



# 2017 Effective Practices Report for Student Success, Retention, and Completion

Effective practices for two-year and four-year undergraduate colleges and universities, as rated by campus officials in a June 2017 poll



HIGHER ED  
BENCHMARKS



STUDENT SUCCESS



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### 13 Population-Specific Programs for Student Success/Retention/Completion Ordered by Percent Rated “Very Effective”

Population-Specific Programs	INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE	VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE
<b>Four-year private institutions</b>					
Programs designed specifically for first-year students (e.g., orientation for first-year students, a first-year experience program)	96.2%	43.4%	50.0%	6.6%	<b>93.4%</b>
Honors programs for academically advanced students	60.8%	37.5%	41.7%	20.8%	<b>79.2%</b>
Programs designed specifically for international students	54.4%	27.9%	37.2%	34.9%	<b>65.1%</b>
Programs designed specifically for adult/nontraditional students	50.6%	27.5%	55.0%	17.5%	<b>82.5%</b>
Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk academically	82.3%	23.1%	58.5%	18.5%	<b>81.5%</b>
Programs designed specifically for online learners	39.2%	22.6%	41.9%	35.5%	<b>64.5%</b>
Programs for first-generation students	48.1%	21.1%	50.0%	28.9%	<b>71.1%</b>
Programs designed specifically for transfer students	55.7%	18.2%	50.0%	31.8%	<b>68.2%</b>
Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk for reasons other than academics	62.3%	16.7%	47.9%	35.4%	<b>64.6%</b>
Programs designed specifically for veterans	38.0%	16.7%	40.0%	43.3%	<b>56.7%</b>
Programs designed specifically for underrepresented populations	58.2%	13.0%	63.0%	23.9%	<b>76.1%</b>
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	40.5%	6.3%	62.5%	31.3%	<b>68.8%</b>
Programs for part-time students	26.6%	4.8%	38.1%	57.1%	<b>42.9%</b>



<b>Population-Specific Programs</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM</b>	<b>VERY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>Four-year public institutions</b>					
Honors programs for academically advanced students	77.8%	61.9%	33.3%	4.8%	<b>95.2%</b>
Programs for first-generation students	66.7%	44.4%	22.2%	33.3%	<b>66.7%</b>
Programs designed specifically for underrepresented populations	85.2%	34.8%	47.8%	17.4%	<b>82.6%</b>
Programs designed specifically for veterans	77.8%	33.3%	52.4%	14.3%	<b>85.7%</b>
Programs designed specifically for first-year students (e.g., orientation for first-year students, a first-year experience program)	85.2%	26.1%	69.9%	4.3%	<b>95.7%</b>
Programs designed specifically for international students	77.8%	23.8%	52.4%	23.8%	<b>76.2%</b>
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	23.1%	16.7%	33.3%	50.0%	<b>50.0%</b>
Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk academically	85.2%	13.0%	47.8%	39.1%	<b>60.9%</b>
Programs designed specifically for adult/nontraditional students	48.1%	7.7%	38.5%	53.8%	<b>46.2%</b>
Programs designed specifically for transfer students	63.0%	5.9%	47.1%	47.1%	<b>52.9%</b>
Programs designed specifically for online learners	66.7%	5.6%	44.4%	50.0%	<b>50.0%</b>
Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk for reasons other than academics	59.3%	0.0%	68.8%	31.3%	<b>68.8%</b>
Programs for part-time students	29.6%	0.0%	25.0%	75.0%	<b>25.0%</b>

<b>Population-Specific Programs</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM</b>	<b>VERY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>Two-year public institutions</b>					
Honors programs for academically advanced students	63.9%	39.1%	47.8%	13.0%	<b>87.0%</b>
Programs designed specifically for veterans	55.6%	30.0%	30.0%	40.0%	<b>60.0%</b>
Programs for first-generation students	55.6%	30.0%	30.0%	40.0%	<b>60.0%</b>
Programs designed specifically for underrepresented populations	55.6%	25.0%	55.0%	20.0%	<b>80.0%</b>
Programs designed specifically for first-year students (e.g., orientation for first-year students, a first-year experience program)	91.7%	24.2%	51.5%	24.2%	<b>75.8%</b>
Programs designed specifically for transfer students	25.0%	22.2%	55.6%	22.2%	<b>77.8%</b>
Programs designed specifically for online learners	52.8%	21.1%	36.8%	42.1%	<b>57.9%</b>
Programs designed specifically for second-year students	13.9%	20.0%	40.0%	40.0%	<b>60.0%</b>
Programs for part-time students	27.8%	20.0%	20.0%	60.0%	<b>40.0%</b>
Programs designed specifically for international students	33.3%	16.7%	58.3%	25.0%	<b>75.0%</b>
Programs designed specifically for adult/nontraditional students	38.9%	14.3%	28.6%	57.1%	<b>42.9%</b>
Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk academically	77.8%	10.7%	57.1%	32.1%	<b>67.9%</b>
Programs designed specifically for students who are at risk for reasons other than academics	54.3%	10.5%	57.9%	31.6%	<b>68.4%</b>

### 13 Online Learner Practices for Success/Retention/Completion Ordered by Percent Rated “Very Effective”

Online Learner Practices	INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE	VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE
<b>Four-year private institutions</b>					
Faculty advisor assigned to each online learner	52.8%	42.9%	39.3%	17.9%	<b>82.1%</b>
Mandatory online interaction between faculty and online learners	69.4%	41.2%	47.1%	11.8%	<b>88.2%</b>
Congratulating, alerting, and nudging system (early-alert system) for online learners	49.0%	37.5%	37.5%	25.0%	<b>75.0%</b>
Technical support to address online connection issues	83.7%	36.6%	53.7%	9.8%	<b>90.2%</b>
Mandatory academic advising for online learners	50.0%	36.0%	56.0%	8.0%	<b>92.0%</b>
Orientation program or course for online learners	67.3%	30.3%	57.6%	12.1%	<b>87.9%</b>
Student services geared to online learners, including registration and financial aid	69.4%	29.4%	55.9%	14.7%	<b>85.3%</b>
Student satisfaction assessment to identify program improvements for online learners	65.3%	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	<b>87.5%</b>
Mandatory training program for online faculty	67.3%	24.2%	57.6%	18.2%	<b>81.8%</b>
Faculty development and support in online technology and online teaching pedagogy	77.6%	21.1%	65.8%	13.2%	<b>86.8%</b>
Academic support services specifically for online learners	66.7%	19.4%	44.4%	36.1%	<b>63.9%</b>
Intentional post-enrollment communications at key intervals to impact online learner success/retention/completion	55.1%	18.5%	51.9%	29.6%	<b>70.4%</b>
Online readiness assessment for incoming students	46.9%	17.4%	43.5%	39.1%	<b>60.9%</b>

<b>Online Learner Practices</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM</b>	<b>VERY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>Four-year public institutions</b>					
Mandatory academic advising for online learners	31.8%	28.6%	57.1%	14.3%	<b>85.7%</b>
Technical support to address online connection issues	95.5%	28.6%	47.6%	23.8%	<b>76.2%</b>
Student services geared to online learners, including registration and financial aid	50.0%	27.3%	45.5%	27.3%	<b>72.7%</b>
Faculty development and support in online technology and online teaching pedagogy	95.5%	23.8%	47.6%	28.6%	<b>71.4%</b>
Mandatory training program for online faculty	59.1%	23.1%	61.5%	15.4%	<b>84.6%</b>
Orientation program or course for online learners	59.1%	23.1%	30.8%	46.2%	<b>53.8%</b>
Intentional post-enrollment communications at key intervals to impact online learner success/retention/completion	31.8%	14.3%	42.9%	42.9%	<b>57.1%</b>
Academic support services specifically for online learners	65.2%	13.3%	46.7%	40.0%	<b>60.0%</b>
Student satisfaction assessment to identify program improvements for online learners	68.2%	13.3%	40.0%	46.7%	<b>53.3%</b>
Congratulating, alerting, and nudging system (early-alert system) for online learners	47.6%	10.0%	50.0%	40.0%	<b>60.0%</b>
Faculty advisor assigned to each online learner	54.5%	0.0%	58.3%	41.7%	<b>58.3%</b>
Mandatory online interaction between faculty and online learners	59.1%	0.0%	46.2%	53.8%	<b>46.2%</b>
Online readiness assessment for incoming students	50.0%	0.0%	36.4%	63.6%	<b>36.4%</b>



Online Learner Practices	INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE	VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE
<b>Two-year public institutions</b>					
Mandatory training program for online faculty	77.4%	58.3%	29.2%	12.5%	87.5%
Faculty development and support in online technology and online teaching pedagogy	83.9%	42.3%	46.2%	11.5%	<b>88.5%</b>
Faculty advisor assigned to each online learner	25.8%	37.5%	50.0%	12.5%	<b>87.5%</b>
Intentional post-enrollment communications at key intervals to impact online learner success/retention/completion	32.3%	30.0%	40.0%	30.0%	<b>70.0%</b>
Mandatory online interaction between faculty and online learners	64.5%	30.0%	60.0%	10.0%	<b>90.0%</b>
Technical support to address online connection issues	87.1%	29.6%	37.0%	33.3%	<b>66.7%</b>
Student satisfaction assessment to identify program improvements for online learners	77.4%	29.2%	33.3%	37.5%	<b>62.5%</b>
Mandatory academic advising for online learners	29.0%	22.2%	44.4%	33.3%	<b>66.7%</b>
Online readiness assessment for incoming students	58.1%	22.2%	38.9%	38.9%	<b>61.1%</b>
Student services geared to online learners, including registration and financial aid	61.3%	21.1%	36.8%	42.1%	<b>57.9%</b>
Orientation program or course for online learners	67.7%	19.0%	23.8%	57.1%	<b>42.9%</b>
Congratulating, alerting, and nudging system (early-alert system) for online learners	71.0%	18.2%	40.9%	40.9%	<b>59.1%</b>
Academic support services specifically for online learners	74.2%	17.4%	56.5%	26.1%	<b>73.9%</b>



## 28 General Strategies and Tactics for Student Success/Retention/Completion Ordered by Percent Rated “Very Effective”

General Strategies and Tactics	INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE	VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE
<b>Four-year private institutions</b>					
Academic support (e.g., learning center, math lab, tutoring)	96.2%	48.7%	47.4%	3.9%	<b>96.1%</b>
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major (e.g., internships, volunteer work, experiential learning, service learning)	92.4%	47.9%	43.8%	8.2%	<b>91.8%</b>
Advising by professional staff, one-on-one	73.1%	47.4%	42.1%	10.5%	<b>89.5%</b>
Advising specifically for students approaching graduation to ensure they are on track	78.5%	40.3%	43.5%	16.1%	<b>83.9%</b>
Mandatory first-year experience or orientation course	88.6%	38.6%	50.0%	11.4%	<b>88.6%</b>
Providing career services during students' second year to help students see the connection between coursework and careers	65.8%	34.6%	42.3%	23.1%	<b>76.9%</b>
Providing career services during students' first year to help students see the connection between coursework and careers	74.7%	33.9%	39.0%	27.1%	<b>72.9%</b>
Student success coaching (internal)	69.6%	32.7%	43.6%	23.6%	<b>76.4%</b>
Faculty advising, one-on-one	94.9%	32.0%	50.7%	17.3%	<b>82.7%</b>
Providing guided pathways with fewer course options to keep students moving to graduation	57.0%	31.1%	33.3%	35.6%	<b>64.4%</b>
Training residence hall staff to recognize at-risk students	74.4%	31.0%	44.8%	24.1%	<b>75.9%</b>
Providing each student with an academic plan/roadmap of courses	87.3%	30.4%	49.3%	20.3%	<b>79.7%</b>
Congratulating, alerting, and nudging system (early-alert system)	83.5%	30.3%	56.1%	13.6%	<b>86.4%</b>
Financial aid and scholarships aimed at retention	59.5%	25.5%	55.3%	19.1%	<b>80.9%</b>

28 general strategies and tactics continued for four-year private institutions

General Strategies and Tactics	INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE	VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE
<b>Four-year private institutions</b>					
Using on-campus student employment as a strategy to engage/retain students	79.7%	23.8%	50.8%	25.4%	<b>74.6%</b>
Individualized academic recovery plan for students on probation or suspension	91.1%	22.2%	62.5%	15.3%	<b>84.7%</b>
Student life program supporting student success	77.9%	21.7%	50.0%	28.3%	<b>71.7%</b>
Supplemental Instruction™	50.0%	21.1%	57.9%	21.1%	<b>78.9%</b>
Peer mentoring	73.4%	17.2%	62.1%	20.7%	<b>79.3%</b>
Interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing before they leave	82.3%	16.9%	44.6%	38.5%	<b>61.5%</b>
Communication plan for recruit-back purposes for students who have left	63.3%	16.0%	42.0%	42.0%	<b>58.0%</b>
Summer bridge program	27.8%	13.6%	68.2%	18.2%	<b>81.8%</b>
Intentional post-enrollment communications at key intervals to impact student retention	70.9%	12.5%	64.3%	23.2%	<b>76.8%</b>
Financial literacy programs to assist students and parents with managing their personal finances	57.0%	11.1%	53.3%	35.6%	<b>64.4%</b>
Learning communities	51.9%	10.0%	50.0%	40.0%	<b>60.0%</b>
Student success coaching (outsourced)	13.9%	9.1%	54.5%	36.4%	<b>63.6%</b>
Required developmental education courses	73.4%	8.6%	63.8%	27.6%	<b>72.4%</b>
Use of social media to engage students	85.9%	6.0%	46.3%	47.8%	<b>52.2%</b>

<b>General Strategies and Tactics</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM</b>	<b>VERY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>Four-year public institutions</b>					
Academic support (e.g., learning center, math lab, tutoring)	100.0%	48.1%	48.1%	3.7%	<b>96.3%</b>
Mandatory first-year experience or orientation course	70.4%	47.4%	42.1%	10.5%	<b>89.5%</b>
Advising by professional staff, one-on-one	92.6%	44.0%	52.0%	4.0%	<b>96.0%</b>
Supplemental Instruction™	77.8%	42.9%	38.1%	19.0%	<b>81.0%</b>
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major (e.g., internships, volunteer work, experiential learning, service learning)	96.3%	42.3%	26.9%	30.8%	<b>69.2%</b>
Student success coaching (internal)	74.1%	40.0%	50.0%	10.0%	<b>90.0%</b>
Summer bridge program	53.6%	40.0%	26.7%	33.3%	<b>66.7%</b>
Providing each student with an academic plan/roadmap of courses	92.6%	36.0%	52.0%	12.0%	<b>88.0%</b>
Peer mentoring	77.8%	28.6%	52.4%	19.0%	<b>81.0%</b>
Providing guided pathways with fewer course options to keep students moving to graduation	70.4%	26.3%	42.1%	31.6%	<b>68.4%</b>
Advising specifically for students approaching graduation to ensure they are on track	88.9%	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%	<b>75.0%</b>
Individualized academic recovery plan for students on probation or suspension	92.6%	24.0%	40.0%	36.0%	<b>64.0%</b>
Learning communities	77.8%	23.8%	38.1%	38.1%	<b>61.9%</b>
Financial aid and scholarships aimed at retention	81.5%	22.7%	45.5%	31.8%	<b>68.2%</b>



28 general strategies and tactics continued for four-year public institutions

General Strategies and Tactics	INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE	VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE
<b>Four-year public institutions</b>					
Using on-campus student employment as a strategy to engage/retain students	85.2%	21.7%	56.5%	21.7%	<b>78.3%</b>
Required developmental education courses	81.5%	18.2%	59.1%	22.7%	<b>77.3%</b>
Congratulating, alerting, and nudging system (early-alert system)	85.2%	17.4%	69.6%	13.0%	<b>87.0%</b>
Providing career services during students' second year to help students see the connection between coursework and careers	85.2%	17.4%	39.1%	43.5%	<b>56.5%</b>
Communication plan for recruit-back purposes for students who have left	66.7%	16.7%	27.8%	55.6%	<b>44.4%</b>
Faculty advising, one-on-one	92.6%	16.0%	44.0%	40.0%	<b>60.0%</b>
Intentional post-enrollment communications at key intervals to impact student retention	77.8%	14.3%	52.4%	33.3%	<b>66.7%</b>
Providing career services during students' first year to help students see the connection between coursework and careers	81.5%	13.6%	36.4%	50.0%	<b>50.0%</b>
Training residence hall staff to recognize at-risk students	70.4%	10.5%	57.9%	31.6%	<b>68.4%</b>
Use of social media to engage students	92.6%	8.0%	44.0%	48.0%	<b>52.0%</b>
Interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing before they leave	66.7%	5.6%	50.0%	44.4%	<b>55.6%</b>
Financial literacy programs to assist students and parents with managing their personal finances	77.8%	0.0%	61.9%	38.1%	<b>61.9%</b>
Student life program supporting student success	89.9%	0.0%	70.8%	29.2%	<b>70.8%</b>
Student success coaching (outsourced)	3.7%	0.0%	100.00%	0.0%	<b>100.0%</b>

<b>General Strategies and Tactics</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM</b>	<b>VERY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>Two-year public institutions</b>					
Summer bridge program	36.1%	38.5%	15.4%	46.2%	<b>53.8%</b>
Mandatory first-year experience or orientation course	66.7%	37.5%	37.5%	25.0%	<b>75.0%</b>
Academic support (e.g., learning center, math lab, tutoring)	97.2%	37.1%	54.3%	8.6%	<b>91.4%</b>
Training residence hall staff to recognize at-risk students	25.0%	33.3%	66.7%	0.0%	<b>100.0%</b>
Giving students practical work experiences in their intended major (e.g., internships, volunteer work, experiential learning, service learning)	94.4%	32.4%	50.0%	17.6%	<b>82.4%</b>
Using on-campus student employment as a strategy to engage/retain students	86.1%	29.0%	41.9%	29.0%	<b>71.0%</b>
Advising by professional staff, one-on-one	100.0%	27.8%	63.9%	8.3%	<b>91.7%</b>
Providing each student with an academic plan/roadmap of courses	76.5%	26.9%	46.2%	26.9%	<b>73.1%</b>
Student success coaching (internal)	72.2%	26.9%	50.0%	23.1%	<b>76.9%</b>
Required developmental education courses	91.7%	21.1%	54.5%	24.2%	<b>75.8%</b>
Learning communities	45.7%	18.8%	31.3%	50.0%	<b>50.0%</b>
Providing guided pathways with fewer course options to keep students moving to graduation	75.0%	18.5%	55.6%	25.9%	<b>74.1%</b>
Faculty advising, one-on-one	77.8%	17.9%	46.4%	35.7%	<b>64.3%</b>
Congratulating, alerting, and nudging system (early-alert system)	94.4%	17.6%	32.4%	50.0%	<b>50.0%</b>



28 general strategies and tactics continued for two-year public institutions

General Strategies and Tactics	INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE	VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE
<b>Two-year public institutions</b>					
Student life program supporting student success	65.7%	17.4%	56.5%	26.1%	<b>73.9%</b>
Advising specifically for students approaching graduation to ensure they are on track	77.1%	14.8%	59.3%	25.9%	<b>74.1%</b>
Financial literacy programs to assist students and parents with managing their personal finances	75.0%	14.8%	44.4%	40.7%	<b>59.3%</b>
Individualized academic recovery plan for students on probation or suspension	75.0%	14.8%	59.3%	25.9%	<b>74.1%</b>
Providing career services during students' second year to help students see the connection between coursework and careers	75.0%	14.8%	48.1%	37.0%	<b>63.0%</b>
Providing career services during students' first year to help students see the connection between coursework and careers	75.0%	14.8%	55.6%	29.6%	<b>70.4%</b>
Financial aid and scholarships aimed at retention	63.9%	13.0%	56.5%	30.4%	<b>69.6%</b>
Communication plan for recruit-back purposes for students who have left	52.8%	10.5%	31.6%	57.9%	<b>42.1%</b>
Use of social media to engage students	97.2%	5.7%	42.9%	51.4%	<b>48.6%</b>
Peer mentoring	50.0%	5.6%	72.2%	22.2%	<b>77.8%</b>
Intentional post-enrollment communications at key intervals to impact student retention	52.8%	5.3%	52.6%	42.1%	<b>57.9%</b>
Interviews or surveys with students who are withdrawing before they leave	61.1%	4.5%	40.9%	54.5%	<b>45.5%</b>
Supplemental Instruction™	61.1%	4.5%	59.1%	36.4%	<b>63.6%</b>
Student success coaching (outsourced)	16.7%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	<b>100.0%</b>

### 30 Management Practices for Optimizing Student Success/Retention/Completion Ordered by Percent Rated “Very Effective”

Management Practices	INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE	VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE
<b>Four-year private institutions</b>					
Identifying courses with high withdrawal and/or failure rates	83.5%	39.4%	40.9%	19.7%	<b>80.3%</b>
Tracking persistence and progression patterns, term by term, for all students who matriculate	82.3%	38.5%	49.2%	12.3%	<b>87.7%</b>
Using an incoming student assessment to identify students' needs	57.7%	35.6%	46.7%	17.8%	<b>82.2%</b>
Statistical modeling to predict the likelihood of an incoming student persisting to degree completion	54.4%	34.9%	46.5%	18.6%	<b>81.4%</b>
Setting measurable goals to improve the retention rate from term-to-term or year-to-year	79.7%	33.3%	49.2%	17.5%	<b>82.5%</b>
Using a Learning Management System (LMS) to monitor academic progress and identify at-risk students	63.3%	32.0%	40.0%	28.0%	<b>72.0%</b>
Title III or Title V funding	46.2%	30.6%	38.9%	30.6%	<b>69.4%</b>
Using retention software to help track and manage student retention	45.6%	30.6%	50.0%	19.4%	<b>80.6%</b>
Tracking retention rates for specific academic programs	82.3%	29.2%	58.5%	12.3%	<b>87.7%</b>
Tracking rates of academic probation	82.9%	28.6%	47.6%	23.8%	<b>76.2%</b>
Using student satisfaction assessment data to make changes to address attrition	91.0%	28.2%	59.2%	12.7%	<b>87.3%</b>
Identifying courses that are more difficult or less difficult to complete	82.1%	28.1%	59.4%	12.5%	<b>87.5%</b>
Assessing what's important to your currently enrolled students to help ensure their satisfaction and success	93.7%	27.0%	50.0%	23.0%	<b>77.0%</b>

30 management practices continued for four-year private institutions

Management Practices	INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE	VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE
<b>Four-year private institutions</b>					
Using retention data to shape recruitment strategies	75.9%	26.7%	61.7%	11.7%	<b>88.3%</b>
Benchmarking performance against peer institutions (e.g., retention and completion rates)	86.1%	26.5%	39.7%	33.8%	<b>66.2%</b>
Using student life evaluations to make changes to student life programs and services to address attrition	78.5%	25.8%	48.4%	25.8%	<b>74.2%</b>
Setting measurable goals for college completion rates	79.7%	25.4%	49.2%	25.4%	<b>74.6%</b>
Training in professional service skills for front-line staff, new employees, or student employees to make campus atmosphere student-centered	63.3%	24.0%	50.0%	26.0%	<b>74.0%</b>
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate persistence, retention, and completion rate data throughout the campus	73.4%	22.4%	48.3%	29.3%	<b>70.7%</b>
Reviewing course sequences within academic programs to address attrition	70.5%	21.8%	56.4%	21.8%	<b>78.2%</b>
Tracking credit hours attempted versus completed for each term	71.4%	16.4%	60.0%	23.6%	<b>76.4%</b>
Research into what attracted and convinced students to enroll in order to keep promises and understand expectations	60.3%	12.8%	59.6%	27.7%	<b>72.3%</b>
Setting measurable goals for credit hours or courses completed	60.3%	10.6%	55.3%	34.0%	<b>66.0%</b>
Monitoring student usage of academic support services	86.1%	10.3%	54.4%	35.3%	<b>64.7%</b>
Faculty mentor program to strengthen the skills of new, continuing, or adjunct faculty	64.6%	9.8%	54.9%	35.3%	<b>64.7%</b>



<b>Management Practices</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM</b>	<b>VERY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>Four-year public institutions</b>					
Tracking persistence and progression patterns, term by term, for all students who matriculate	92.6%	56.0%	36.0%	8.0%	<b>92.0%</b>
Identifying courses with high withdrawal and/or failure rates	88.9%	54.2%	41.7%	4.2%	<b>95.8%</b>
Tracking retention rates for specific academic programs	96.3%	46.2%	42.3%	11.5%	<b>88.5%</b>
Identifying courses that are more difficult or less difficult to complete	85.2%	39.1%	52.2%	8.7%	<b>91.3%</b>
Using an incoming student assessment to identify students' needs	70.4%	36.8%	31.6%	31.6%	<b>68.4%</b>
Using a Learning Management System (LMS) to monitor academic progress and identify at-risk students	63.0%	35.3%	52.9%	11.8%	<b>88.2%</b>
Tracking credit hours attempted versus completed for each term	85.2%	34.8%	47.8%	17.4%	<b>82.6%</b>
Statistical modeling to predict the likelihood of an incoming student persisting to degree completion	77.8%	33.3%	57.1%	9.5%	<b>90.5%</b>
Monitoring student usage of academic support services	92.6%	32.0%	40.0%	28.0%	<b>72.0%</b>
Tracking rates of academic probation	88.9%	29.2%	50.0%	20.8%	<b>79.2%</b>
Using retention data to shape recruitment strategies	96.3%	26.9%	61.5%	11.5%	<b>88.5%</b>
Setting measurable goals for credit hours or courses completed	81.5%	22.7%	68.2%	9.1%	<b>90.9%</b>
Using retention software to help track and manage student retention	55.6%	20.0%	66.7%	13.3%	<b>86.7%</b>



30 management practices continued for four-year public institutions

Management Practices	INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE	VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE
<b>Four-year public institutions</b>					
Title III or Title V funding	64.0%	18.8%	43.8%	37.5%	<b>62.5%</b>
Setting measurable goals to improve the retention rate from term-to-term or year-to-year	100.0%	18.5%	70.4%	11.1%	<b>88.9%</b>
Using student satisfaction assessment data to make changes to address attrition	85.2%	17.4%	43.5%	39.1%	<b>60.9%</b>
Setting measurable goals for college completion rates	88.9%	16.7%	75.0%	8.3%	<b>91.7%</b>
Research into what attracted and convinced students to enroll in order to keep promises and understand expectations	80.8%	14.3%	38.1%	47.6%	<b>52.4%</b>
Assessing what's important to currently enrolled students to help ensure their satisfaction and success	81.5%	13.6%	50.0%	36.4%	<b>63.6%</b>
Training in professional service skills for front-line staff, new employees, or student employees to make campus atmosphere student-centered	88.0%	13.6%	36.4%	50.0%	<b>50.0%</b>
Reviewing course sequences within academic programs to address attrition	85.2%	13.0%	65.2%	21.7%	<b>78.3%</b>
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate persistence, retention, and completion rate data throughout the campus	85.2%	13.0%	39.1%	47.8%	<b>52.2%</b>
Faculty mentor program to strengthen the skills of new, continuing, or adjunct faculty	74.1%	10.0%	45.0%	45.0%	<b>55.0%</b>
Benchmarking performance against peer institutions (e.g., retention and completion rates)	81.5%	9.1%	45.5%	45.5%	<b>54.5%</b>
Using student life evaluation to make changes to student life programs and services to address attrition	80.0%	5.0%	60.0%	35.0%	<b>65.0%</b>

<b>Management Practices</b>	<b>INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM</b>	<b>VERY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE</b>	<b>VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE</b>
<b>Two-year public institutions</b>					
Tracking retention rates for specific academic programs	80.6%	44.8%	34.5%	20.7%	<b>79.3%</b>
Tracking persistence and progression patterns, term by term, for all students who matriculate	88.9%	40.6%	37.5%	21.9%	<b>78.1%</b>
Identifying courses that are more difficult or less difficult to complete	77.8%	32.1%	50.0%	17.9%	<b>82.1%</b>
Identifying courses with high withdrawal and/or failure rates	88.9%	31.3%	40.6%	28.1%	<b>71.9%</b>
Using retention data to shape recruitment strategies	75.0%	25.9%	44.4%	29.6%	<b>70.4%</b>
Setting measurable goals for college completion rates	86.1%	25.8%	48.4%	25.8%	<b>74.2%</b>
Setting measurable goals to improve the retention rate from term-to-term or year-to-year	86.1%	25.8%	38.7%	35.5%	<b>64.5%</b>
Tracking credit hours attempted versus completed for each term	69.4%	24.0%	44.0%	32.0%	<b>68.0%</b>
Assessing what's important to currently enrolled students to help ensure their satisfaction and success	83.3%	23.3%	36.7%	40.0%	<b>60.0%</b>
Benchmarking performance against peer institutions (e.g., retention and completion rates)	83.3%	23.3%	40.0%	36.7%	<b>63.3%</b>
Reviewing course sequences within academic programs to address attrition	86.1%	22.6%	48.4%	29.0%	<b>71.0%</b>
Using student satisfaction assessment data to make changes to address attrition	88.9%	21.9%	46.9%	31.3%	<b>68.8%</b>
Using student life evaluation to make changes to student life programs and services to address attrition	63.9%	21.7%	52.2%	26.1%	<b>73.9%</b>



30 management practices continued for two-year public institutions

Management Practices	INSTITUTIONS USING PROGRAM	VERY EFFECTIVE	SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE	MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE	VERY OR SOMEWHAT EFFECTIVE
<b>Two-year public institutions</b>					
Using a Learning Management System (LMS) to monitor academic progress and identify at-risk students	66.7%	20.8%	33.3%	45.8%	<b>54.2%</b>
Tracking rates of academic probation	80.6%	20.7%	27.6%	51.7%	<b>48.3%</b>
Using established communication procedures to regularly communicate persistence, retention, and completion rate data throughout the campus	69.4%	20.0%	32.0%	48.0%	<b>52.0%</b>
Title III or Title V funding	76.5%	19.2%	53.8%	26.9%	<b>73.1%</b>
Faculty mentor program to strengthen the skills of new, continuing, or adjunct faculty	58.3%	19.0%	38.1%	42.9%	<b>57.1%</b>
Using retention software to help track and manage student retention	44.4%	18.8%	25.0%	56.3%	<b>43.8%</b>
Statistical modeling to predict the likelihood of an incoming student persisting to degree completion	36.1%	15.4%	38.5%	46.2%	<b>53.8%</b>
Setting measurable goals for credit hours or courses completed	58.3%	14.3%	47.6%	38.1%	<b>61.9%</b>
Using an incoming student assessment to identify students' needs	58.3%	14.3%	42.9%	42.9%	<b>57.1%</b>
Monitoring student usage of academic support services	74.3%	11.5%	53.8%	34.6%	<b>65.4%</b>
Research into what attracted and convinced students to enroll in order to keep promises and understand expectations	63.9%	4.3%	39.1%	56.5%	<b>43.5%</b>
Training in professional service skills for front-line staff, new employees, or student employees to make campus atmosphere student-centered	71.4%	4.0%	48.0%	48.0%	<b>52.0%</b>

## General Trend of Cohort Graduation Rate Over Past Three Years

**Four-year institutions:** this is for the first-time, full-time freshmen who completed a four-year degree within six years.

**Two-year institutions:** this is for the first-time, full-time freshmen who completed a two-year degree within three years.

Graduation Rate Trend	FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
Increased 10 percentage points or more	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Increased 5 to 9.9 percentage points	6.6%	7.4%	27.3%
Increased 1 to 4.9 percentage points	43.4%	33.3%	27.3%
Remained stable (within +/- 1 percentage point)	36.8%	48.1%	42.4%
Decreased 1 to 4.9 percentage points	6.6%	11.1%	3.0%
Decreased 5 to 9.9 percentage points	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Decreased 10 percentage points or more	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%

### Quality Ratings for Three Leadership Practices Ordered by Percent Rated “Excellent Quality”

Survey Items	INSTITUTIONS USING METHOD	EXCELLENT QUALITY	GOOD QUALITY	FAIR QUALITY	POOR QUALITY	EXCELLENT OR GOOD QUALITY
<b>Four-year private institutions</b>						
Individual position within our institution charged with leading and coordinating retention activities for getting results in the areas of student success/retention/completion	88.6%	25.3%	34.2%	24.1%	5.1%	<b>59.5%</b>
Committee to lead and coordinate efforts for student success/retention/completion	88.6%	36.7%	27.8%	19.0%	5.1%	<b>64.5%</b>
Written plan to guide effort aimed at student success/retention/completion	75.9%	12.7%	35.4%	21.5%	6.3%	<b>48.1%</b>
<b>Four-year public institutions</b>						
Individual position within our institution charged with leading and coordinating retention activities for getting results in the areas of student success/retention/completion	85.2%	14.8%	40.7%	25.9%	3.7%	<b>55.5%</b>
Committee to lead and coordinate efforts for student success/retention/completion	85.2%	29.6%	40.7%	14.8%	0.0%	<b>70.3%</b>
Written plan to guide effort aimed at student success/retention/completion	81.5%	0.0%	48.1%	22.2%	11.1%	<b>48.1%</b>
<b>Two-year public institutions</b>						
Individual position within our institution charged with leading and coordinating retention activities for getting results in the areas of student success/retention/completion	86.1%	13.9%	36.1%	33.3%	2.8%	<b>50.0%</b>
Committee to lead and coordinate efforts for student success/retention/completion	77.8%	11.1%	27.8%	30.6%	8.3%	<b>38.9%</b>
Written plan to guide effort aimed at student success/retention/completion	91.7%	8.3%	36.1%	38.9%	8.3%	<b>44.4%</b>

## Practice of Annually Creating or Updating a Written Plan

Respondents indicated (yes/no) if they create or update a plan annually to guide student success, retention, and completion efforts.

Survey Item	FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
Yes, we create or update a plan annually	48.1%	59.3%	52.8%

## Role of Committee

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.

Survey Item	FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
The retention committee is empowered to make decisions that affect multiple areas of campus	23.9%	28.0%	3.6%
The retention committee is charged to make recommendations that affect multiple areas of campus	44.8%	56.0%	85.7%
The retention committee gathers and shares information that affects multiple areas of campus	31.3%	16.0%	10.7%

### 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 retention officer (or top officer in charge of initiatives for student success/retention/completion).

Survey Item	FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
Academic affairs	46.8%	30.8%	18.8%
Enrollment management	11.7%	15.4%	3.1%
President	20.8%	19.2%	18.8%
Student affairs	13.0%	19.2%	46.9%
Other*	7.8%	15.4%	12.5%

\*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 (yes/no) if their institutions' attention to student success/retention/completion has been influenced by performance-based funding.

Survey Item	FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
Yes, performance-based funding has influenced us to pay more attention to these areas	12.7%	63.0%	54.3%



## ABOUT THIS STUDY

### SOURCE OF DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Data in this report reflect responses from 142 four-year and two-year colleges and universities that collectively enroll 770,000 students. Respondents participated in the Ruffalo Noel Levitz national electronic poll of Effective Practices for Student Success, Retention, and Completion between May 15 and June 12, 2017. 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 79 four-year private institutions, 27 four-year public institutions, and 36 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.”

#### FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS

*Note: Any participating two-year private institutions are included on this list.*

American International College (MA)	Concordia University (CA)
Appalachian Bible College (WV)	Concordia University Ann Arbor (MI)
Ashland University (OH)	Cornell College (IA)
Assumption College (MA)	D’Youville College (NY)
Aultman College of Nursing and Health Sciences (OH)	Dakota Wesleyan University (SD)
Azusa Pacific University (CA)	Elizabethtown College School of Continuing & Professional Studies (PA)
Bethany College (WV)	Elmira College (NY)
Bethel College (KS)	Elms College (MA)
Brightwood Career Institute - Broomall (PA)	Erskine College (SC)
Brightwood Career Institute - Philadelphia Mills (PA)	Evangel University (MO)
Brightwood College - Palm Springs (CA)	Everest College (VA)
Bryant & Stratton College (WI)	Friends University (KS)
California Baptist University (CA)	Goodwin College (CT)
California Baptist University Online & Professional Studies (CA)	Goshen College (IN)
Capella University (MN)	Guilford College (NC)
Clarkson University (NY)	University of West Georgia (GA)



*Four-year private institutions continued*

Harding University Main Campus (AR)  
Heidelberg University (OH)  
Holy Apostles College and Seminary (CT)  
Houston Baptist University (TX)  
Iowa Wesleyan University (IA)  
John Brown University (AR)  
Lancaster Bible College (PA)  
Life Pacific College (CA)  
Lincoln Memorial University (TN)  
Lindenwood University, Belleville Campus (IL)  
Lindenwood University, St. Charles Campus (MO)  
Lynchburg College (VA)  
Manhattanville College (NY)  
Marquette University (WI)  
Mars Hill University (NC)  
McPherson College (KS)  
Mercer University (GA)  
Moody Bible Institute (IL)  
Mount St. Joseph University (OH)  
Norwich University (VT)  
Oklahoma Christian University (OK)  
Pacific Lutheran University (WA)  
Patten University (CA)  
Penn Commercial Business/Technical School (PA)  
Penn View Bible Institute (PA)  
Pima Medical Institute (AZ)  
Point Loma Nazarene University (CA)  
Roosevelt University (IL)  
Saint Mary's College (IN)  
Saint Norbert College (WI)  
Saint Xavier University (IL)  
San Francisco Art Institute (CA)  
South Florida Bible College (FL)  
St. Bonaventure University (NY)  
Stone Child College (MT)  
Texas Lutheran University (TX)  
The College of Health Care Professions (TX)  
Thomas University (GA)

University of Bridgeport (CT)  
University of Mobile (AL)  
University of New England (ME)  
University of St. Francis (IL)  
University of the Cumberlands (KY)  
Utica College (NY)  
Warren Wilson College (NC)  
Watkins College of Art, Design & Film (TN)  
Western New England University (MA)  
Wilmington College (OH)

**FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

Augusta University (GA)  
Austin Peay State University (TN)  
California State University-Fresno (CA)  
Christopher Newport University (VA)  
Cleveland State University (OH)  
Eastern Oregon University (OR)  
Mississippi State University (MS)  
Murray State University (KY)  
Northeastern Illinois University (IL)  
Northern Marianas College (MP)  
Oklahoma Panhandle State University (OK)  
South Seattle College (WA)  
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (AB)  
Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (IL)  
State University of New York College of Agriculture and Technology at Morrisville (NY)  
Texas A & M University - Central Texas (TX)  
The University of Texas School of Biomedical Informatics at Houston (TX)  
University of Central Missouri (MO)  
University of Michigan-Flint (MI)  
University of Missouri-Saint Louis (MO)  
University of Nevada-Las Vegas (NV)  
University of Southern Indiana (IN)

*Four-year public institutions continued*

University of Wisconsin-Platteville (WI)  
Utah State University (UT)  
Weber State University (UT)  
Western Nevada College (NV)

Robeson Community College (NC)  
South Central College (MN)  
Southwestern Oregon Community College (OR)  
St. Charles Community College (MO)  
SUNY Broome Community College (NY)  
Waubonsee Community College (IL)  
Western Dakota Technical Institute (SD)  
Western Texas College (TX)

**TWO-YEAR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

Algonquin College Waterfront Campus (ON)  
Amarillo College (TX)  
Anne Arundel Community College (MD)  
Bay College (MI)  
Bellingham Technical College (WA)  
Belmont College (OH)  
Coahoma Community College (MS)  
College of Lake County (IL)  
College of the Mainland (TX)  
Delaware County Community College (PA)  
Eastern New Mexico University-Roswell (NM)  
Elgin Community College (IL)  
Garden City Community College (KS)  
Gwinnett Technical College (GA)  
Hawkeye Community College (IA)  
Helena College University of Montana (MT)  
Highland Community College (IL)  
Highland Community College (KS)  
Hinds Community College (MS)  
Illinois Eastern Community Colleges (IL)  
Frontier Community College (IL)  
John Tyler Community College (VA)  
Lamar State College-Port Arthur (TX)  
Lewis and Clark Community College (IL)  
Mid-Plains Community College (NE)  
Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MS)  
Nashua Community College (NH)  
NorthWest Arkansas Community College (AR)  
Paul D. Camp Community College (VA)



## Building your strategy for student success, retention, and completion?

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### About Ruffalo Noel Levitz

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