Redefining Student Success:

Predictive Analytics… Moving the Needle on Retention and Persistence!
Is College Worth It?

Value of College Has Been Called into Question for Decades

Guess Which Quotes Are From 1976 vs. 2012

“By all estimates, the rising costs of college have been paced by diminished economic returns on the college investment.”

(1976)

“Is all this investment in college education really worth it? The answer, I fear, is that it’s not.”

(2012)

“As much as 27 percent of the nation’s work force may now be made up of people who are “overeducated” for the jobs they hold.”

More than half of all recent graduates are unemployed or in jobs that do not require a degree.”

“The relationship between higher education and the aspirations of a student is constantly being renegotiated. It is not being eliminated. Not in 1976, and certainly not today.”
Are We Already Seeing the Impact of Change?

Test Scores Declining Everywhere (Except at Elites) Over Last Five Years

Change in SAT Score (75th Percentile) Entering Classes 2009 vs. 2013

Public Institutions, by Grad Rate
Over 80% | 60% to 80% | Under 60%
19.5
-8.1
-5.1

Private Institutions, by Grad Rate
Over 80% | 60% to 80% | Under 60%
13.9
-12.0
-13.9

Major Downstream Implications

$ Less prepared students more costly to serve
Student success metrics begin to decline
Tuition and performance funding decline
Saga repeats, school caught in death spiral
2015 Challenges to Student Success

New Push For Metrics!

The Federal Ratings System that Wasn’t

DEC 2014

What was proposed
New College Ratings System

Access
• Percent of Pell students
• EFC gap
• Percent first-generation
• Family income quintiles

Affordability
• Average net price
• Net price by quintile

Outcomes
• Completion rates
• Transfer rates
• Labor market success
• Graduate school attendance
• Loan performance outcomes

SEPT 2015

What we got
College “Scorecard”

• A repackaging of data available in IPEDS and other sources
• New visibility into financial aid and debt
• Retention and completions data limited to only first-time, full-time students

▶ No clear institution ratings or ability to compare institutions

Not Quite Off the Hook

At least 10 states already promoting public comparison of alumni salary data

The big risk:
Proposal to tie $150M in annual federal aid to performance against these metrics
2015 Challenges to Student Success

New Push For Metrics!

Scorecard Efforts Suggest that We Will Be Reporting More in the Future

Current | Emerging | On the Horizon?
---|---|---
First-Year Retention | Persistence to Next Term | Four-Year Graduation
Six-Year Graduation | | Affordability and Access
40% of students not tracked (PT and transfers) | Members finding useful for making quick corrections | Key metric for controlling total student cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Transfer Success</th>
<th>Postgraduate Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Access to federal aid could be in the balance | Moving toward an accountable care organization? | What’s the real ROI of college?

Most affected:
- Most institutions, esp. larger ones
- Most affected:
  - Selective and flagship publics
- Most affected:
  - Costly private institutions
- Most affected:
  - State system schools
- Most affected:
  - All members

How the Metrics Roll Up

- Four-year graduation
- Persistence
- Registration
- Term GPA
- Exam grades
- Class attendance

Data We Need

- Real-time, granular, process-oriented
  - Real-time student performance
    - Attendance
    - Grades
  - Process completion
    - Registration
    - FAFSA completion
  - Support service interaction
    - Advising interactions
    - Tutoring appointments
  - Interim outcomes
    - Term-to-term persistence
    - Term GPA change
Opportunity Assessment Highlights Areas of Focus

Institution Reports use historical data to point to trends in areas such as graduation rates, time to degree and major switching patterns to identify suggested targeted outreach campaigns, success marker course milestones and other potential programmatic improvement opportunities.

**Institution-Wide**

- Which programs have below-average graduation rates and above-average time to degree?
- Which majors do students frequently switch between?

**College or Department Level**

- Which courses are most predictive of graduation success?
- Which courses have the highest DFW rates?
Not All Courses Are Created Equal

Review Historical Records to Identify Predictive Courses and Grades

Example: Two Required Courses for a Chemistry Major

**CHEM101**
- Graduation Rate in Major:
  - A: 64%
  - B: 58%
  - C: 25%
  - D: 13%
  - F: 10%
  - W: 30%

**BIOL305**
- Graduation Rate in Major:
  - A: 52%
  - B: 55%
  - C: 48%
  - D: 43%
  - F: 12%
  - W: 27%

*Predictive*  ✔  *Not Predictive*  ❌

Success Marker eLearning Module
Current Referrals Rely Too Much on Students, Need Case Management

Without a Case System...

Advisor makes referral
Points out office on campus map
Asks student to set appointment

Did the student ever connect?
Student never reports back

Did the issue get resolved?
Student deals with next steps

With a Closed-Loop Case System...

Advisor makes referral
Advisor opens case in system
Advisor sets appointment

Support service appointment occurs
Case stays open until resolved
Stakeholders work together

Issue is resolved

Advisor follows up if necessary
Notification
Advisor follows up if necessary
Notes
Current Gains and Losses at WCU

Gains:
• FTFTF Rate from Fall 2014 → Spring 2015 up 2%, exceeding our 20/20 Vision goal 5 years ahead of schedule:
  …80.1% retention!
• FTFTF Female retention rate gained 5.4 points.
• We saw a gain of 8.8 points for Black/African American retention, and a 3.9 point gain for Hispanics of any race.

Opportunities:
• New Transfers (both distance and residential) are down. Distance is down significantly, with an 8.3 point drop.
• FTFTF Male retention dropped by 1.8 points.
• We saw a drop of 2.9 points in our New Graduate Student population.
Our Goals

WCU’s goals for the Student Success Collaborative are linked to the Chancellor’s 2020 Vision; primarily, the items outlined in Goal 1.6.

**GOAL 1.6:** Attain a student population that balances the University’s commitment to access, its responsibility for student success, and ensures the sustainability of University funding. (See Initiative 6.3.2)

*Initiative 1.6.1:* Develop data-driven admission strategies (for first-time freshmen, transfer, graduate, and distance students) that balance the University’s aim to increase the academic profile of entering students while continuing to serve the educational role of access as a regional comprehensive university.

*Initiative 1.6.2:* Conduct ongoing program assessment and prioritization and allocate resources to positively affect enrollment.

*Initiative 1.6.3:* Expand efforts to recruit students in programs associated with the curricular focus areas.

*Initiative 1.6.4:* Make the securing of endowed merit and need-based financial aid an institutional fundraising priority. (See Initiative 6.3.6)

*Initiative 1.6.5:* Enhance support for scholarships, graduate assistantships, and student research to attract and retain students who are prepared for the rigors of a Western Carolina educational experience.

*Initiative 1.6.6:* Increase the diversity of the student body and ensure campus resources necessary to support a diverse student body in order to serve the needs of the changing demographics of the region and state and to enhance the educational experience of all students.

*Initiative 1.6.7:* Increase WCU’s freshman-to-sophomore retention rate to 80 percent by 2020.

*Initiative 1.6.8:* Increase WCU’s six-year graduation rate to 60 percent by 2020.

**Accomplished!** We will revisit this objective to set a new goal; we will work with OIPE and the Chancellor to set realistic but ambitious goals for the future.
## 2014-2015 Retention

### First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen
Retention, Graduation and Persistence Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FTFTF</th>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
<th>HS GPA</th>
<th>Cumulative GPA</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,745</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,157</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>3.10</td>
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<td></td>
<td>481</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>2.49</td>
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<td></td>
<td>103</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>2.26</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>2.60</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.10</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summertime GPA</th>
<th>Fall GPA</th>
<th>Retained Fall to Spring</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>1,612</td>
<td>92.4%</td>
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<td>3.54</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>93.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>430</td>
<td>89.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring GPA</th>
<th>Retained Fall to Fall</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1,397</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>84.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.19</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>70.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
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### Western Carolina University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total #</th>
<th>Retention</th>
<th>Graduation</th>
<th>Persistence</th>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1555</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1566</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1250</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1219</td>
<td>76.2%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>74.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1549</td>
<td>74.2%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1423</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1508</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1550</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>75.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1614</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1745</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2014-2015 Retention – Specific Populations

- Honors College students are retained at a high rate—90.3%.
- Students enrolled in transition courses are retained at a higher rate than those that are not.
- Students enrolled in a First Year Seminar course are retained at a rate of 82.4%, whereas students not enrolled in a First Year Seminar course are retained at a rate of 77.5%.
- Students in summer programs are retained at a rate of 87%!
- Overall Learning Community retention is 81.5%.
- First Generation students are retained at a lower rate than other students—74%.
Addressing the “Murky Middle”

**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?

**Murky Middle 33%**
(20% Graduate, 13% Depart)

Large numbers of students finish their first year with a GPA between 2.0 and 3.0. Even though they aren't on probation, nearly two-thirds of these students won't complete. Yet these students are traditionally overlooked at most schools—in part because it is difficult to distinguish those who ultimately graduate from those who eventually depart.

The fate of the murky middle student is just that—murky. This population demands attention, but with limited resources it isn't possible to target the entire group.

Emerging research from the Student Success Collaborative suggests that rigorous analyses of academic data can separate the hidden population of struggling students from the likely graduates, enabling targeted intervention efforts and ultimately improved outcomes.

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**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 trim away back as sophomores despite extensive investments and efforts on their behalf. Schools may want to consider re-allocating energy to 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 in 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 defined departures. Perhaps they decide to transfer, encounter personal hardships 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.

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**All-Stars**

Three-fifths of students who make it to their second year with above a 3.00 GPA go on to graduate. While accidentally we know these students aren’t at risk, they tend to consume considerable advising resources through voluntary self-improvement efforts. This has promoted a national dialogue about understanding student self-direction.
Addressing the “Murky Middle”

Large Numbers of “Murky Middle” Students Leaving Later in College

Histogram of All Students by First-Year GPA
SSC National Data Set

- Graduates within 6 Years (357,405 students)
- Continued Enrollees Past 6 Years (29,826 students)
- 2nd to 6th Year Departures (183,827 students)
- 1st Year Departures (167,697 students)

84% return for a second year
48% graduate within six years
Addressing the “Murky Middle”

Murky Middle GPA Trends Foreshadow Departure Several Terms in Advance

Murky Middle Term GPA Trends Over Time
Students With First-Year GPA 2.0 to 3.0

1. Problems appear well in advance of attrition
2. Trends cut across demographics and programs
3. What other key indicators should we monitor?
# Retention Report

## Fall to Fall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Transfer (Residential)</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
<td>75.1%</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Transfer (Distance)</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
<td>58.9%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASP - all those starting in Summer</td>
<td>62.7%</td>
<td>68.5%</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
<td>72.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASP - enrolled in Fall as Freshmen</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
<td>71.8%</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors (New Freshman)</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>87.3%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>92.0%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors (New Transfer)</td>
<td>93.8%</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Support Services (New Students Only)</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>71.8%</td>
<td>78.3%</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
<td>76.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Athletes</td>
<td>83.2%</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>90.0%</td>
<td>80.7%</td>
<td>89.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Graduate Students (Master’s and Doctoral)</td>
<td>79.3%</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>82.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gray text used to denote cohort size less than 30 students.

**NOTE:** All retention rates account for students who graduate as well.
## 2014-2015 Retention – By Gender

### Detail on Retention by Gender (FTFTF Only)

#### Fall to Fall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Cohort 2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
<td>79.0%</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
<td>80.5%</td>
<td>77.1%</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gray text used to denote cohort size less than 30 students.

**NOTE:** All retention rates account for student who graduate as well.
### Detail on Retention by Race (FTFTF Only)

#### Fall to Fall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>99.0%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>85.0%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>86.7%</td>
<td>81.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
<td>75.3%</td>
<td>84.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics of any race</td>
<td>74.2%</td>
<td>67.4%</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-resident Alien</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race and Ethnicity Unknown</td>
<td>63.6%</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>78.2%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>76.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>72.5%</td>
<td>74.1%</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
<td>80.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen</td>
<td>72.0%</td>
<td>73.7%</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td>77.9%</td>
<td>80.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**NOTE:** All retention rates account for student who graduate as well.

### Retention Rates by Group

[Graph showing retention rates by group]
## 2014-2015 Retention – UNC System

Retention (Freshmen cohort, returning 2nd fall term)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appalachian State University</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Carolina University</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth City State University</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fayetteville State University</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina A &amp; T</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina Central University</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina State University</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>89%</td>
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* Data not available at the time of this report

6-year graduation rates (first-time full-time bachelor’s degree-seeking cohorts)

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* Data not available at the time of this report
Stop-Out Population is Large and Growing

~20% of Students Leave School without a Credential by 6th Year

Share of Students Dropping Out after 6 Years, 2008 Entering Cohort

22.7% Public
17.2% Private

The Reserve Army of Potential Completers

383K Undergraduates who will quit without a bachelor’s degree, per entering cohort

1.4M Accumulated stop-outs with 60+ credits from all four-year institutions
Re-Enrolling and Graduating Stop-Outs

Despite Traditional Prejudices, Stop-Outs Are High Value Targets

**The Conventional Wisdom**

"Stop-outs left because they couldn’t handle the work!"

**The Unexpected Truth**

81% Leave in good academic standing

"We will never get more than 5 or 10 students!"

150+ Increase in annual enrollment from effective re-recruitment programs (Public Research Univ.)

“Typically, our students don’t leave with a bad taste in their mouth. More often, we found they got into relationships, changed jobs, etc. **Life happened.**”

George McClellan
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne