



Preventing Early Attrition

Guiding Intentional Academic Decisions

Community College Executive Forum

Still Seeking Right Answer on Student Success

Colleges Still Struggling to Move the Needle

26%

Completion rate of entering students in the 2008 cohort

42%

Fall-to-fall retention rate of first-time, part-time students, 2013

59%

Fall-to-fall retention rate of first-time, full-time students, 2013

Questions Abound to Uncover Reasons for Attrition



"What are we missing from our student services portfolio that causes students to drop out?"



"Are the causes of drop out more related to academics or life factors?"



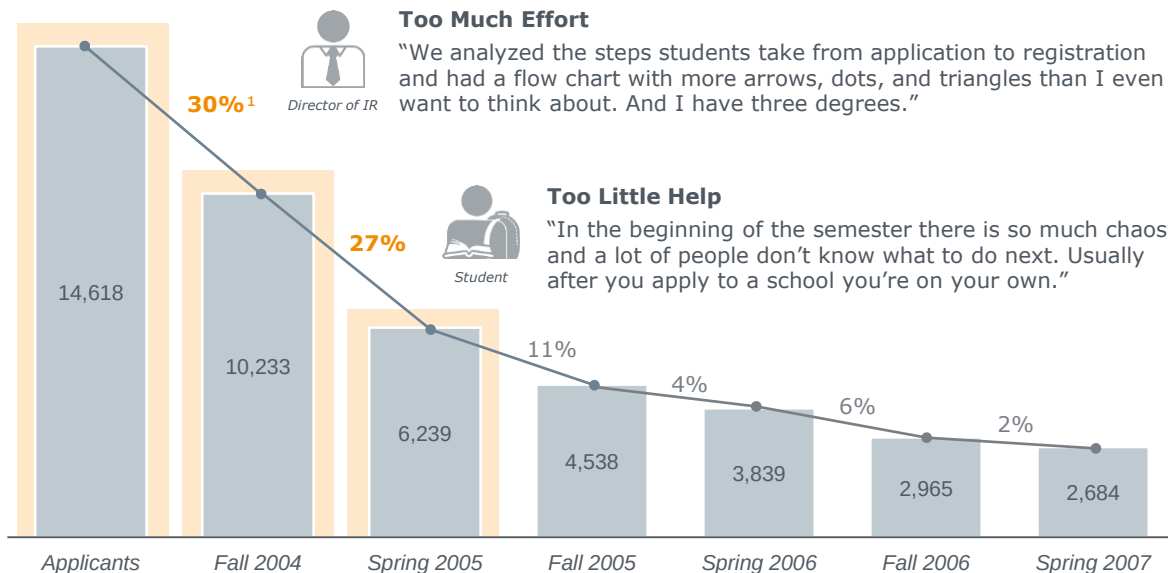
"Why do students seem to leave when we have so many services that would relieve some of their issues?"

All Too Common Story

College Measures Highest Rates of Attrition in Students' First Few Months

Massive Loss All Before First Spring

Enrollment Figures at a Mid-Atlantic Community College



1) Figures represent calculation of percent of total applicant pool lost between the two time periods.

Learning By Doing



Forum Researchers Gather Student Experiences of Intake Processes

Back to School (Secret) Shopping

CCEF Fall 2014 Enrollment Pain Point Visits



22 member community college campuses visited during peak registration for Fall 2014

Adopting the Student Perspective

Guiding Principles for the Research Team



Assume Nothing

Follow campus signage and staff instructions to navigate intake as new student would



11 states visited in total
(Note: Only partially influenced by their scenic locations)



Consider the Outliers

Document experience of several student archetypes to capture nuances in intake practices

150+

Total number of observation hours invested in Enrollment Pain Point Audit Whitepaper



Aim for Enrollment

Complete as many enrollment steps as possible over the course of a single campus visit

Three Key Findings

Major Flaws in Current Practice

1

*Financial
Support
Incomplete*



- Applicants do not complete FAFSA form
- Verification catches students by surprise
- Local and federal benefits go unused
- Students accept loans without knowing costs

2

*Academic
Decisions Made
at Random*



- Students select courses at random
- Time constraints force haphazard goal selection
- Course registration happens in a vacuum
- Students can't commit to 15-credit courseload

3

*Life Factors
Often Disrupt
Completion Goals*



- Students don't access on-campus services
- Course withdrawal occurs anonymously
- Mid-semester dropouts lose all progress made

Guiding Students to the Right Choice

Choice Architecture Theory Highly Applicable to the Intake Process

Government and Private Industry Makes Preferred Option the Default

But Higher Education Misses Chance to Encourage Completion Behavior

Framing

"Medium" most popular coffee size, even when actual size manipulated



Not Enough Credits

Students take "full load" of 12 credits, assume they'll graduate on time



Path of Least Resistance

Consumers more likely to purchase food easily reached at eye level



Unguided Course Selection

Students pick courses based on flawed criteria, delay graduation requirements



Burdening Bad Choice

Motorcyclists must pass extra test and prove insurance to forgo helmet



No-Fault Withdrawals

Students able to drop out or deviate from plans with easy transaction

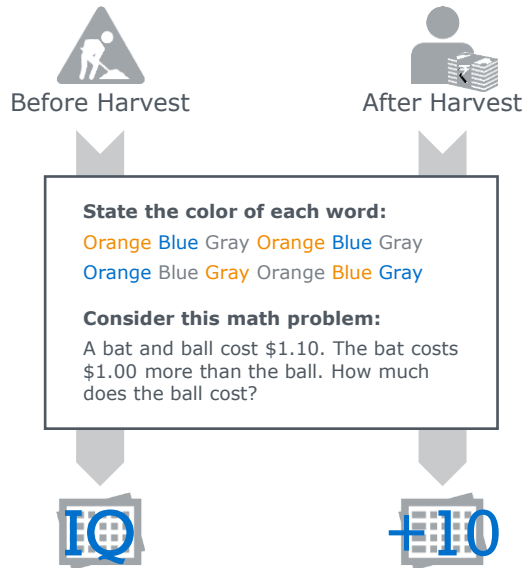


Understanding Cognitive Depletion

Behavioral Economics Explains Why We Make Poor Choices Under Pressure

Lessons from Around the World

World Bank 2015 World Development Report



Findings Hold Stateside

"When your bandwidth is loaded... you're just more likely to not notice things, you're more likely to not resist things you ought to resist, you're more likely to forget things, [and] you're going to have less patience."

*Eldar Shafir, Professor of Psychology
Princeton University*

Source: World Bank, *World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior*, 2015; Raven's Progressive Matrices, Standard Progressive Matrices (Standard, Sets A-E); Emily Badger, "How Poverty Taxes the Brain," *City Lab*, Aug. 2013; EAB interviews and analysis.

Preventing Early Attrition



1

Supporting Optimal Financial Decisions



- Onsite FAFSA Completion Lab
- SMS Verification Updates
- FAFSA Benefits Eligibility Screens
- Pre-Loan Debt Management Workshops

2

Guiding Intentional Academic Decisions



- Meta Major Scheduling Menus
- Completion Mapping Course
- Multi-Term Registration
- Full-Time Summer Scholarships

3

Minimizing First Semester Dropout



- Personalized Resource Nudges
- Cross-Trained Withdrawal Prevention Specialists
- Compressed Mini-Semesters



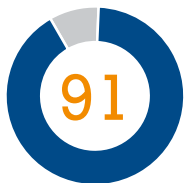
Merely Scratching the Surface

Intake Conversations Suffer When Advisors Have Limited Time Per Student

Much to Cover in 15 Minutes

Idealized Agenda for Intake Advising Appointment

Advising Considered Universally Important...



Percent of CCSSE respondents who report that academic advising and planning is an important service¹



- ? What major do you want to pursue?
- ? What are your goals in coming to college? Why are you here?
- ? What are you good at? What are your weaknesses?
- ? What do you care more about—job satisfaction, salary, free time, etc.?
- ? What other responsibilities do you have outside of school?

...But Few Students Get the Attention They Need



Percent of SENSE respondents who agree that an advisor helped them set and plan for academic goals



1) n= 414,646; n=73,502

Haste Makes Waste



Poor Academic Decisions at Intake Have Consequences Down the Road



Short-Sighted Course Choices

Selected at Random

- Average course catalogue contains 300+ pages
- Total freedom of choice now results in excess credits later

Last-Minute Scheduling

Determined Just Ahead of Semester

- Registration for upcoming semester opens during finals period and last day of class for current semester
- Fragmented planning sessions result in erratic path to graduation



Peer-Pressured Goal Setting

Influenced by Social Network

- Students have limited information about careers outside of personal connections
- Poorly chosen goals lead to major switches and attrition

Opting for Lightest Load

Based on Personal Feasibility

- Full-time enrollment (15 credits per semester) not possible for many non-traditional students
- Part-time students less likely to graduate than full-time peers



Guiding Intentional Academic Decisions

Structured Supports Set Foundation for On-Time Graduation



Intentional Course Choices

Meta Major Scheduling Menus

- From random decision to guided, constrained selection
- Case Study: Queensborough Community College (NY)

Pacing Time to Completion

Multi-Term Registration

- From last-minute hustle to thought-out academic plan
- Case study: West Hills Community College (CA)



Informed Goal Setting

Completion Mapping Course

- From peer pressure impulse to self-exploration and reflection
- Case study: Cuyamaca College (CA)

Right-Fit Course Load

Full-Time Summer Scholarships

- From making the low-cost choice to the right choice
- Case study: Indiana State University (IN)



Good Intentions, Counterproductive Results

DOE Inadvertently Prompts Random Program Selection

No Major? No Aid

New Regulation Bars Undecided Students from Federal Financial Aid



U.S. Department of Education

34 CFR 668.32 – Student Eligibility

*"A student is eligible to receive Title IV, HEA program assistance if the student...is a regular student enrolled, or **accepted for enrollment, in an eligible program at an eligible institution.**"*

Quick Decisions Easy, But Costly



"Just pick one. My sister was here last week and spent an hour reading all the programs they have here. I'm not like that—if I *have* to pick a major, I just pick an easy one and switch later."

Community College Student

20+ Average excess credits earned pursuing a 60-credit A.A./A.S.

\$7.7B Total annual cost to students for excess credits

\$11.5B Total annual cost to U.S. taxpayers for excess credits

Source: "Student Eligibility," Department of Education Federal Student Aid Office, <http://ifap.ed.gov/qahome/qaassessments/studentelig.html>, Accessed Feb. 2015; "The Game Changers: Are states implementing the best reforms to get more college graduates?," Complete College America, Fall 2013; EAB interviews and analysis.

Meta Majors



Colleges Condense Program Offerings to Ease Major Selection Decision

200+ Programs Grouped into a Handful of Choices

Sample of Valencia College's Meta Major Options

Business	STEM	Health Science	Public Safety
Accounting Technology A.S.	Computer Information Technology A.S.	Cardiovascular Technology A.S.	Public Administration A.A.
Economics A.A.	Marine Biology A.A.	Nursing A.S.	Paralegal Studies A.S.
Human Resources Operations Certificate	Laser and Photonics Technician Certificate	Magnetic Resonance Imaging Certificate	Homeland Security Specialist Certificate
Medical Office Administration A.S.	Network Engineering Technology A.S.	Health Information Technology A.S.	Fire Science Technology A.S.
Office Support Certificate	Advanced Electronics Technician Certificate	Emergency Medical Technology Certificate	Correctional Officer Career Certificate

Meta Majors Catch on across Community Colleges Nationally

- CUNY Lehman College
- Valencia College
- Palm Beach State College
- Ivy Technical Community College
- Queensborough Community College
- Monroe Community College
- Macomb Community College

Source: "New Student Experience," Valencia College, <http://valenciacollege.edu/academic-affairs/new-student-experience/meta-majors.cfm>, Accessed Feb. 2015; EAB interviews and analysis.

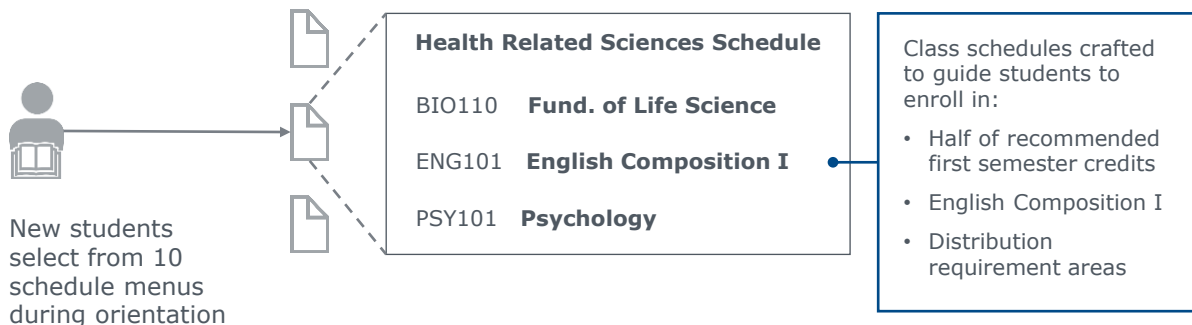
À La Carte Academic Schedules



CUNY Queensborough Offers Prefabricated Meta Major Scheduling Menus

Highlighting Most Relevant Course Options

Illustration of QCC's Newest Scheduling Model



Tip: If historical data shows that a significant number of students switch between meta majors, this is cause to ensure some overlap of scheduling menus across meta majors (e.g., the scheduling menus for the STEM and Health Related Sciences meta majors share ENG101 and MAT119)



Allow Choice, But With Guardrails

Three Pieces of Implementation Advice for Meta Major Scheduling Menus



Search Records

- Analyze historical data to identify 10 most enrolled courses in each meta major among first-year students
- Identify which courses on the list are applicable to programs in the meta major



Provide Many Timeslots

- Courses on scheduling menus should be available all throughout the day and night
- Consider variations of scheduling menus that align to certain times of day (i.e., all courses on the scheduling menu are offered from 9:00am to 1:00pm)



Optimize for Transfer

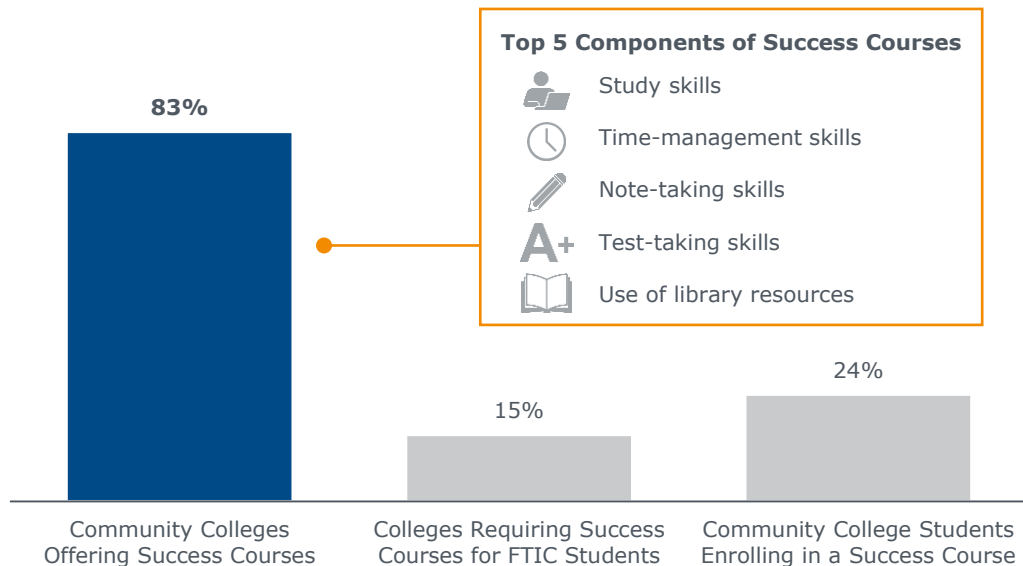
- When selecting courses for scheduling menu, indicate which courses are accepted by four-year university transfer partners
- Consider creating specialized scheduling menus for students planning to transfer

A Narrow Definition of Success Skills

Student Success Courses Plentiful, but Miss the Mark

Courses Suffer from Low Utilization and Limited Scope

Results from 2011 CCSSE and CCIS Surveys



Source: "Matter of Degrees: Promising Practices for Community College Student Success," Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2012; EAB interviews and analysis.

Redefining Elements for Success



Course Focused on Career Exploration Draws Crowds, Boosts Persistence

Cuyamaca's Completion Mapping Course



Exploring Personality Type

Do What You Are self-assessment



Determining Learning Style

Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (PEPS)



Defining Multiple Intelligences

Student journaling class activities



Articulating Career Interests

O*NET exploration assignments



C U Y A M A C A
· C O L L E G E ·

2,000

First-year students
participating in optional
PDC 124 course annually



85%

Fall-to-spring persistence
rate for career mapping
course completers, versus
65% for non-enrollees



Boost Course Enrollment with Perks

Flexible

- Offered online, face-to-face, hybrid

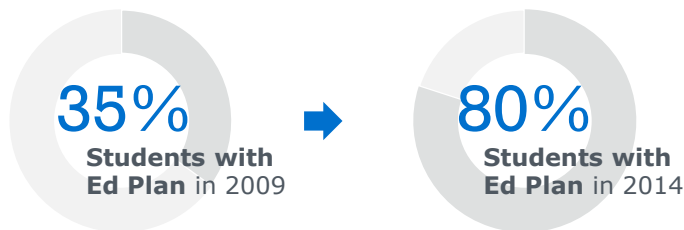
Transferrable

- Applicable to A.A. and A.S. general education requirements
- Transfers to California State University System and University of California system as general education electives

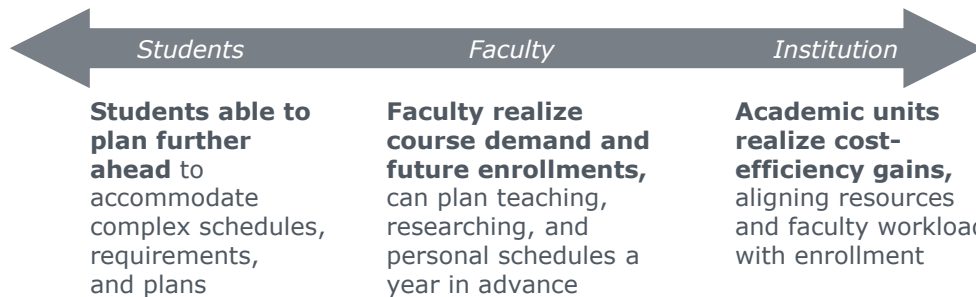
Extending Registration's Reach

Multi-Term Commitment Enables and Encourages Long-Term Planning

Investments in Ed Planning Infrastructure Foreshadow Multi-term Registration



Reg365 Supports Student Success and Institutional Management



Source: Allie Grasgreen, "Registering Toward Completion," Inside Higher Ed, April 2014; "Cleveland State University - Multi-Term Registration: Course Scheduling for Student Success," AACU Innovations Exchange; EAB interviews and analysis.

Experts Recommend Multi-Term Registration

“I’m kind of surprised it’s not more widespread, because it’s not technologically a challenge. I think it makes a lot of sense if you can do it. It’s good resource planning.”

*Michael V. Reilly, Executive Director
American Association of College Registrars*

“This is almost zero effort from a registrar’s perspective.”

*Janet Stimple, University Registrar
Cleveland State University*

Getting Multi-Term Registration Right

Three Key Pieces of Advice from West Hills Community College

1 Conduct Pre-Requisite Checks Multiple Times

Staff use degree audit system to notify and drop students from summer, fall, and spring courses if prerequisites are no longer satisfied because of dropped (previous semester) courses



Conduct degree audit two times prior to each semester:

- Spring: early January, late April
- Summer: late May, mid-July
- Fall: early August, mid-November

2 Reduce Number of Course Scheduling Meetings

Faculty assemble once annually to plan a full year's worth of courses, rather than meeting two to three times per year to plan the schedule for each semester



College realizes advantage of long-term schedule planning:

- Forecast for budget needs
- Plan personal life around anticipated courses
- Identify course capacity and faculty demand earlier

3 Adjust Student Billing Timeline

Students billed in a two-part process for the entire year's tuition because district requires student payment within 24 hours of registration



- Fall and summer tuition due within 24 hours of registration
- Reminder statements sent out on October 1
- Spring tuition due on November 1

Federal Funding Stream Dries Up

Part-Time Students Seek Summer Financing to Stay on Track



Outdated Timeline Fails Students

"We've thought about college in an agrarian way forever. Maybe that's fine for the elite, and maybe that's fine for farmers, but it doesn't work for our students who are working, or have financial challenges."

*Joshua Powers, Associate Vice President
Indiana State University*

Grand Experiment Comes to End

Year-Round Pell Grants Ended in 2011



2008 Higher Education Opportunity grant lets students qualify for Summer Pell grant



From 2008 to 2010:

- Two-year college enrollment grows by 200,000 students
- FTE enrollment grows 14%, while head-count grows 9%
- Summer FTE enrollment grows 15%, while summer head-count grows 10%

70%

Students taking fewer than 15 credits per term at community colleges and thus off-track for timely graduation

39%

Fall-to-fall retention rate for part-time community college students, compared to 59% for full-time students



2011 federal spending bill maintains maximum Pell grant, but eliminates year-round Pell

Source: Lauren Sieben, "Community College Students Take More Credit Hours, and Report Says Pell Increases Are Why," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 2011; Public Agenda, "With Their Whole Lives Ahead of Them: Myths and Realities About Why So Many Students Fail to Finish College," 2009; EAB interviews and analysis.

Summer Pell Alternative

Scholarship Incentives Make 30-Credit Annual Enrollment Attainable

Full-Year Enrollment

ISU's Summer Scholarship Pays Students to Reach Full-Time Status



Past Pilot Phase:

On-Track Summer Scholarship piloted summer 2014; set for growth summer 2015



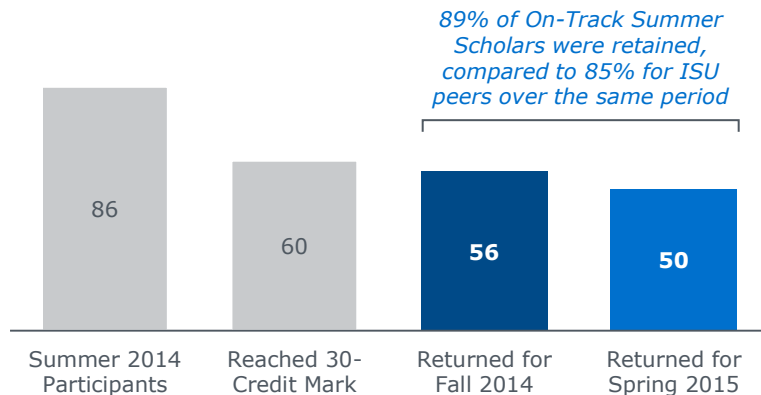
Meeting a Need:

Banded tuition models insufficient incentive for full time enrollment if students have competing demands on time—work, family, etc.



Program Benefits:

Scholarship provides 6 free college credits over summer and a \$300 book stipend



Advice from the Front Lines:



Expect increased demand for summer courses



Expand size of summer tutoring network



Consider summer orientation for new online students

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Questions on Today's Material?



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