

7 Compelling Facts That Impact Student Retention and College Completion

June 2017 findings from an RNL poll of campus officials

1

Poll shows widespread use of 16 practices for student success and retention across two-year and four-year institutions



Top-rated practices:

- **One-on-one advising**
- **Academic support (learning center, math lab, tutoring)**



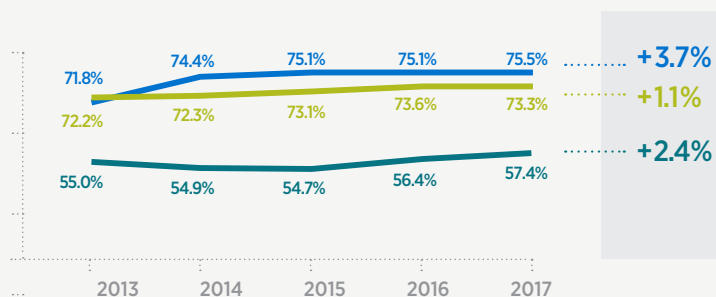
Also widely used across sectors:

- Experiential learning
- Programs for specific populations (at-risk students, honors students, etc.)
- Mandatory FYE course
- Career services
- Student success coaching

- Individualized course roadmaps/plan
- Early-alert system
- Financial aid for retention
- On-campus employment
- Academic recovery program
- Advising near-graduates
- Feedback from students who completely withdraw
- Social media to engage enrollees
- Required developmental ed classes

For ratings of each practice, see source below.

ALL THE EFFORT IS PRODUCING SOME IMPACT



NATIONAL RETENTION RATES (MEAN)

■ Four-year private institutions ■ Four-year public institutions ■ Two-year public institutions

TAKEAWAY

Pursuing a mix of direct, student-focused activities is important, but how can you know which particular activities, and which particular groups of students, will lead you to greater success? With comprehensive assessment data, you can identify and prioritize key issues and find practical ways to solve them (see fact ③).

Source: ACT Institutional Data Files, 2013-2017. Retrieved from RuffaloNL.com/ACT



Download all the findings of the poll.

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Four-year private institutions



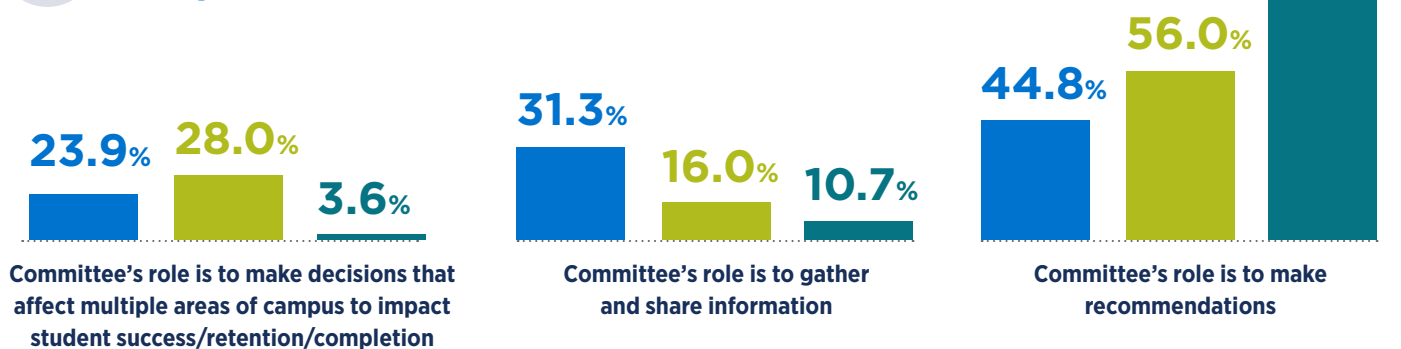
Four-year public institutions



Two-year public institutions

2

<1/3 of respondents had a committee that was empowered to make decisions

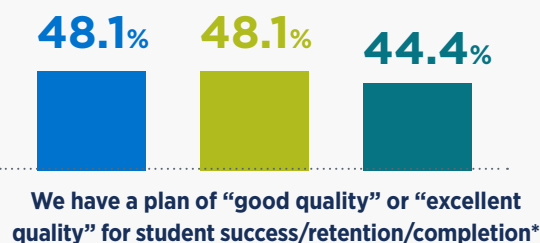


TAKEAWAY

Time after time, RNL has seen that effective committees for student success generate better outcomes. Strive to develop a well-trusted committee that has strong campuswide buy-in and solid campuswide representation, including faculty. Continue to build trust with continuity from one year to the next, and gradually empower the group to make decisions based on its past success.

3

<1/2 of the poll respondents had a written plan they considered “good or excellent”



TAKEAWAY

The first step in creating a high-quality written plan is to gather all of the data you have available for student success planning, as well as a wishlist of data that would strengthen your plan. With comprehensive assessment data in hand, you'll be all set to interpret and apply the data findings to guide strategic resource allocations for optimal impact. (RNL often works with campuses using analytics and assessments such as the RNL Student Retention Predictor, RNL Satisfaction-Priorities Surveys, and the RNL College Student Inventory—see descriptions last page.)

*Response options included: Excellent quality, good quality, fair quality, poor quality, or no plan.

4

A lack of effective leadership was reported by many respondents, especially at two-year public institutions



TAKEAWAY

At the helm of every effective student success committee is always an effective and experienced leader. Be sure this person has faculty and committee buy-in and demonstrates transparency, accountability, great listening skills, an understanding of good group decision processes, and a proven ability to carefully interpret data for decision-making.



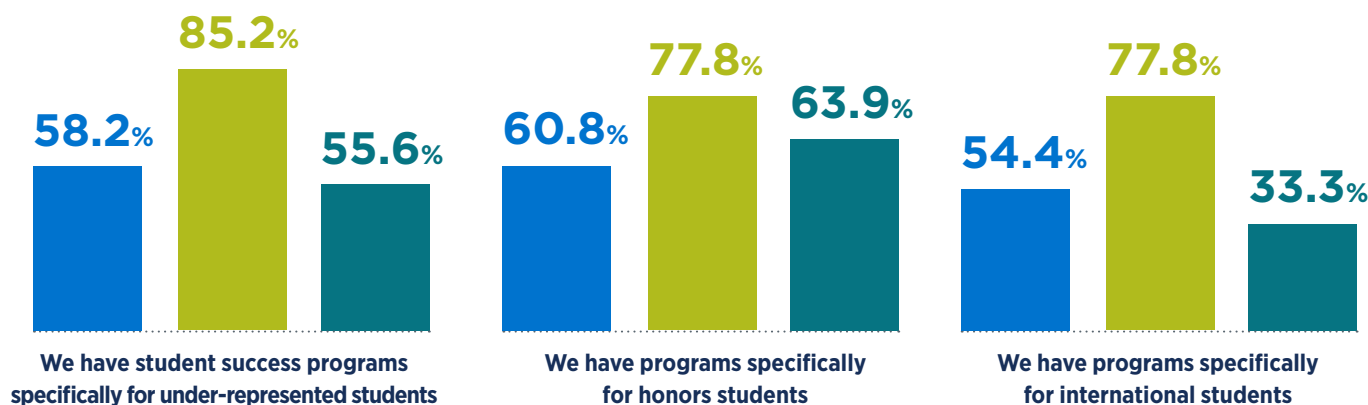
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Student success programs targeted to specific student populations are often under-utilized but rated effective

Usage of programs targeted to three specific populations



High ratings: Programs for under-represented students, honors students, and international students were rated effective by the majority of respondents from two or all three sectors.

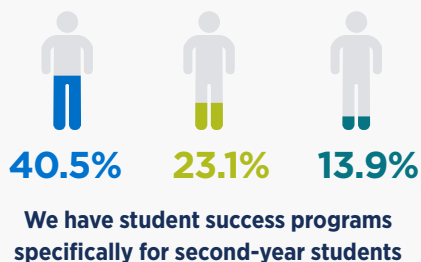
TAKEAWAY

Which populations should you focus on? Differentiated interventions for specific subpopulations can be very productive. (See our infographic released earlier in 2017—*5 Insights to Increase Student Retention and College Completion Rates*.)

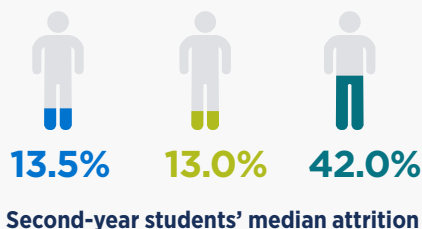
6

<1/2 of respondents had student success programs beyond the first year, even though attrition in year two is substantial

Usage of second-year programs



Attrition of second-year students*



Second-year students' median attrition

TAKEAWAY

Because attrition is still substantial in year two, best practice is to develop a first- through fourth-term completion plan with different interventions each term.

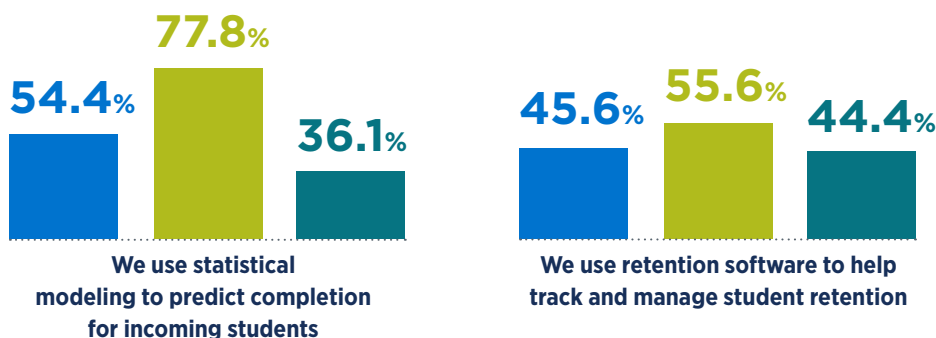
Source: 2017 RNL Student Retention Indicators Benchmark Report

*Excludes graduates, students who completed their programs (Based on 2015-16 second-year cohort)

7

Four-year institutions rated the use of two management tools effective, but many respondents weren't using them

Usage of two management tools



TAKEAWAY

Having the right technology makes management easier. Statistical models, analytics, and software for student success can be combined to manage data, prioritize interventions, and guide strategic decisions.

High ratings: Modeling and software were rated effective by the majority of respondents from four-year private and public institutions.

OPPORTUNITIES for college and university leaders

Use RNL products to increase retention and completion rates

RNL Student Success™

PROVIDES comprehensive analytics, insights, and accurate assessments for retention planning and student success interventions. You'll see where to focus your effort for greater impact by connecting your data directly to improved student persistence.

RNL Student Retention Predictor™

PREDICTS with surprising accuracy which incoming students are unlikely to persist no matter what you do, which students are likely to persist no matter what you do, and which students to prioritize for interventions, using *advanced analytics and statistical modeling*.

RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory™

BENCHMARKS your students' satisfaction, priorities, and experiences—inside and outside the classroom—compared to national norms.

RNL College Student Inventory™

ACCELERATES early interventions by assessing the strengths, challenges, and support needs of each individual incoming student.

RNL Mid-Year Student Assessment™

STRENGTHENS persistence at the mid-point of the first year using a follow-up post-test to the College Student Inventory.