



# Survey of Best Practices in Student Retention 2015 Edition

*Primary Research Group Staff*

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The study presents data from a survey of 48 North American colleges about their student retention efforts. The study helps its readers to answer questions such as: What are retention rates for different categories of student such as distance learning students, foreign students, graduate students, full time undergraduates and other groups? How important are offices such as financial aid, academic advising and tutoring, among others, perceived to be in the retention effort? What special efforts are being made to identify at risk students and what measures are being taken? How are retention efforts evaluated? What is the impact of general economic conditions on retention? How much are colleges spending on retention consulting? What role does student employment opportunities play in retention? Data in the study is broken out by college size, type, level of tuition and for public/private status. Just a few of the 150+ page report's many findings are that: • The year on year retention rate of graduate students was a mean 82.31% and a median 86% in a reported range of 60%-98%. • More than 54% of colleges surveyed said that their college tutoring service had a significant or dramatic impact on their retention rates. • For academic advising, 39.58% said it had a significant impact and 12.5% said that it had a dramatic impact. • The higher the school's annual tuition costs, the more likely the school is to investigate their students' reasons for leaving. The schools' reported mean rates of conducting interviews with exiting students were: 20.5% for schools with tuition costs of less than \$8,000 per year, 35.5% for schools in the \$8,000-\$19,000 bracket, 50.82% for those in the \$19,000-\$28,000 range and 55.36 for those with an annual tuition of more than \$28,000. • A plurality of public colleges, 36.36%, said that their school teaches information or computer literacy within the framework of another basic course. • Private colleges were slightly more inclined than public colleges to identify high risk students and then intervene at certain thresholds.

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