




The Ten Commandments of Student Success and Retention

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1. Ensure that the institution has adopted a philosophy of serving students

- ◆ Focus on developing the finest possible educational environment
- ◆ Lead the campus toward an increasing focus on customer service -- find ways to serve students and let them know you care
- ◆ Remember that all drop-outs are not flunk outs
- ◆ Guard against any semblance of the bait and switch ploy
- ◆ Understand that retention is not the goal, it is a by-product of student success
- ◆ Promote friendships and connections among faculty, staff and students




2. Develop a method of constant probing for the reasons why students consider, come, stay, and leave the college.

- ◆ Research, Research, Research
- ◆ Find out the real reasons why students come, stay and leave
- ◆ Understand the needs and desires of your target markets
- ◆ Find out what competes for your student's time, affection, attention, money, etc.
- ◆ Find out the issues that are frustrating to students and either reaffirm your stand or do something about the issue -
- annual studies of satisfaction, informal communication, on-going communication, and exit interviews
- ◆ Understand each student's motivation for attending this college versus other choices




3. Make developing people the highest priority.

- ◆ Invest in faculty development -- faculty are the key to student retention
- ◆ Reward quality teaching that includes advising and mentoring of students
- ◆ Make sure that people are in the right jobs -- properly utilize their giftings/talents
- ◆ Be ruthless in removing poor customer service agents




4. Ensure that the academic programs are what the college can and should do very well.

- ◆ Concentrate on defining, fostering and support quality academic programs
- ◆ Develop a realistic institutional mission that identifies what the college does well
- ◆ Set realistic academic program goals




5. Recognize that political realities are important and must be worked through for any effective retention effort.

- ◆ Commitment to retention and customer service must be evident from the top
- ◆ Assign responsibility for leading the retention effort to a person who is well connected to the power brokers
- ◆ Remember that all teachers are not good advisors
- ◆ Understand that no prophet is accepted in his/her own country
- ◆ Remember -- they killed the prophets




6. Understand the necessary **processes** to have an effective retention program.

- ◆ Identify the key decision group for each type of retention effort and insure their involvement in a campus-wide steering committee
- ◆ Put the best thinkers on campus to work on improving student success
- ◆ Get students started right -- insure that you have quality welcoming and orientation efforts that last more than a few days
- ◆ Front-load the freshmen year
- ◆ Learn the techniques of developmental advising/mentoring -- insure that mentoring is an ongoing, proactive process that is much more than assisting with class scheduling
- ◆ Value good teaching -- affirm the significance of what happens in the classroom and advising office




7. **Present** the college in an open and honest manner.

- ◆ Be open and honest about what your school does well (and not so well)
- ◆ Be open and honest about problems and solutions




8. Ensure that institutional **policies** are necessary, reasonable, and minimal.

- ◆ Review all policies and procedures for student centeredness and convenience (not institutional)
- ◆ Have a grade forgiveness policy



9. Learn to **predict and prioritize** which students need extra attention and be **proactive** in providing services to all students.

- ◆ Track the original educational objective of new students
- ◆ Identify, support and mentor drop-out prone students



10. Foster cooperation and **partnering** of college units to serve the needs of students.

- ◆ Insure that information is shared appropriately with others who can make a difference
- ◆ Utilize campus resources to foster student success