

## GETTING TO 88% RETENTION IN 2010

### STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE 2005-PRESENT

#### I. STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

##### DATA BASED DECISION MAKING PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS CAMPUS VISION IN ACTION FUNDS (*VIA*)

##### SPECIFIC ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN OR PLANNED.

These actions link to best practices designed to help students make a connection early to University and on research specific to TCU

- Created hand off from admissions
- Established E-Frog (*VIA*)
- Creating Electronic Alert System
- Addressing the need for mid—Semester intervention (U grade)
- Created College 101—A structured program in spring semester for first year students who would have been dismissed for academic reasons at the end of their first semester. A similarly structured program for those first year students who do not succeed in the spring semester program. (*VIA*)
- Established Recruit back (internal and external)

Financial aid intervention

Re-recruit those who left TCU to attend two-year colleges

- Hired Professional Advisors for ADDRAN (*VIA*)
- Addressed the importance of housing as a factor for Honors and in Wiggins
- Re-focused Chancellor's Assembly on academics
- Began to address the myths that retention is a simple problem to be solved solely by Admissions bringing in "better" students, or by providing more

financial aid or by ensuring that a student gets into his/her choice of a Greek organization.

- Examination of first year seminars as a factor in retention and what model would work best for TCU
- Begin process of building a new understanding and practice of advising and mentoring and determining what works best for TCU

## **II. LESSONS LEARNED**

- Change can happen!
- Importance of VIA grants for the initiative
- Importance of verifying hypotheses and TCU “truths.” These include: roles of faculty and student peers and assumptions that only academically weak students are at risk and that those who register last at registration are at risk
- Faculty and staff professional development as a result of the initiative
- Need for personnel assistance to sustain the initiative

## **III. NEXT STEPS**

- Refocus on High Achievers
- Act on research findings, especially in establishing academic learning communities for first year students and developing learning commons in residences
- Expand initiatives to sophomores
- Maintain support of VPs and Deans and increase involvement of faculty
- Continue to showcase TCU to external audiences as a contributor to student success and to up-date TCU community on work of the Student Success Committee
- Resolve pressing matter of personnel assistance for sustainability
- Complete the paradigm shift to making student success a TCU priority
- Create readily accessible data base



- Determine which *VIA* funded projects to absorb into the budget.

#### IV. RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- Each 1% increase in retention means \$410,000 dollars
- Each 1% increase enhances TCU reputation
- Each 1% increase enhances faculty and staff morale

#### V. DATA FOR 2007

<b>All</b>		
	N	%
Not Retained	235	14 %
Retained	1417	86 %
Total	1652	100 %

<b>Retention by Sex</b>				
	F		M	
	N	%	N	%
Not Retained	143	14 %	92	14 %
Retained	844	86 %	573	86 %
Total	987	100 %	665	100 %

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#### **Retention by Ethnicity (excludes non-resident students)**

	White		Minority	
	N	%	N	%
Not Retained	164	13 %	57	19 %
Retained	1079	88 %	246	81 %
Total	1243	100 %	303	100 %

p<.05

**Retention by Frog Camp Attendance**

	Frog Camp			
	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
Not Retained	133	13 %	102	17 %
Retained	924	87 %	493	83 %
Total	1057	100 %	595	100 %

p<.05

**Retention by First Semester Cumulative GPA**

	Not Retained		Retained		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
0.0 - 0.5	13	44.8%	16	55.2%	29	100.0%
0.6 - 1.0	13	36.1%	23	63.9%	36	100.0%
1.1 - 1.5	24	39.3%	37	60.7%	61	100.0%
1.6 - 2.0	36	24.8%	109	75.2%	145	100.0%
2.1 - 2.5	27	12.3%	192	87.7%	219	100.0%
2.6 - 3.0	37	9.1%	370	90.9%	407	100.0%
3.1 - 3.5	36	9.5%	341	90.5%	377	100.0%
3.6 - 4.0	43	11.6%	329	88.4%	372	100.0%

p<.001

**Retention by Honors Status**

	Honors			
	No		Yes	
	N	%	N	%
Not Retained	211	15 %	24	10 %
Retained	1190	85 %	227	90 %
Total	1401	100 %	251	100 %

p<.05



Successful Graduation  
Data Driven Decision Making – High Points

**Annual Retention/Graduation Report** – Tracks retention by cohort through six years comparing actual four and six-year graduation rates to expected rates for each cohort and sub-groups within the cohort.

- Demonstrated that attrition was an issue across all levels of academic performance.
- Caused us to reevaluate action steps taken with lowest achieving students and became the foundation for the Academic Warning program.
- Affirmed the retention effects of Frog Camp attendance for most cohorts
- Revealed that Freshman Seminar participation had little or no effect on retention.

**Match between Expectations and Experiences** – A series of studies designed to assess the match between students' expectations and their early college experiences.

- Revealed that students know fairly early in their college experience whether they expect to return for subsequent semesters.
- Revealed that students who leave after the fall semester seem to leave because they have not made adequate social connections in or out of the classroom.
- Findings to date suggest that faculty-student relationships at TCU are less important and peer relationships are more important in the retention process. These relationships are opposite of what is reported in the literature on student retention. This research is ongoing.

**Multivariate Analysis of Longitudinal Data** – Institutional Research compiled and maintains a longitudinal dataset on the entering freshman cohorts from 2000 forward. Dr. Kristen Klopfenstein has analyzed these data using logistic regression to identify factors which significantly contribute to retention or attrition.

- Confirmed findings from Annual Retention Report that Frog Camp contributes significantly to retention and freshman seminar participation does not.
- Confirmed findings of Expectations/Experiences studies that social integration (and the mechanisms that contribute to social integration through academic and co-curricular activities) is key to retention.
- Revealed that late decision-making, not August orientation, is a key factor in retention.
- For students making between 2.0 and 3.0, found an inverse relationship between high school GPA and retention.
- Identified residential patterns which contributed to higher rates of attrition allowing residential staff to make adjustments to first-year housing assignments.
- Identified the importance of continuing financial scholarships for high achievers for retention.
- Identified how mid-semester U-grades relate to retention for students who are struggling academically.

- Confirmed positive effects of participation in TRIO programs for students with a GPA less than 3.0
- eFrog2010 and eFrog 2011 (with GoalQuest) were initiated in order to address the integration concerns raised by these findings and those in the expectations/experiences studies.
- Recommendation that Learning Communities be developed to further academic and social integration of students into the TCU community.
- Chancellor's Assembly given a more academic focus and academic ritual as a means of introducing students to and welcoming them into the community of scholars at TCU.

**Identification of Critical Data Elements to serve as Early Warning Indicators –**

Members of the Successful Graduation committee have begun to use available data to identify students who may be at risk of attrition. The internal Recruit Back effort is this result of this process. Financial holds and advising holds are proactively reviewed so that problems which could lead to attrition can be resolved early.

**What Happens to the Leavers? –** This study analyzed the enrollment patterns of students who leave TCU prior to graduation.

- Revealed that over half of the students who leave TCU prior to graduate (and for whom subsequent enrollment data were available) enrolled in a public 2-year institution. This finding is the impetus for a new external recruit back program which will begin this year.

**New/Ongoing Projects**

- Implementation of a PeopleSoft Retention Page to allow for better tracking and evaluation of various retention interventions
- Implementation of an intervention mechanism to allow faculty and staff to report students that they think may be having academic or personal difficulties.
- Continuation of the expectations/experiences studies to see if findings are unique to the initial cohort studied or part of a broader trend.
- An examination of the relationship between "gate-keeper" courses and retention.
- Evaluation of eFrog2010 and retention.
- Collaboration with Eduventure.