

## 35 Good Practices in Retention: an Exercise

### Directions

Rate each suggestion below on a scale of one to seven to evaluate your institution's current employment of the retention strategy, where:

1 represents "This strategy is not used at all"

7 represents "This strategy is used in a complete, effective way"

#	Item	Rating
1	Track the retention of cohort groups (e.g. under-prepared, undecideds, honors students, athletes, commuters, residents, late admits, etc.), and develop targeted programs for those whose retention is low.	
2	Conduct summer orientation programs, where the emphasis is on activities designed to build interpersonal affiliations to peers and bonds to the institution. Design and deliver orientation experiences for special groups of students (e.g., adults, transfers, internationals, athletes, selected majors, commuters, resident students).	
3	Review all promotional materials to ensure that they are creating accurate pre-entry expectations of the institution. Develop well-designed campus visit experiences that realistically portray the institution to prospective students. Determine if recruitment activities are targeting students who are likely to be successful at the institution.	
4	Provide a comprehensive sophomore year experience that prepares undecided students for their major. For all sophomore students, provide a concrete academic plan to complete degree in four years.	
5	Offer a wide array of student extracurricular activities.	
6	Have a system in place to identify students who are under-prepared. Provide programs and services for academically under-prepared students.	
7	Establish excellent academic support services (e.g., learning center, math lab, writing lab), and proactively assist students in using this assistance. Provide peer tutorial services and supplemental-like instruction for "killer courses."	
8	Have a comprehensive first year experience that includes an extended orientation course (i.e., first-year experience course).	
9	Determine strategies that lessen the number of junior status students that leave the institution.	
10	Design high-interest residential living programs and activities. Ensure residential facilities are in good condition.	
11	Empower retention committee to address all retention related initiatives regardless of reporting structures.	
12	Conduct student satisfaction surveys on a systematic basis. Using results to plan improvements.	
13	Conduct exit interviews to ascertain student reasons for leaving and possibly to resolve issues that are barriers to returning.	
14	Require that students on academic probation participate in a "success" program that includes learning contracts.	

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15	Provide online and in-person tutorial support beyond academic support such as stress/time management, substance abuse, and study skills.	
16	Review availability of classes to be sure student needs are being met. Eliminate low demand courses and increase availability of high demand courses.	
17	Employ processes that create specific strategies designed to foster degree completion and career goal attainment.	
18	Identify students who may be dropout-prone by observing "behavioral cues" (e.g., missing classes, failing to apply for financial aid, not pre-registering, or requesting a transcript) as part of a proactive "early-alert" program. Reach out to those students to intervene and assist them. Use telecounseling to contact students experiencing difficulty or planning not to return. Communicate with students who are in good standing who fail to enroll.	
19	Review all policies, procedures, syllabi, and processes to ensure that they are student-centered, learning-oriented, and outcomes-oriented.	
20	Design financial aid systems that allow families to reapply for aid when financial circumstances have changed and increase scholarship aid allocations to match tuition increases.	
21	Explore strategies that recruit a student back to the institution who has left in good standings.	
22	Lessen the "campus runaround." Provide ongoing quality service training for all front-line support staff and supervisors. Design an intake system that includes a seamless orientation, assessment, advising, registration, and bill paying process.	
23	Provide a comprehensive training program for students participating in the college work-study program.	
24	Establish an office devoted exclusively to the improvement of the teaching/learning process. Develop an ongoing program to help faculty understand the critical role they play in retention. Eliminate or reduce large lecture classes (or have part of the course be a small discussion section). Assist faculty in learning about and using cooperative and collaborative teaching/learning strategies.	
25	Connect alumni to current students in mentoring program.	
26	Develop an institutional academic advising plan that includes the components that are associated with successful delivery and organization of advising services. Provide development opportunities for advisors. Design an evaluation program that assesses the effectiveness of the institution's advising program, as well as individual advisor. Develop or purchase a computerized degree audit system. Use this in advising. Involve faculty in academic advising.	
27	Provide an Honors Program to challenge the best students and to structure ease of connections.	
28	Change the attitude in serving students from, "We have the services, but students don't take advantage of them," to "How can we provide proactive ways of ensuring that students are supported by the programs we offer?"	
29	Frontload the best instructors and advisors in the first and second year.	
30	Provide an ongoing internal communications program for students and parents after enrollment.	
31	Integrate technology into daily practice where faculty and staff are actively using Web-based tools to engage students.	

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32	Provide a majority of coursework past lecture style courses where students are actively engaged in learning.	
33	Design programs geared towards adult populations.	
34	Provide enhanced and dynamic counseling services.	
35	Host learning communities that foster more explicit intellectual connections between students, students and faculty, and disciplines of smaller subgroups of students, with a common sense of purpose, leading to an integration of classroom and non-classroom experiences.	