

NACADA Executive Office
Kennesaw State University
2323 Anderson Ave., Suite 225
Marietta, GA 30067-2912
Phone: (770) 532-2912
Fax: (770) 532-7752
e-mail: nacadan@kennesaw.edu

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Academic Advising: Impacting Student Learning, Persistence, Retention, and Completion

Nancy S. King, Ph.D.
Kennesaw State University

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Overview

Participants will:

- Discuss retention and completion
- Identify challenges to completion
- Identify high impact activities
- Identify strategies to support students
- Identify campus collaborations to support strategies

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Why are We Discussing This? Increased Emphasis on Retention and Completion

- Newfound focus on creating a better educated populace
- Attitude shift to support students through completion (even if underprepared and from poor education systems)
- Those who start higher education must be guided to finish
- Focus is on identifying those who need more assistance
(ETS, SuccessNavigator, The Retention Agenda, July 2013)

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Why is Student Retention/Persistence Important?

College retention, persistence, and graduation rates influence public perceptions of quality.

State legislatures and governing boards are increasingly concerned about graduation rates.

Obama is proposing tying federal aid to student & college performance. Some states already do.

Focusing on student success is programmatically responsible.

Improved student persistence towards graduation can provide additional resources to invest in people and programs.

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CCA recommends changing how we track students. Traditionally, we only tracked **first-time** attending **full-time students**, and that is all the federal government required until now...few exceeded this minimal standard.

Consider these facts:

- There is a new majority on campus. **Seventy-five percent** of students are juggling some combination of families, jobs, and school while commuting to class.

Continued...

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Facts



- Only a quarter of these post-trationals (despite age) go full-time, attend residential colleges, and have most of their bills paid by their parents.
- Part-time students rarely graduate.
- Poor students and students of color struggle the most to graduate.
- Students are taking too many credits and too much time to complete.
- Remediation is broken, producing few students who will ultimately graduate.

Complete College America, 2011

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BUT...

- 44% of those who start 4-year degrees DO NOT graduate within 6 years
- 71% of those who start 2-year degrees DO NOT graduate in 3 years

(ETS, SuccessNavigator, The Retention Agenda, July 2013)

**get up
and
finish
what
you
started**

Small Group Work

What challenges do your students face that interfere with completion?

Why are your students leaving?

A Few Stats...

- The median retention rate among public colleges is **77%**; for private colleges is **79%**
- The median six-year completion rate for public institutions is **51%** ; private colleges is **63%**

Be advised

(Selingo, 2015)

Undergraduate Students

About 59 percent of first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at a 4-year institution in fall 2006 completed that degree within 6 years. The graduation rate for females (61 percent) was higher than the rate for males (56 percent).

Figure 1. Annual full-time student retention rates at 2- and 4-year degree-granting institutions, by institution level, institutional applicant acceptance rate, and control: 2012

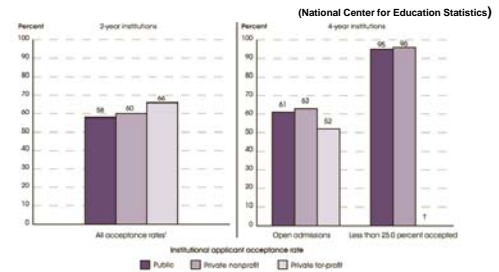
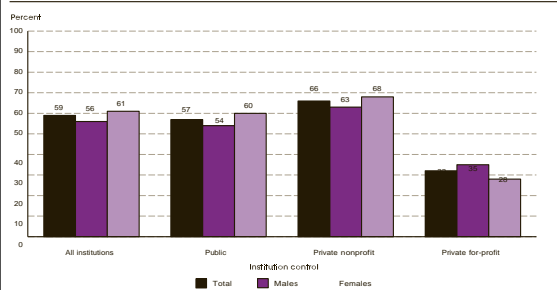


Figure 2. Percentage of students seeking a bachelor's degree at 4-year degree-granting institutions who completed a bachelor's degree within 6 years, by control of institution and sex: Starting cohort year 2006



NOTE: Data are for 4-year postsecondary institutions participating in Title IV federal financial aid programs. Graduation rates apply to first-time, full-time undergraduates seeking a bachelor's or equivalent degree. Students who transferred to another institution and graduated are not counted as completers at their initial institution.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), Spring 2013, Graduation Rates component. See Digest of Education Statistics 2013, table 326.10.

Figure 3. Percentage of students seeking a bachelor's degree at 4-year degree-granting institutions who completed a bachelor's degree within 6 years, by institutional applicant acceptance rate: Starting cohort year 2006

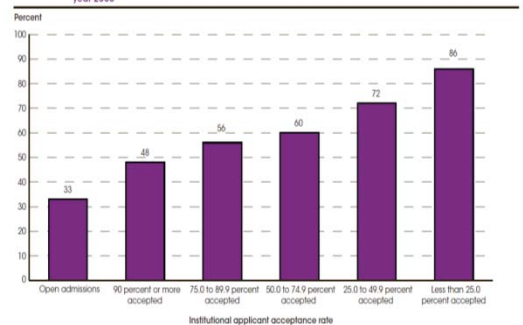
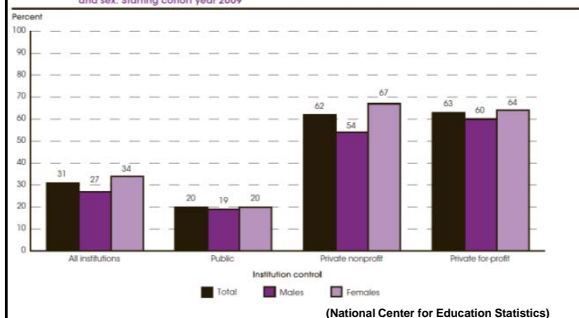


Figure 4. Percentage of students seeking a certificate or degree at 2-year degree-granting institutions who completed a credential within 150 percent of the normal time required to do so, by control of institution and sex. Starting cohort year 2009



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Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practice

- Active & collaborative learning
- Student effort
- Academic challenge
- Student-faculty interaction
- Support for learners

(Center for Community College Student Engagement [CCSSE], 2015)

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Student Success: Building a Culture for Retention and Completion on College Campuses

Remember that **44%** of American students who begin at four-year colleges, don't earn a degree in six years...

- Colleges and universities are stepping up efforts to improve retention and completion rates.
- Methods include increased student success practices including **academic advising**.
- Nearly all colleges and universities use data analytics to better understand student success.

(Doubleday, J., December, 2013)

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What Practices are Institutions Using?

- Professional Advising
- First-Year Program
- Freshman Seminars
- Living/Learning Communities
- Faculty Instructional Development
- Career Exploration Programs
- Summer Bridge Programs
- Mentoring Programs
- Monitoring Gateway Courses
- Proactive Advising
- Student Awareness of Key Services
- Midterm Progress Alerts

(Selingo, 2015)

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"It is hard to imagine any academic support function that is more important to student success and institutional productivity than advising."

(Kuh, *Student Success in College*, 2005)

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The Experts Tell US...

"Effective advising is a part of successful retention programs."

(Tinto, 2007)

"Good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience."

(Light, *Making the Most of College*, 2001)

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Make Connections!

Advisors are interpreters who help students navigate their new world. As such, academic advisors have to make connections.



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WHAT DO STUDENTS WANT FROM ADVISORS?

Accurate Information "Do they know?"

Accessibility "Are they there?"

Caring Attitude "Do they care?"



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Something to Remember...

People will forget what you say.
They will even forget what you do.
But they never forget how you
made them feel.



(Maya Angelou)

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SMALL GROUP WORK

**What student success initiatives is
your institution putting in place?**

**WHO IS AT THE TABLE
DISCUSSING COMPLETION?**

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High Impact Activities

Engagement in
HIGH IMPACT ACTIVITIES
leads to gains in

- ✓ Deep Learning
- ✓ General Gains
- ✓ Personal Gains
- ✓ Practical Gains

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High Impact Activities are...



Those initiatives identified by practitioners such as Kuh, Gardner, Tinto, and the AAC&U's Leap Initiatives, that have had positive impact on students' educational experiences, and, in turn, their retention and persistence.

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High Impact Ideas

- First-Year Seminars & Experiences (embed advising)
- Common Intellectual Experiences
- Learning Communities
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments & Projects
- Undergraduate Research
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
- Internships
- Capstone Courses & Projects
- Offering Engaging Student Activities
- Career Pathways
- Peer mentoring programs

Recent Gallop Research “The Big Six”

Gallup-Purdue University Survey, 2014

- I had at least one professor who made me excited about learning. **(63%)**
- My professors cared about me as a person. **(27%)**
- I had a mentor who encouraged me to pursue my goals and dreams. **(22%)**

(Gallup-Purdue, 2014)

“The Big Six” (Cont.)

- I worked on a project that took a semester or more to complete. **(32%)**
- I had an internship or job that allowed me to apply what I was learning in the classroom. **(29%)**
- I was extremely active in extracurricular activities and organizations while I attended college. **(20%)**

“The Big Six” (Cont.)

Time Needed to Attain Degree Correlated to the “Big Six”

- **75%** who strongly agree that they had all six of these experiences graduated in four years.
- **61%** of those who could not strongly agree with any of the six experiences graduated in four years.

“Big Six” Experiences Also Linked to Preparation for Life After College

82% of graduates who strongly agree that they had all six experiences also strongly agree their schools prepared them well for life outside of college.

5% of those who do not strongly agree that they had any of these experiences strongly agree that they were well prepared for life after college.

Relate the “Big Six” to your campus...

**WHO WILL BE YOUR
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS?**

Focus on the Entire Educational Experience

Institutions need to realize
that retention issues
lie not only in their students
and the situations they face
**but also in the very character
of the institution
and its educational settings.**

Many institutions report that faculty and students are only moderately happy with advising on their campuses.

Institutional Changes for Retention

- Focus on student learning and the places in which students are asked to learn
- Stress shared, connected learning, and the importance of the educational community—involving all campus personnel and students
- Provide all levels of assistance in a manner which is connected to learning, not isolated from it — Students do not learn in isolation from their peers.

Take New Deliberate Approach to Learning & Advising

- No one size fits all...what is best model?...what is best approach?
- Creatively attract students to advising centers.
- Know your students.
- Provide guidance on majors, job outlook, prospects in geographical area.
- Recognize that advising is not registration!
- Share responsibility for student success .
- Help students map out a path to success.

New Approach (Cont.)

- Encourage students to experience diversity early
- Connect students with co-curricular activities
- Refer to key campus resources (counseling, tutoring, career services)
- Meet students “where they are” academically, socially, psychologically, & culturally
- Set high expectations—challenge, implore, and support
- Focus on culture sooner than later
 - Identify cultural properties that impede advisor effectiveness and student success
 - Expand the number of cultural practitioners in advising
 - Install an ethic of positive cultural communication

SMALL GROUP WORK

What does this mean for your advising unit?
For training and development? For assessment?

What changes will you put in place?

Advising and Retention



In Conclusion:

Developing strong advising programs and building a **campus-wide focus** on retention is essential to the academic success and retention of students at institutions of higher education.

*“There is no silver bullet! Student retention is based on improving the **entire undergraduate experience**” (Nutt as cited in Doubleday, 2013).*