



MOVING THE NEEDLE ON STUDENT RETENTION

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About us



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Previous Institutions: Purdue University, University of Kentucky, University of Missouri-Columbia, Utah Valley University, Utah State University



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Previous Institutions: Southern Utah University, University of Denver, Indiana Institute of Technology

About Southern Utah University

LOCATION:

Cedar City, UT

Population: 31,223



ENROLLMENT:

Undergraduate: 9,324

Graduate: 921

TOTAL: 10,245

TUITION AND FEES:

Resident: \$5,918

Fees: \$756

TOTAL: \$6,674

RETENTION / COMPLETION:

Retention Rate: 71.0%

Completion Rate: 49.2%

MISC INFO:

Selective Admission

Avg. Incoming Class: 1,500

Campus Housing: 600 beds

Greek Life: 4 Chapters

ATHLETICS:

Division I



THE ARTS:



THE OUTDOORS:



Getting to know you...



Presentation overview

PART 1: Why retention?

PART 2: Improving retention

PART 3: Partnering with
Academic Affairs for student
success

Part 1

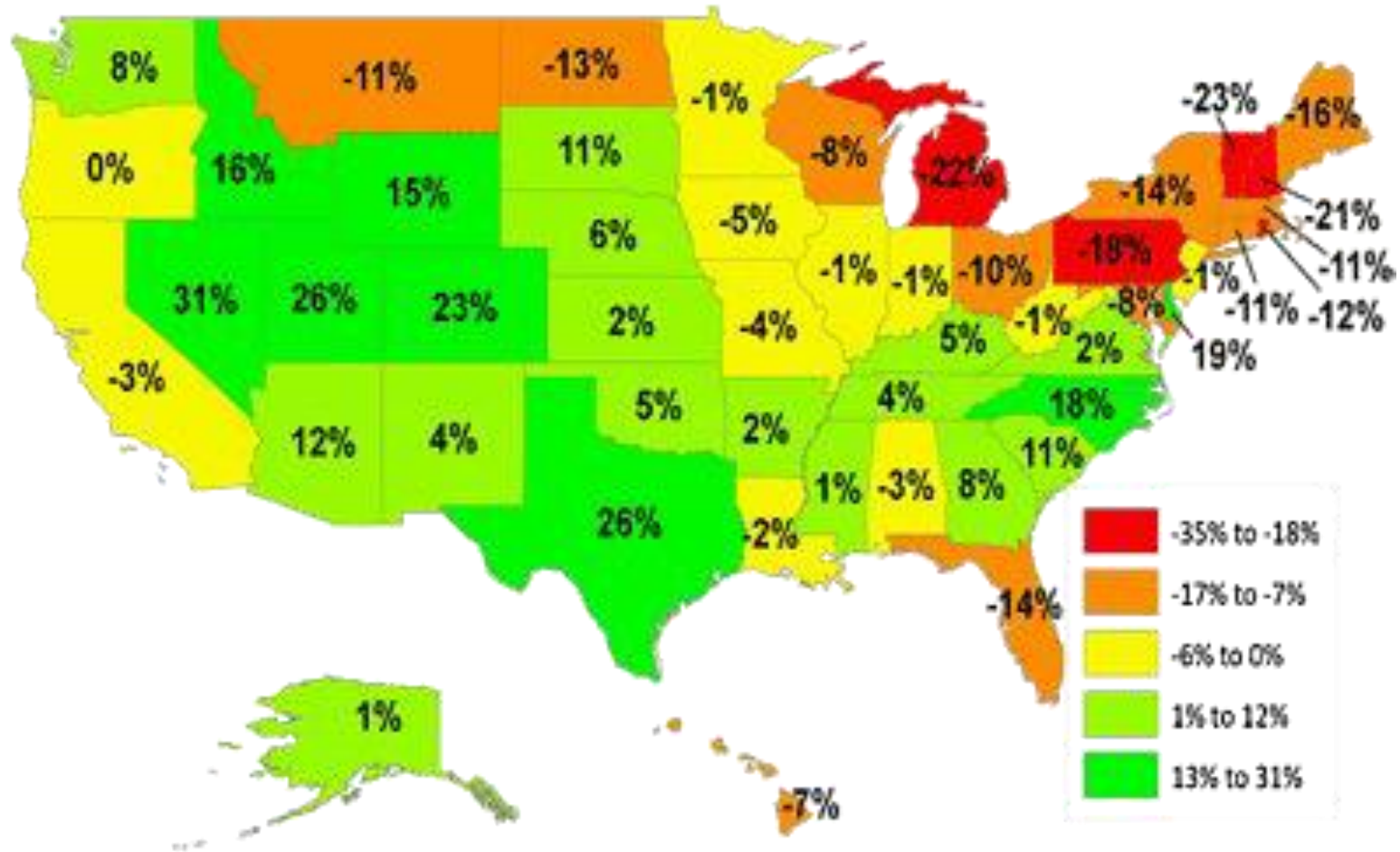
Why Retention?

Doom and gloom???



National trends (HS Graduates)

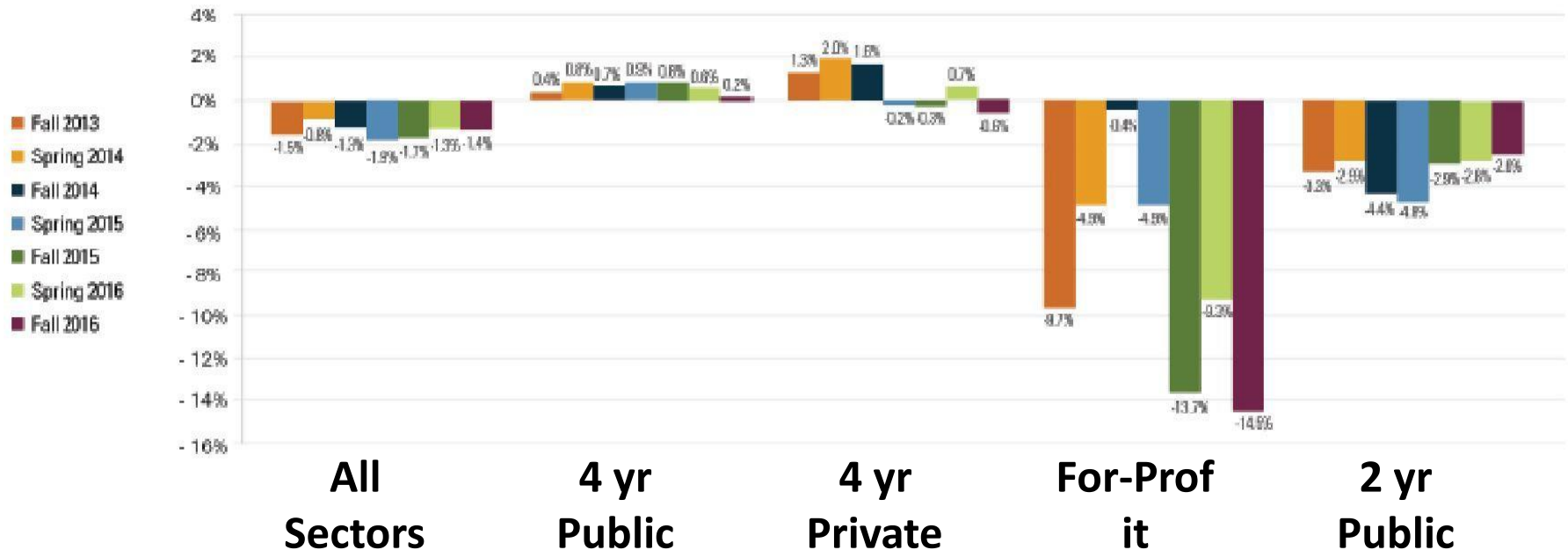
Percent Change in High School Graduates, 2007-08 to 2020-21



Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Projections of Education Statistics to 2020

National trends (Enrollment)

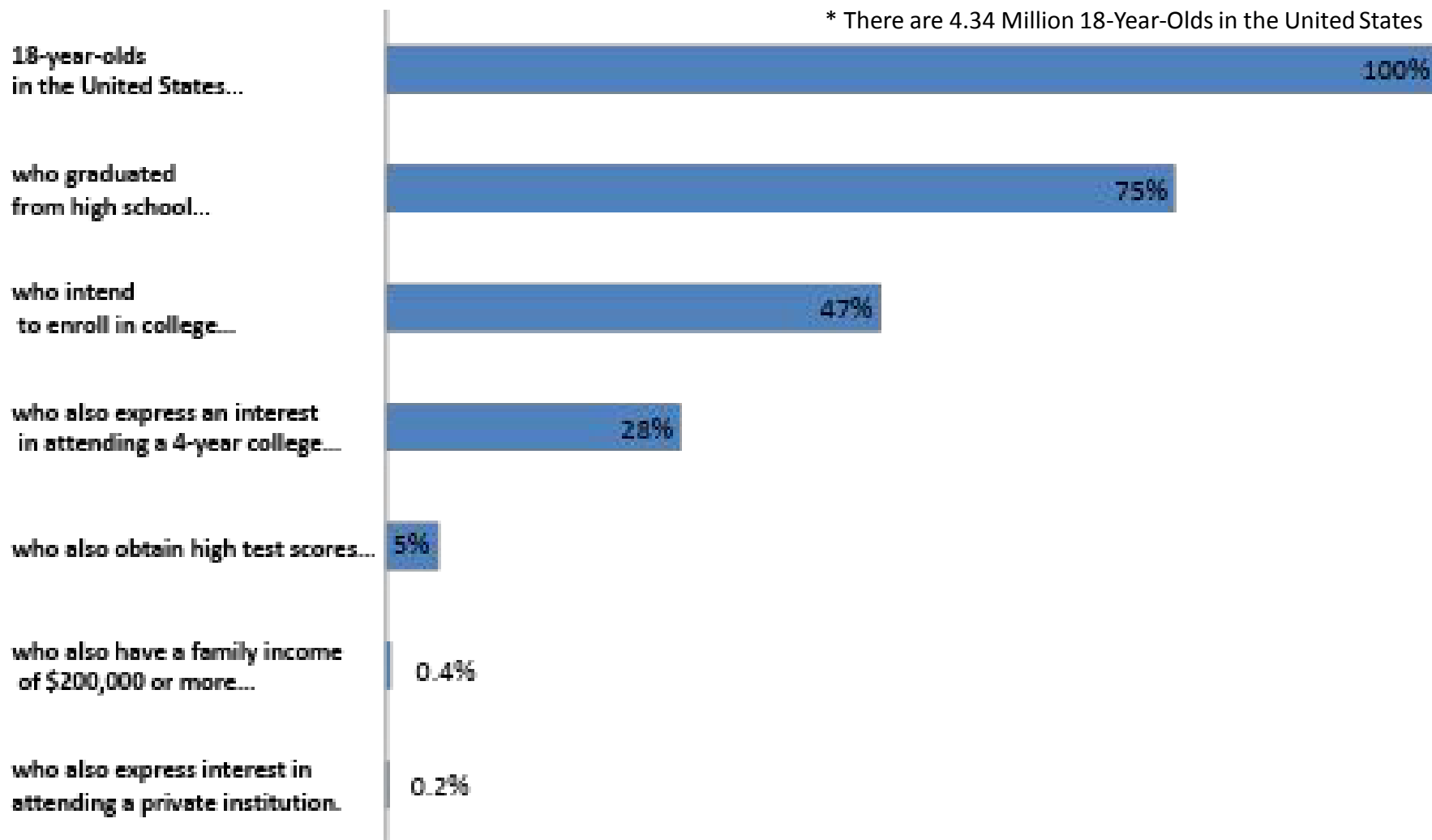
Percent Change from Previous Year, Enrollment by Sector



4 year public schools were the only sector to grow in enrollment (0.2%) in Fall 2016.

National trends (Ability to pay)

* There are 4.34 Million 18-Year-Olds in the United States

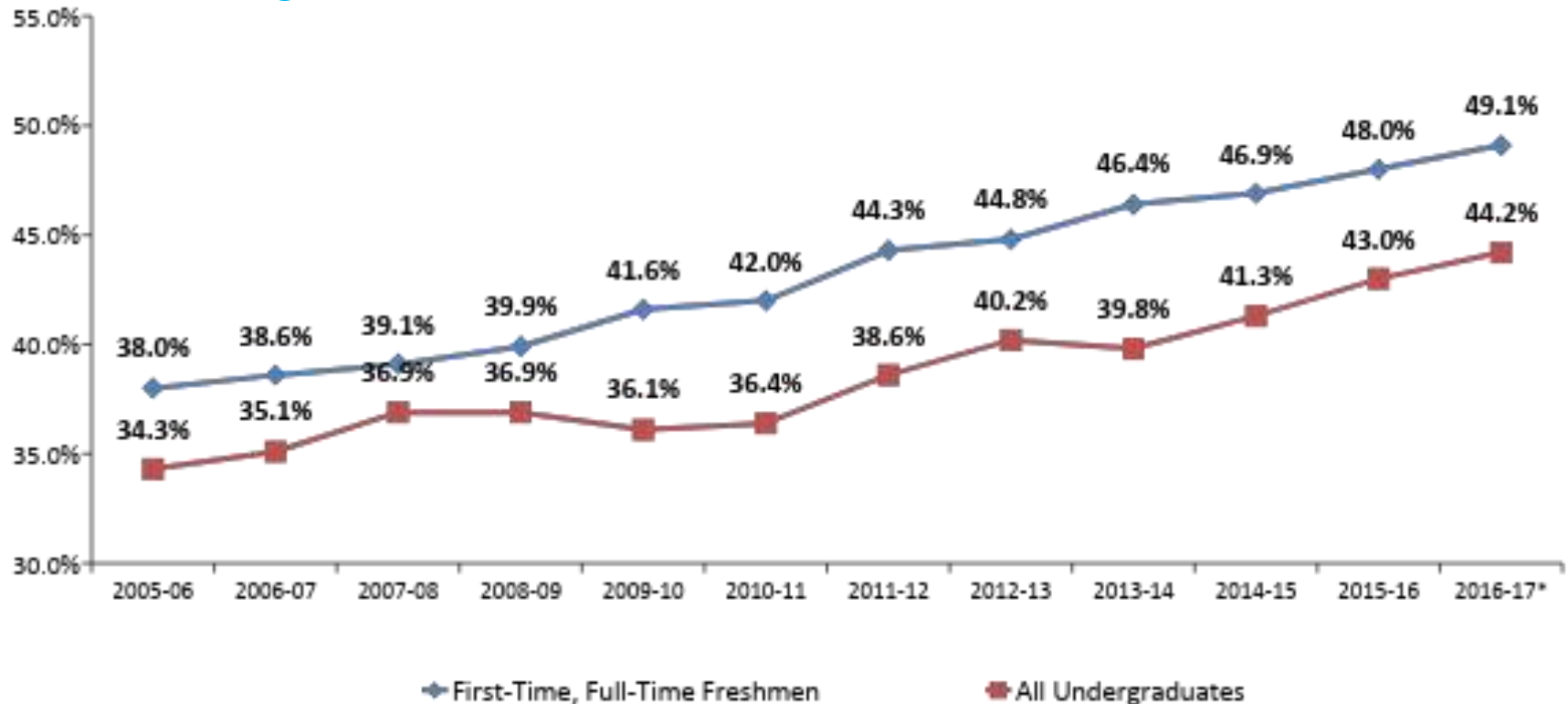


(NACUBO Webinar, May 31, 2017)

National trends (Discount rates)

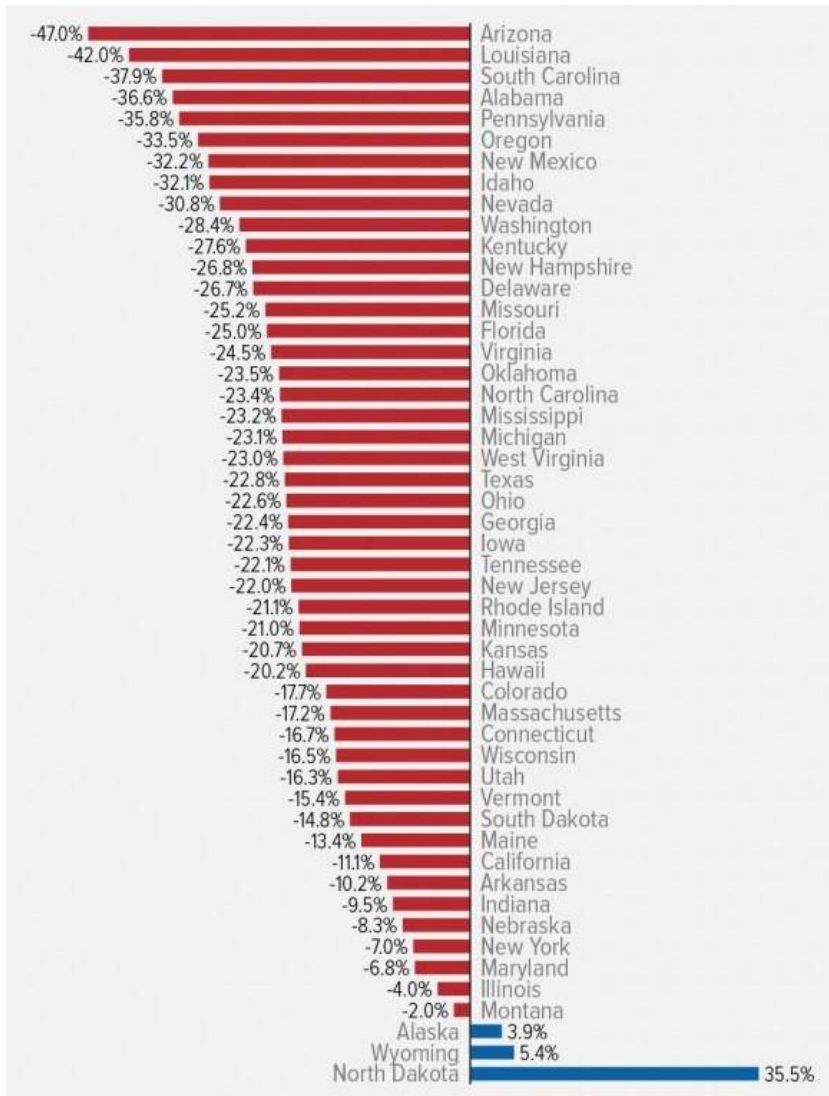
“Institution” Tuition Discount Rates Reached an All-Time High in 2016-17

Average Institutional Tuition Discount Rate from 2005-06 to 2016-17



Source: NACUBO Tuition Discounting Study, 2005 to 2016; data are as of the fall of each academic year.

National trends (Decreased funding)



Percent change in state spending per student, inflation adjusted, 2008-2015

47 states have cut funding to higher education in the past 7 years.

Only 3 states have increased funding over the past 7 years.

(* Center for Budget and Policy Priorities)

National trends (Financial woes)



“There are over 4,000 colleges and universities in the United States, but Harvard Business School professor **Clayton Christensen** says that half are bound for bankruptcy in the next few decades.”

Welcome Generation Z

General:

- Born between 1994-2010.
- “Individuals” and do not believe in living in “social norms.”
- **Through internet and social media they speak their mind** (not verbally in-person); they seek instant results.
- They may see living with others as an intrusion on their space; never known a non-digital world; consistently seeking flexibility; seeking to be treated like adults.
- Gen Zers are **much closer with their families** than millennials:
 - 69% said their parents are top role model.
 - 90% will make sure their parents feel a planned purchase is affordable before moving forward.
- Their decisions aren't always based in fact or logical reasoning.

Generation Z - Careers and Finances

- 42% expect to **work for themselves** in their career, compared to 11% nationally.
- 3 out of 10 (28%) members of Gen Z are optimistic about the future of the U.S. economy, and 4 out of 10 (39%) are pessimistic.
- Their perspectives on lifestyle and finances have been **influenced by the weight of the Great Recession**.
- When asked an open-ended question about today's economy, members of Gen Z are most likely to be concerned about jobs and unemployment. This is the biggest spontaneous concern for a third (34%) of Gen Z.
- If given \$500, members of Gen Z would be most likely to save it for nothing in particular (47%) or save it for college (34%). Three out of 10 (29%) would use it to cover living necessities.

Generation Z - Schooling

- They are **highly self-directed**, demonstrated by a strong desire to work for themselves, study entrepreneurship, and **design their own programs** of study in college; nearly 3 out of 4 (72%) said that colleges should allow students to design their own course of study or major.
- 76% wish their hobby would turn into a full-time job, compared to 50% of millennials.
- Majority (81%) believe obtaining a college degree is important to having a successful career.
- 32% noted that **finding a job was the biggest concern** for their generation (the highest percentage, followed by 16% - the cost of education). Despite this concern, 79% are optimistic that they will find a job in 5 months or less after graduation.

Generation Z - Schooling

- Generation Z appears to be particularly **averse to student loan debt** – 25% say they don't think any debt is manageable and 44% saying they could only handle debt payments of \$100 a month. Financial worries for Gen Z extend beyond college, with 64% saying they are concerned about being able to get a job and 60% expressing concern about having enough money.
- When given a list of possible concerns, almost half (46%) of Gen Z respondents expressed **concern about having a large student loan** balance when they finish studying.
- Generation Zers largely prefer a traditional undergraduate experience augmented by **innovations that offer hands-on experiences and practical skills**. Nearly 8 in 10 (79%) favor integrating education programs with employer internships.

Generation Z - Communication

- **Go to them**, don't beg them to come to you.
- Share, like, tweet; **feed their curiosity**.
 - Tap into the entrepreneurial spirit. Make stuff and help Gen Z make stuff. Collaborate with them and help them collaborate with others. Educate and build expertise, they want to be experts. Help them to achieve it.
- Don't belittle them.
- Provide easy, consumable format.
 - Get to the point right away.
 - Communicate through “**snackable**” content.
- While Generation Y initiated text messages as a norm, Generation Z prefers communicating through images, icons and symbols.

Generation Z - Communication

- Gen Z's attention spans are getting shorter as well, explaining their preference for video and images rather than text.
- They are the ultimate consumers of snack media. They communicate in bite sizes. Punchy headlines or razor sharp text resonate much better than lengthy chunks of words or long winded passages.
- Be authentic; skip the buzzwords; communicate across multiple platforms; see them as diverse.
- **Focus on their future** (i.e. how will they reach their career and life goals).

Sources:

Adecco Survey <http://www.adeccousa.com/employers/resources/Pages/generation-z-vs-millennials-infographic.aspx>

<http://www.northeastern.edu/news/2014/11/innovation-imperative-meet-generation-z/>

National Education Association, July 13, 2015 <http://neatoday.org/2015/07/13/here-comes-generation-z-what-makes-them-tick/>

Generation Z Goes To College, Jossey-Bass <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1119143454,miniSiteCd-JBHIGHERED.html>

Dr. Jim Hundrieser, VP Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Plymouth State University, Presented at the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Conference, July 8, 2015.

<http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/236560>

National survey from Northeastern University, November 18, 2014 <http://www.northeastern.edu/news/2014/11/generation-z-survey>

Higher Ed needs a new approach

We can no longer do things the way we've always done them.



Part 2

Improving Retention

The ASCEND MODEL

Affordability

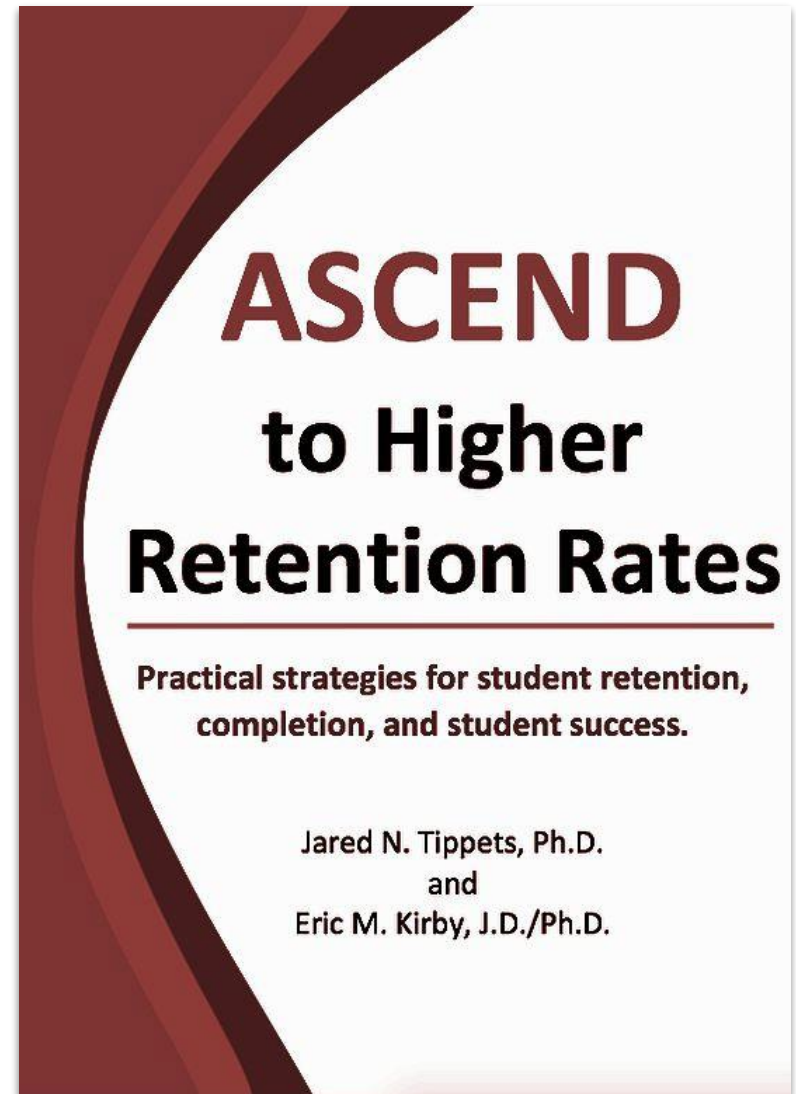
Support

Culture

Engagement

Nudges

Data



The ASCEND MODEL

Affordability

Support

Culture

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* Highlighted Strategies:

- Retention funds
- Step-down Scholarships
- “Free Food”

The ASCEND MODEL

Affordability

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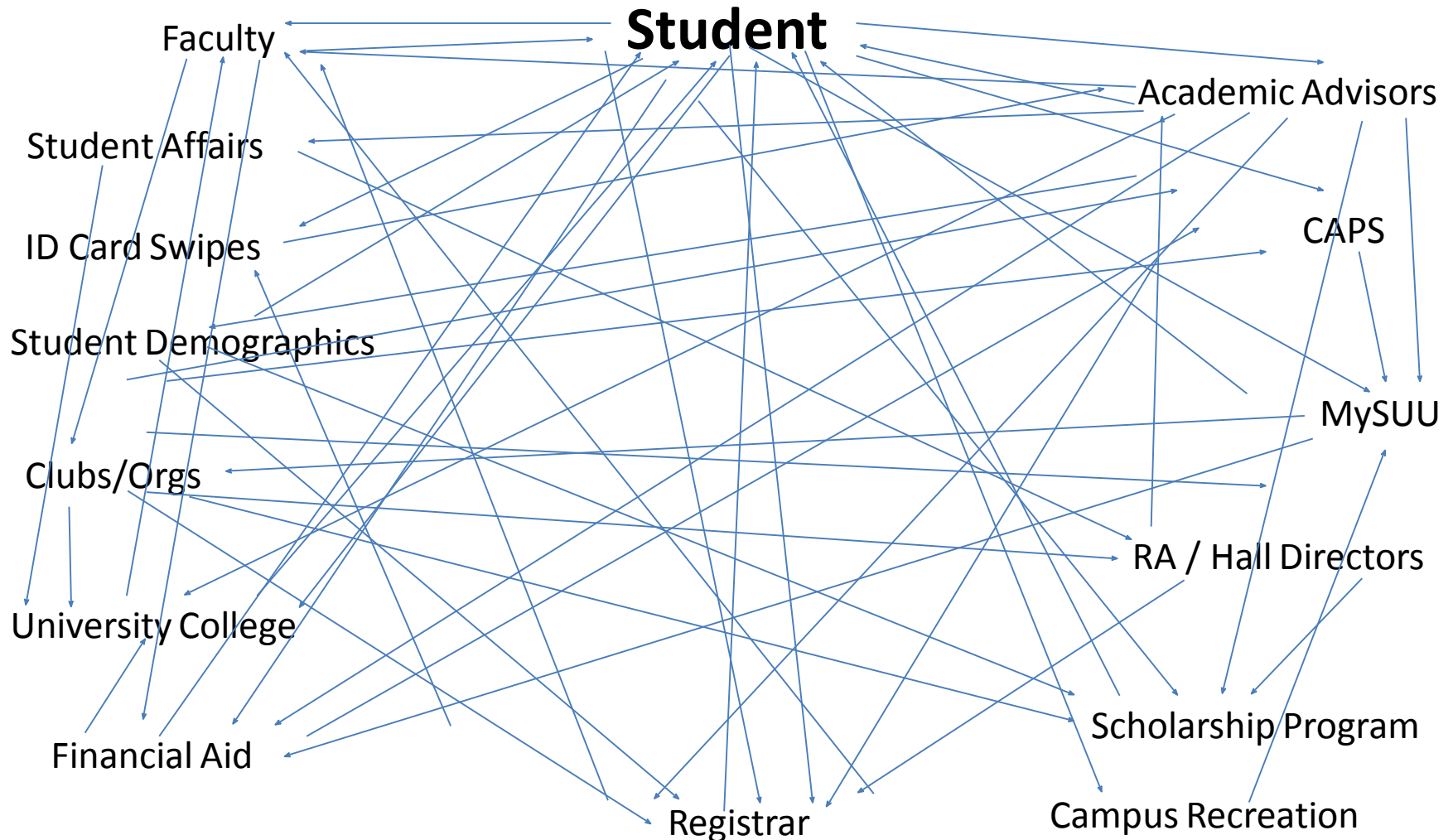
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* **Highlighted Strategies:**

- ACES program
- 38 points of contact
- Faculty partners

What do we know about our students?

“You need to go to the office.”



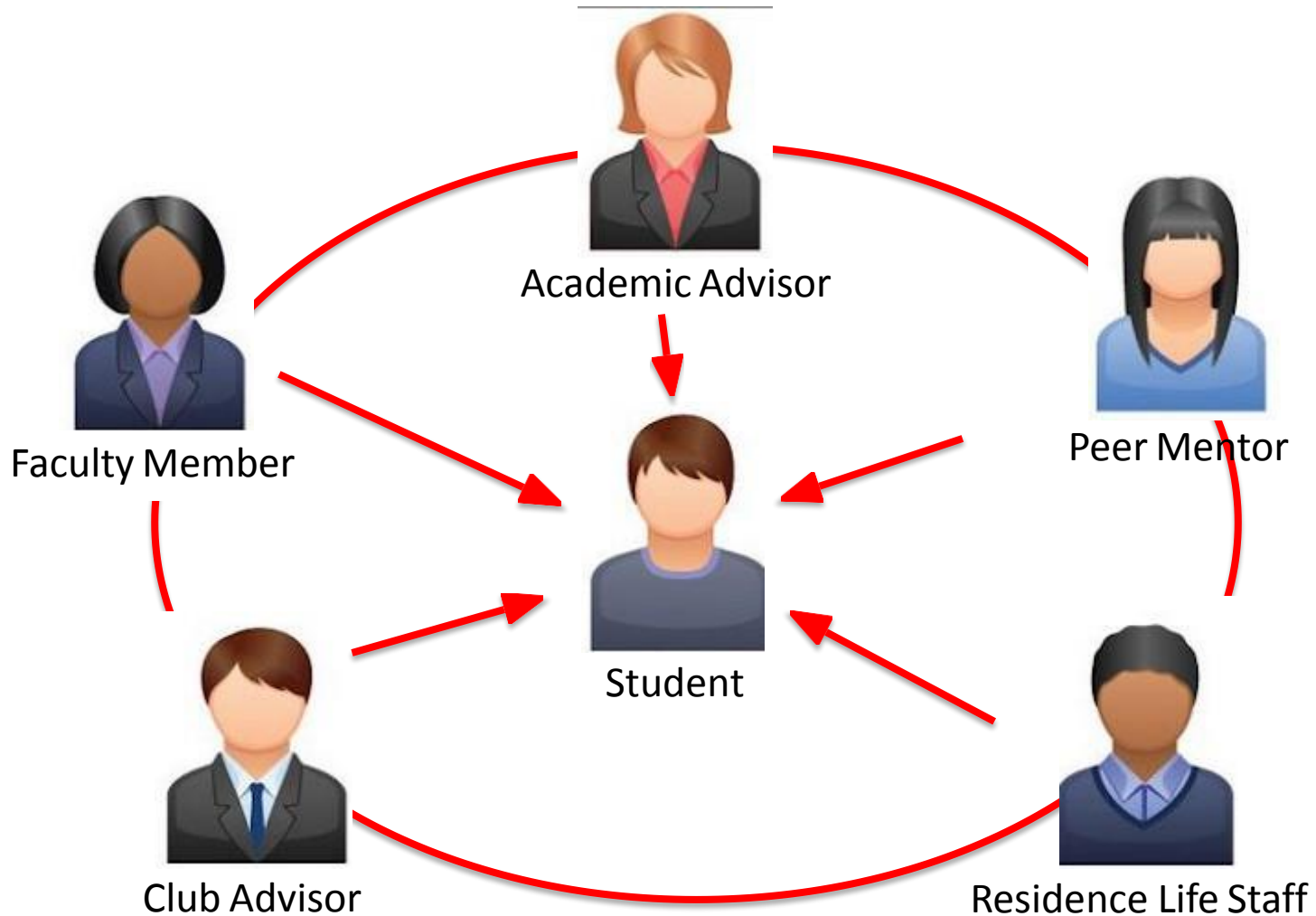
Do we really know our students?



B.I.N.G.O.

Bonnie Boe?
Donna Doe?
Frank Foe?
Harry Hoe?
Jackie Joe?
Karen Koe?
Larry Loe?
Martha Moe?
Paula Poe?
Ralph Roe?
Sammy Soe?
Tommy Toe?

Student success team



The ASCEND MODEL

Affordability

Support

Culture

Engagement

Nudges

Data

* Highlighted Strategies:

- Chief Retention Officer
- Shift Academic Advising Culture

Chief Retention Officer

designated worrier

[dez-ig-neyt-ed wuhr-ee-yer]

noun

1. a person who stays up at night worrying about the retention of your students.
2. a person who “owns” retention on your campus.

Impact of advising on retention

“Good academic advising often provides the best opportunity for all students to develop a personal, consistent relationship with someone in the institution who cares about them.”

“Regardless of institutional type or the composition of the student body, say Ernest Pascarella and Patrick Terenzini in *How College Affects Students*, solid academic advising has an important impact on student persistence. Students who are the happiest and academically the most successful have developed a solid relationship with an academic advisor.”

“So what works in student retention? The answers rest with four decades of research about student persistence that consistently points to solid academic advising, with advising positioned squarely as the vital link in this retention equation.”

“Conclusions drawn from Joe Cuseo’s “Academic Advisement and Student Retention” build a strong case for the value of academic advising because it “exerts a significant impact on student retention through its positive association with . . . (1) student satisfaction with the college experience, (2) effective educational and career planning and decision making, (3) student utilization of campus support services, (4) student-faculty contact outside the classroom, and (5) student mentoring.”

“In *Student Success in College: Creating Conditions That Matter* (2005), George Kuh makes the point that just as important as the time and effort students put into their coursework is the way institutions support strategies that connect students to the campus environment and high-impact learning experiences. The way to bring all of these elements together is by embedding within them solid academic advising programs.”

“Based on ten years of qualitative research with over 1,600 recent college graduates from 90 institutions across the country, Richard Light, in *Making the Most of College*, underscores the value of academic advising and its positive influence on student retention through his conclusion that “good advising may be the single most underestimated characteristic of a successful college experience” (p. 81).

“Academic advising is the very core of successful institutional efforts to educate and retain students. For this reason, academic advising ... should be viewed as the ‘hub of the wheel’ and not just one of the various isolated services provided for students...academic advisors offer students the personal connection to the institution that the research indicates is vital to student retention and student success” (Nutt, 2003).

“One study involving a large number of first year students revealed that students who experienced what they reported as “good quality” advising withdrew at much lower rates than those who experienced poor advising or no advising” (Metzner, 1989).

“Effective retention programs have come to understand that academic advising is the very core of successful institutional efforts to educate and retain students.”

“The cost of recruiting one new student to college approximates the cost of retaining 3-5 already enrolled students.”

“It is hard to imagine any academic support function that is more important to student success and institutional productivity than advising” (Kuh, 1997, p. 11).

Impact of advising on retention

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Academic Advisors are KEY!

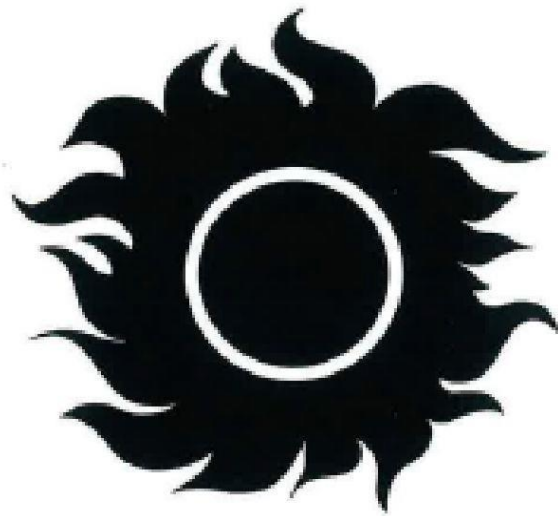
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The Tavi Way



TAVI

TAVI means God of Sun, the sun that shone on the land of the ancient Aztecs. It is a bursting flame of brilliant energy to guide the many ways we go. SUSC chose this name for their yearbook for many reasons, several of these reasons have been lost in history along with the people who originate them. The real reason, we think, is that SUSC is alive with light and shining people who make this institution a ball of energy that will live in memories for the eternities. The moments spent at SUSC will live as long as the people who made them. That is what we of the TAVI staff hope to do this year, capture the important moments, store them and give them to you to remember.

1966 Yearbook p. 2

TAVI

A young man is seen emerging from the fieldhouse, smiling. He has successfully completed his registration. He is eager to get going and hungry to learn. We watch him as he walks past the football field where he pauses for a moment, thinking. He then continues his journey past the Student Center, the Library, the Science Building, the Administration Building, and finally Old Main.

He glances down at the paper in his hand, the paper the Yearbook staff had given him. "Tavi," it said, "What is Tavi?" "Well," he thought, "it is an Indian word meaning the sun." But what does it have to do with the yearbook?" Just as the sun radiated atomic energy, giving off heat and light, does the yearbook of C.S.U. radiate the mass energy of the students, giving them enthusiasm, determination, and strength. Through the yearbook is seen a reflection of accomplishments and failures, personalities and dispositions, victories, and defeats.

Tavi is a good word to represent the yearbook. It is the precise summation of so much.

As the sun slowly sets we see him walk toward his dorm. His shoulders are straight, his head high. He is proud; he is making new advancements and so are his surroundings. It will be a great year.

Arlow Vance

1972 Yearbook

p. 125

TAVI captures the joy of being alive

Advising → Coaching

Why are you a TBIRD?

T Title

B Bed

I Individual

R Reason

D Dreams

The ASCEND MODEL

Affordability

Support

Culture

* Highlighted Strategies:

- Campus Connect
- Tasty Talks
- Meet-ups before events

Engagement

Nudges

Data

The ASCEND MODEL

Affordability

Support

Culture

Engagement

* Highlighted Strategies:

- Registration Blitz
- “First 10 Weeks” Campaign

Nudges

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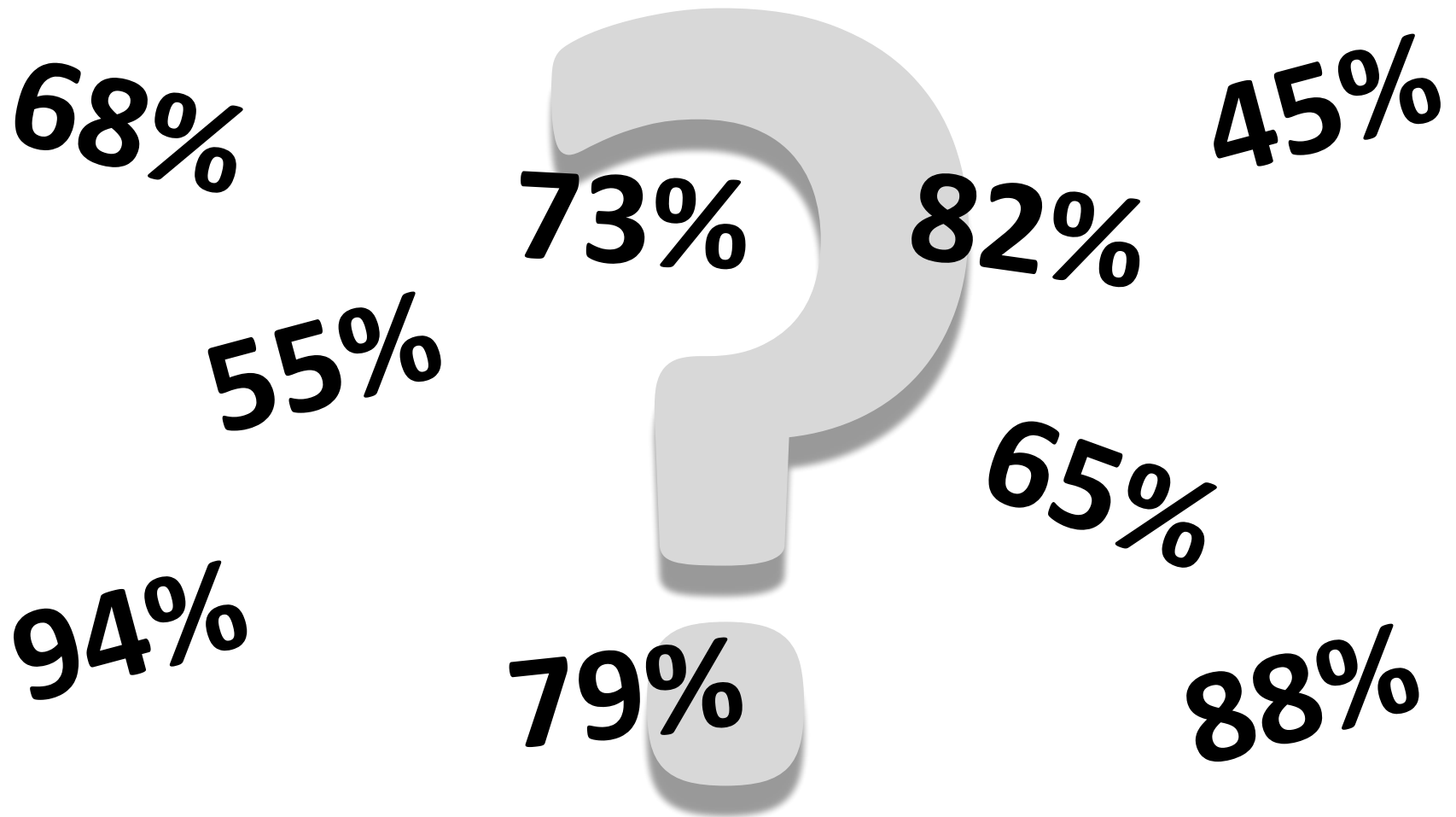
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* **Highlighted Strategies:**

- “Reasons Students Leave” study
- T-bird Take-off Questionnaire
- Third week survey

Reflection question

What percentage of students would retain regardless of what we do for them?



Reflection question

What are the top 3 reasons why students leave your campus?

(Hunch or backed by data?)

“Why do students leave?” Study

7 Reasons Why Students Leave SUU


- Financial
- Employment
- Life Outside the Classroom
- Health / Basic Needs
- Involvement / Engagement / Sense of Belonging
- Academic Performance (But usually the real issue was Time Management)
- Major / Career

“Students don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.”

Why do students leave SUU and how can we help?

“Students don’t care how much you know, until they know how much you care.”

Students need to know that we care for them before they will care to listen to what we have to say. Think about Maslow’s “Hierarchy of Needs” and how important it is to meet basic needs before we strive to help students meet higher order needs. When meeting with students, before jumping right into answering a their problems, consider asking them some very simple questions about their basic needs. See what you can do to help. Often, you’ll find that a student’s real issues is where we should start when helping them.



- **HEALTH / BASIC NEEDS** (Food, water, warmth, rest)
 - a) Questions to ask: How is your health? Are you exercising? Eating well? How are you doing emotionally and mentally? How many hours of sleep are you getting each night?
 - b) What you can do to help:
 - i) Encourage them to take care of themselves, exercise, and strive for 8 hours of sleep
 - ii) If they need food, refer them to the HOPE Pantry in the Community Engagement Center
 - iii) If they are struggling emotionally or mentally, take them to CAPS
- **FINANCIAL**
 - a) Questions to ask: How are things for you financially? Are you able to pay your bills and meet your needs? Do you have any “holds” that you can’t afford to pay? How did you pay for college this semester? How do you plan to pay for school next semester? Have you filed out your FAFSA yet?
 - b) What you can do to help:
 - i) Help them understand the value of taking out small loans to continue their education scholarship fund
 - ii) Have them visit with Colin Ward, in Financial Aid, who can help with SUU’s retention scholarship fund
 - iii) Take Strong, in the Center for Diversity & Inclusion, has access to multicultural scholarships
 - iv) Lynn Stoen, in Student Support Services, has access to a couple different scholarship funds for low-income, first generation, non-traditional students, or veterans who are Utah residents in good academic standing
 - v) Mik Topala, in Non-Traditional Student Services, can help students with childcare costs through the CCAMPES grant
- **EMPLOYMENT**
 - a) Questions to ask: Do you currently have a job? Do you need help finding a job (or better paying job)? How many hours a week are you currently working? (NOTE: Caution them that working over 20 hours a week may create a challenge to balance school, life, and work.)
 - b) What you can do to help:
 - i) Encourage them to meet with our Career Center staff
 - ii) Introduce them to the “Jobs for T-Birds” website (www.suu.edu/employment) where all student jobs (on-campus and off-campus) are posted
 - iii) Offer to review their resume as another set of eyes to make sure it is ready to go.
- **LIFE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM**
 - a) Questions to ask: Questions to ask: How are you doing balancing everything – class, work, life, homework, involvement? What are the biggest distractions that are competing with your ability to focus on your goals? How are things with your roommates? How are things at home?
 - b) What you can do to help:
 - i) Provide them with personal guidance and encourage them to take things a day at a time
 - ii) If they have psychological needs, walk them to CAPS to set up an appointment
- **INVOLVEMENT / ENGAGEMENT / SENSE OF BELONGING / FIT**
 - a) Questions to ask: You came to SUU with certain expectations about what college would be like, how has your actual experience been compared to what you expected it would be like? Talk to me about your involvement outside of the classroom. What has made you feel at home here at SUU? How do you find a group of friends or individual that you have connected with here?
 - b) What you can do to help:
 - i) Introduce them to Third Connection (<http://thirdconnection.collegeadviser.net>) where they can learn about clubs and organizations on campus
 - ii) Coach them through the steps for getting involved. Have this student meet with an ACE or the Student Involvement & Leadership staff.
- **ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE** (Usually the real issue is TIME MANAGEMENT)
 - a) Questions to ask: Talk to me about your current study habits. Are you studying enough to be successful? Do you feel like you are managing your time effectively? Are you taking advantage of your professor’s office hours? How do you like your classes? How do you like your professors?
 - b) What you can do to help:
 - i) Make sure they are aware of academic resources on campus (e.g. Tutoring Center, Writing Center, etc.)
 - ii) Work through a time management / weekly plan with them or send them to Dale Orton in the Tutoring Center and he can help guide students and their schedules.
- **MAJOR / CAREER**
 - a) Questions to ask: How are you feeling about your current choice of major? What are your long term career goals? What is your dream job?
 - b) What you can do to help:
 - i) If the student is unsure about their major, have them meet with Brian Fullerton in the Career Center

HOW DO YOU BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND ESTABLISHING RAPPORT?

- 1) Look them in the eye
- 2) Ask open ended questions
- 3) Listen (be a natural encourager... Not, say “hmm-hmm”, “uh-huh”, “yeah”)
- 4) Clarify, summarize, and make sure you understand (Are they Mad, Glad, Sad, or Scared?)
- 5) Offer to help and make referrals

NOTE: Do not jump right into solutions... Solving their problems is the last step.

T-bird Take-off Questionnaire (TTQ)

- Personal background and family information
- Information to help create fall semester schedule
- What are you most nervous about?
- What are you most excited about?
- High school experiences
- Educational goals and motivation toward degree
- College choice and who/what helped them make it
- Finances
- Hopes and expectations for their college experience

We only ask questions that provide 'actionable' data.

Third week survey

- How is their financial well-being?
- How is their emotional well-being?
- How is their physical well-being?
- How is their social well-being?
- Do they have a job? If so, how many hours a week are they working?
- How many hours are you studying each week?
- Are they currently attending extracurricular/campus activities?
- Have they joined a club or organization?
- How are things with their roommates? Any conflicts?
- How do they like their classes?
- Do they have any distractions at home that impacts their ability to focus on school?
- Are they homesick?
- Do they feel safe?
- Do they feel like they fit in on campus?
- Have they thought about transferring to another school?
- Are they happy with their current major and career goals?
- Do they feel like their professors care about them as individuals?
- Have they gone to any professor office hours yet?
- Are they happy with the quality of instruction/teaching they are getting?

We only ask questions that provide 'actionable' data.

Retention rates by:

- Demographics (Gender, Age, Race/Ethnicity, etc.)
- High School Data
- Housing
- Test Scores
- Interaction with SUU
- Attendance at SUU programs
- Campus Involvement/Engagement
- Utilization of Campus Resources
- Courses taken and grades earned

***Over 50 different
data points!***

The 'Murky Middle'

Profiling campus segments based on early academic performance to determine which students succeed, which fail, and **where schools should focus their efforts**

Most student success initiatives target freshman students, but 52% of attrition occurs after the first year. And of these late stage departures, over half are within the "Murky Middle."

Where are you focusing your student success efforts?



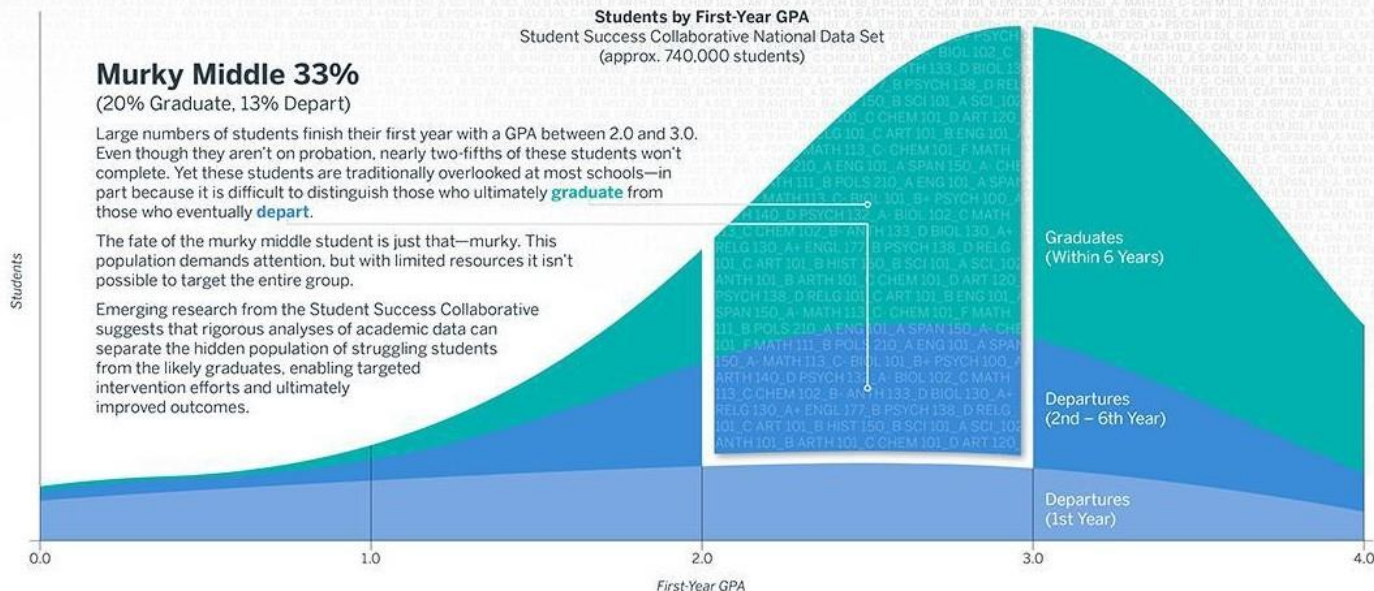
Phoenixes

Despite facing early challenges, these students are able to course correct and ultimately graduate. Unfortunately, fewer than one in ten students who finish their first year below a 2.0 GPA will eventually right the ship, despite considerable investment from their institutions.



Failed to Launch

These students fail to hit the ground running and struggle in the initial phase of college. More than three-fifths of the students who finish their first year with a GPA below 2.0 don't make it back as sophomores despite extensive investments and efforts on their behalf. Schools may want to consider re-allocating energy toward a group of students more likely to complete, like the Murky Middle.



The Ones That Got Away

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the vast majority of these students are transferring to and graduating from other institutions after the first year. Most institutions would love to retain these high-performing students and don't want to see them enroll with a competitor. Though many in this group leave due to fit, the question remains whether more customized support could help retain a portion of these strong students.

Unsolved Mysteries

Sometimes even the best students won't complete. It can be hard to isolate the cause of attrition for this group of delayed departures. Perhaps they decide to transfer, encounter personal hardship, or are unable to persist due to finances. Whatever the reason, it isn't showing up in their academics, leaving many institutions wondering how they can be reached and whether this group's attrition is ultimately outside of their control.

All-Stars

Three-fourths of students who make it to their second year with above a 3.0 GPA go on to graduate. While anecdotally we know these students aren't at risk, they tend to consume considerable advising resources through voluntary self-improvement efforts. This has prompted a national dialogue about understanding student self-direction.

When do students need us most?

What if we could focus on those students who need us most, when they need us most?



The students we targeted

- Students who told us they intend to transfer
- Students who we had not met yet (No-show at fall welcome week, no meetings with peer mentors or academic advisors, etc.) – “Need to be Needed”
- Students had not registered for next semester
- Native American students
- In-State students
- Utah, Davis, and Weber County residents
- Canyon View, Springville, and Hunter HS students
- 19 and 20 year olds
- Performing & Visual Arts majors
- HS GPA's below a 2.99
- ACT below a 24
- Students who live off campus



7%

Campus must change, not just technology

- Knowing this data does not automatically remove University roadblocks
- Knowing this data does not automatically make every faculty and staff member effective
- Knowing this data does not automatically make every student motivated

We are only as good as the people who do something with the data.

A Campus-wide Approach

Campus Partners:

- Academic Advisors
- Registrar's Office
- Academic Colleges/Faculty
- President's Council
- Student Affairs
- Housing & Residential Life
- Campus Recreation
- Multicultural Affairs
- Greek Affairs
- Career Services
- Student ID Card Office
- Student ID Card Office
- Financial Aid & Scholarships
- Institutional Research
- Student Government
- Clubs/Organizations
- Tutoring & Learning Centers
- Counseling Services
- Campus Police
- Information Technology
- Etc., Etc., Etc.....

Moving the Needle

Remember the 4 C's to moving the needle...

Must be campus-wide

Must be comprehensive

Must be collaborative

Must be coordinated

Part 3

Partnering with Academic Affairs for Student Success

When working with faculty

- Most effective when you work “bottom-up” rather than “top-down”
- Focus on a faculty member’s ability to influence a student’s “well-being”
- Remove the word “retention” from our vocabulary
- It is our job to remove barriers, not a faculty’s job. We need faculty to connect our students who are struggling with us.
- Faculty are not typically as interested in “retention,” “persistence,” and “completion.” But, we have found that faculty do care deeply about a student’s well-being and success and learning.
 - Most faculty are already doing a lot.

Ideas

- Retreats between academic and student affairs leaders
- Get buy-in on first year seminar
- Getting key faculty to sit on early alert
- Monthly meetings with key faculty
- Sending them emails to get them to help with re-registration
- Close the loop
- 3rd week enrollment census
- New faculty orientation
- Team up with Tavi Group
- Influencer Awards
- The Nest as a one stop shop
- List of resources to include in their resources
- Report back to them on success stories
- Praise the positive
- Mid-term grades
- Educating students on professor office hours
- Orientation lunches
- Personalized visits
- Retention reports by college
- Registration updates in Dean's Council meetings

Faculty Partners



Student Affairs / Academic Affairs Retreat

Faculty Partners



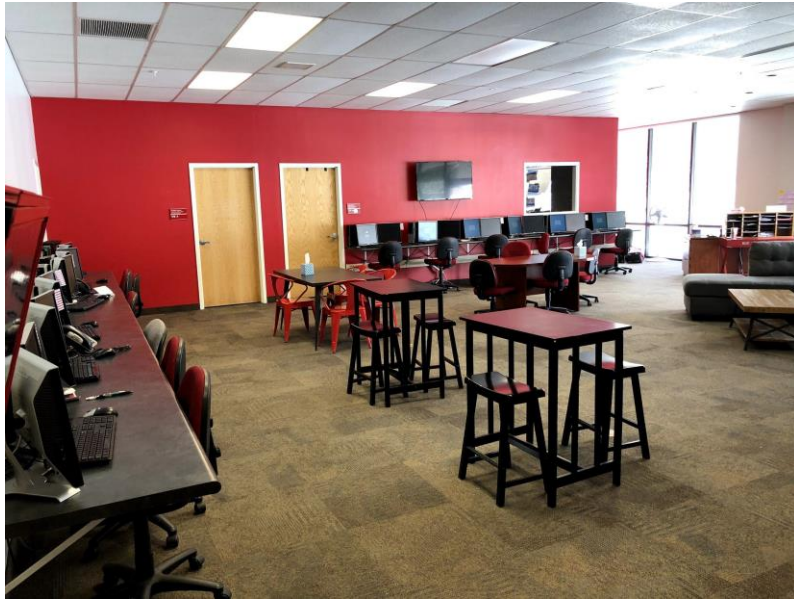
“Campus Influencer” Awards

Faculty Partners



Involving Faculty in Thunder U

Faculty Partners



The Nest: Student Help Center

[illegible]

We found faculty partners who would assist us in personal outreach to students to encourage registration.



Thank You.

For more information, or to continue the conversation, please contact us at jaredtippets@suu.edu or erickirby@suu.edu

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