' attention to student success/retention/completion has been influenced by performance-based funding.

..... **Performance-based funding has influenced our campus to pay more attention to these areas**

Four-year private institutions



Four-year public institutions



Two-year public institutions



ABOUT THIS STUDY

SOURCE OF DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data in this report reflect responses from 248 four-year and two-year colleges and universities that collectively enrolled 1,606,026 undergraduate students (according to data reported to IPEDS). Respondents participated in the RNL national electronic poll of Effective Practices for Student Success, Retention, and Completion between April 15 and May 10, 2019. The poll was emailed to student affairs, academic affairs, and retention officers at accredited, degree-granting institutions across the United States. Respondents to the poll included 109 four-year private institutions, 75 four-year public institutions, and 64 two-year public institutions, as listed below.

THANK YOU
to those who
participated

Standard descriptive statistics (such as sample means) were used to analyze the results of the survey for central tendency and variation. Due to the relatively small sample size, these results should be read as indicators.

To report the findings as accurately as possible, the rankings of effectiveness were based only on the relative effectiveness **options that were given to respondents: “very effective,” “somewhat effective,” and “minimally effective,”** rather than include the fourth response, “practice not used.”

PRIVATE FOUR-YEAR PARTICIPANTS

Abilene Christian University (TX)	Finlandia University (MI)	Ohio Christian University (OH)
Anderson University (IN)	Franklin W Olin College of Engineering (MA)	Oklahoma Christian University (OK)
Anna Maria College (MA)	Frontier Nursing University (KY)	Olivet College (MI)
Aquinas College (MI)	Gallaudet University (DC)	Ozark Christian College (MO)
Aultman College of Nursing and Health Sciences (OH)	George Fox University (OR)	Piedmont College (GA)
Baker University (KS)	Gordon College (MA)	Point Park University (PA)
Barton College (NC)	Goshen College (IN)	Pontifical Catholic University Puerto Rico (PR)
Becker College (MA)	Hamline University (MN)	Rollins College (FL)
Benedictine (IL)	Indiana Wesleyan University-Marion (IN)	Saint Ambrose University (IA)
Blackburn College (IL)	Ithaca College (NY)	Saint Augustine's University (NC)
Brevard College (NC)	Jarvis Christian College (TX)	Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College (IN)
Bucknell University (PA)	John Carroll University (OH)	Saint Xavier University (IL)
Caldwell University (NJ)	King University (TN)	Seattle University (WA)
California Baptist University (CA)	La Roche College (PA)	Sherman College of Straight Chiropractic (SC)
Carroll College (MT)	La Salle University (PA)	Southern Adventist University (TN)
Central Methodist University-College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (MO)	Laboure College (MA)	Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine & Health Sciences (AZ)
Chaminade University of Honolulu (HI)	Lakeland University (WI)	Southwestern Assemblies of God University (TX)
Chowan University (NC)	Lewis University (IL)	Southwestern University (TX)
Concordia College-New York (NY)	Lindenwood University-Belleville (IL)	Spring Hill College (AL)
Concordia University Irvine (CA)	Los Angeles Pacific University (CA)	The Master's University and Seminary (CA)
Concordia University-Nebraska (NE)	Loyola University New Orleans (LA)	Trinity University (TX)
Cornell College (IA)	Manhattanville College (NY)	Trocaire College (NY)
Defiance College (OH)	Marian University (IN)	Universidad Del Sagrado Corazon (PR)
DeSales University (PA)	Marquette University (WI)	University of Charleston (WV)
Dominican University (IL)	Mercer University (GA)	University of Detroit Mercy (UD)
Duquesne University (PA)	Mercy College of Ohio (OH)	University of Mount Olive (NC)
D'Youville College (NY)	Meredith College (NC)	University of Mount Union (OH)
Eastern Mennonite University at Lancaster (PA)	Messiah College (PA)	University of New England (ME)
Eastern University (PA)	Missouri Baptist University (MO)	University of St. Francis (IL)
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University-Prescott (AZ)	Mount Mercy University (IA)	University of Valley Forge (PA)
Erskine College (SC)	Niagara University (NY)	Ursuline College (OH)
Family of Faith Christian University (OK)	North Greenville University (SC)	Utica College (NY)
	Northwest University (WA)	Voorhees College (SC)
	Norwich University (VT)	Wagner College (NY)
	Oglethorpe University (GA)	



Private Institutions (cont.)

Wartburg College (IA)
Washington Adventist University (MD)
Wayland Baptist University (TX)
Webster University (MO)
Wheaton College-Norton, MA (MA)
Whitworth University (WA)
William Peace University (NC)
York College Pennsylvania (PA)

Marshall University (WV)
McNeese State University (LA)
Miami University (OH)
Michigan State University (MI)
Michigan Technological University (MI)
Minnesota State University, Mankato (MN)
Mississippi State University (MS)
Mississippi University for Women (MS)
Missouri Southern State University (MO)
Missouri Western State University (MO)

The Evergreen State College (WA)
The University of Alabama (AL)
University at Buffalo (NY)
University of Alabama in Huntsville (AL)
University of California-Santa Cruz (CA)
University of Central Missouri (MO)
University of Georgia (GA)
University of Hawaii-West Oahu (WO)
University of Idaho (ID)
University of Michigan-Flint (MI)
University of Missouri, Kansas City (MO)
University of Montana Missoula (MT)
University of North Georgia (GA)
University of the District of Columbia (DC)
University of the Virgin Islands (VI)
Utah State University (UT)
Valdosta State University (GA)
Western Kentucky University (KY)
Western Oregon University (OR)

PUBLIC FOUR-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

Alabama State University (AL)
Bellingham Technical College (WA)
Bemidji State University (MN)
Bowling Green State University (OH)
Central Connecticut State University (CT)
Christopher Newport University (VA)
Clayton State University (GA)
Coastal Carolina University (SC)
Eastern Kentucky University (KY)
Eastern Oregon University (OR)
Elizabeth City State University (NC)
Emporia State University (KS)
Florida Atlantic University (FL)
Governors State University (IL)
Grand Valley State University (MI)
Idaho State University (ID)
Indian River State College (FL)
Indiana University Southeast (IN)
Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IN)
John Jay College (NY)
Kent State University at Kent (OH)
Lamar University (TX)
Louisiana Tech University (LA)

Morgan State University (MD)
Nicholls State University (LA)
Norfolk State University (OH)
Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology (OK)
Oregon Institute of Technology (OR)
Oregon State University (OR)
Palm Beach State College (FL)
Purdue University Northwest (IN)
Radford University (VA)
Ramapo College of New Jersey (NJ)
Rhode Island College (RI)
Rowan University (NJ)
Saginaw Valley State University (MI)
Sam Houston State University (TX)
San Diego Mesa College (CA)
Southwestern Oklahoma State University (OK)
St. Mary's College of Maryland (MD)
Stockton University (NJ)
SUNY at Albany (NY)
SUNY College at Geneseo (NY)
SUNY College at Oswego (NY)
SUNY College of Technology at Delhi (NY)
Texas A & M University-Corpus Christi (TX)

PUBLIC TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

Amarillo College (TX)
Arkansas State University Mid-South (AR)
Bates Technical College (WA)
Black Hawk College (IL)
Bucks County Community College (PA)
Camden County College (NJ)
Cape Cod Community College (MA)
Cape Fear Community College (NC)
Central Ohio Technical College (OH)
Central Oregon Community College (OR)
Chemeketa Community College (OR)
Clarendon College (TX)
Cleveland State Community College (TN)

Public Two-Year Institutions (cont.)

Collin College (TX)	Oklahoma City Community College (OK)
Community College of Denver (CO)	Owensboro Community and Technical College (KY)
CUNY Hostos Community College (NY)	Ozarka College (AR)
East Central Community College (MS)	Phoenix College (AZ)
El Paso Community College (TX)	Pikes Peak Community College (CO)
Garden City Community College (KS)	Queensborough Community College (NY)
Garrett College (MD)	Rowan College at Burlington County (NJ)
Great Bay Community College (NH)	Solano Community College (CA)
H. Councill Trenholm State Community College (AL)	Somerset Community College (KY)
Harrisburg Area Community College (PA)	South Plains College (TX)
Hawkeye Community College (IA)	Southwestern Oregon Community College (OR)
Highland Community College (KS)	St. Philip's College (TX)
Hopkinsville Community College (KY)	Tarrant County College District (TX)
Houston Community College (TX)	University of Arkansas Community College-Batesville (AR)
James A Rhodes State College (OH)	University of New Mexico-Gallup Campus (NM)
John Tyler Community College (VA)	University of South Carolina-Lancaster (SC)
Johnson County Community College (KS)	Virginia Highlands Community College (VA)
Lee College (TX)	Western Technical College (WI)
Metropolitan Community College-Kansas City (MO)	Western Texas College (TX)
Middlesex County College (NJ)	
Midlands Technical College (SC)	
Minnesota State Community and Technical College (MN)	
Mitchell Technical Institute (SD)	
Montgomery County Community College (PA)	
Moreno Valley College (CA)	
Mott Community College (MI)	
Mountwest Community and Technical College (WV)	
New Mexico State University-Alamogordo (NM)	
North Arkansas College (AR)	
North Idaho College (ID)	
Northeastern Junior College (CO)	
Northland Pioneer College (AZ)	



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