

## 2011 MACRAO CONFERENCE and DIAMOND ANNIVERSARY

### Retaining Our Students to Graduation: A Hands-on Workshop for Developing a Comprehensive Persistence Plan

Brenda Selman, University of Missouri  
Cindy R. Miller, Columbia College Kansas City

Sunday, October 23, 2011 2:00 p.m.



## Session Rules of Etiquette

- ❖ Please turn off your cell phone/pager
- ❖ If you must leave the session early, please do so as discreetly as possible
- ❖ Please avoid side conversation during the session



Thank you for your cooperation!

# Introduction

- ❖ Our background and our roles as presenters/facilitators
- ❖ What is your role/position?
- ❖ Why are we here?
- ❖ Why is this topic important?

## Just to get us started...student retention stories

- ❖ Share your most rewarding story/anecdote about a situation in which a student was successfully retained at your institution.



# Six “S” Retention Planning

Stakeholders, Statistics, Students, Strategy, Steps, and Success!

## Stakeholders

- ❖ Work in your small group to identify stakeholders who are/should be involved in the retention/persistence discussion at your institution.
- ❖ Share your list with large group.



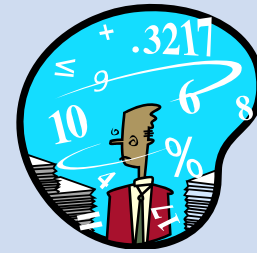
## Stakeholders – Brenda

- ❖ Why registrars important to retention efforts
  - ✓ Part of enrollment management and/or academic affairs teams
  - ✓ Uphold institutional mission
  - ✓ Policy knowledge
  - ✓ Process knowledge
  - ✓ Data owner

## Stakeholders – Cindy

- ❖ “Systematic and college wide” approach (Pascarella)
- ❖ “Visible individual to coordinate team...with authority” (2004 ACT Study)
  - ✓ Upper level leadership
  - ✓ Enrollment management
  - ✓ Student affairs staff
  - ✓ Academic affairs personnel and Faculty
  - ✓ Assessment and institutional research folks
  - ✓ Others?
- ❖ Getting buy-in

## Statistics



- ❖ What information do you currently have? What information do you need to obtain? Who can help you, both internally and externally, with your research and data collection?
- ❖ Share your ideas with large group.

## Statistics – Cindy

- ❖ Understand past and present trends
- ❖ Set realistic goals (not 100%)
- ❖ Data lends credibility to programming efforts
- ❖ Defining retention – program, student, course
- ❖ Metrics of new students as well as academic progress of continuing students
- ❖ Using external resources (AACRAO)

## Statistics – Brenda

- ❖ Registrar can provide data of who returns and who leaves
- ❖ Peak withdrawal times
- ❖ Target groups and their special characteristics
- ❖ Work with academic advisors
- ❖ Campus offices – financial aid, institutional research, NSC

## Students

- ❖ Who are your students?
  - ✓ Key issues that your “typical” student faces?
  - ✓ Who stays and who leaves?
- ❖ Identify in your small groups and share your campus profile with the large group.



## Students – Brenda

- ❖ MU students typical profile
- ❖ Policy issues and deadlines (academic, financial)
- ❖ Specific groups to watch
  - ✓ Incoming freshmen with low GPAs
  - ✓ Seniors ready to graduate
  - ✓ Others

## Students – Cindy

- ❖ Adult learner profile
  - ✓ Goals – degree, personal fulfillment, job skills
  - ✓ Multiple and competing life roles
- ❖ Factors influencing initial enrollment decision
- ❖ Factors influencing continuing enrollment
  - ✓ Strengths
  - ✓ Challenges

## Strategy



- ❖ What strategies can you employ to serve your students and increase the likelihood they will persist?
- ❖ Develop draft outline of strategies in small group and then share with the large one.

## Strategy – Cindy

- ❖ General approach – mission + data + resources + program planning
- ❖ Three interventions (2004 ACT):
  - ✓ Academic advising
  - ✓ First year programs
  - ✓ Learning support
- ❖ Adult students
  - ✓ Barriers to success
  - ✓ Motivators for remaining enrolled

## Strategy – Brenda

- ❖ Challenge the status quo
- ❖ Go beyond the “we have always done it this way” thought pattern
- ❖ New deadlines, new policies
- ❖ New positions, funding dollars
- ❖ Flexible course options
- ❖ Software to supplement existing student information system

## Steps

- ❖ What will YOU do next? What is the first thing you will do when you get back to campus?
- ❖ In your small group, take the strategies you have developed in the last phase and create specific ACTION steps to implement them. Share with the large group!



## Steps – Brenda

- ❖ Who do you need to engage?
- ❖ What will you do when you return to campus?
- ❖ Who do you have to convince?
- ❖ What outside resources can help?

## Steps – Cindy

- ❖ Advising to manage expectations and goals
- ❖ New Student Orientation
- ❖ Reduce bureaucracy
- ❖ Communicate and contact!
- ❖ Act on at-risk students
- ❖ Outreach to non-enrolled students
- ❖ Using technology to engage students
- ❖ Convenient and flexible class schedules
- ❖ Faculty involvement and active learning

## Success

- ❖ How will you know it when you see it?



## Success – Cindy

- ❖ Once the program is in place, constantly monitor the results
- ❖ Make adjustments as needed
- ❖ Check frequently with stakeholders
- ❖ On-going assessment, not one-time event
- ❖ Combine objective metrics with anecdotal information
- ❖ Continuous improvement of programming efforts

## Success – Brenda

- ❖ Make it measurable
- ❖ Everyone needs to know the goal
- ❖ Set specific goals, for instance:
  - ✓ Retention from year one to year two will exceed 85%
  - ✓ Graduation rate will exceed 87%

## Summary of the Six S's

**Stakeholders**

**Statistics**

**Students**

**Strategy**

**Steps**

**Success**

## Questions?

❖ Any final questions, comments, kudos?



Brenda Selman, [selmanb@missouri.edu](mailto:selmanb@missouri.edu)  
Cindy R. Miller, [cmiller@ccis.edu](mailto:cmiller@ccis.edu)

Please complete the workshop evaluation form!