Enhancing Students Success from Application Through the First Year
College Measures Highest Rates of Attrition in Students’ First Few Months

Massive Loss All Before First Spring

Enrollment Figures at a Mid-Atlantic Community College

Too Much Effort
“We analyzed the steps students take from application to registration and had a flow chart with more arrows, dots, and triangles than I even want to think about. And I have three degrees.”

Too Little Help
“In the beginning of the semester there is so much chaos and a lot of people don’t know what to do next. Usually after you apply to a school you’re on your own.”

1) Figures represent calculation of percent of total applicant pool lost between the two time periods.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
A National Phenomenon

Applicant Conversion Rates Worsen as More At-Risk Students Enter College

Smaller Pieces of a Shrinking Pie
Average Attrition Rates across Fall Applicants¹

Factors Exacerbating ‘Melt’
Profile of Incoming Two-Year College Students

Community college students placed into a remedial course in 2016, compared to 41% in 2003-2004

First-time community college students completing a financial aid application in 2017, compared to 42% in 2007

Non-traditional age community college students in 2017, compared to 45% in 2011


¹) n=101 Non-profit and for-profit two-year colleges reporting application data to IPEDS
## From Good to Great

Current Efforts to Improve Intake Useful, But Ultimately Insufficient

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where We’ve Invested</th>
<th>Incremental Advances</th>
<th>But Still Much Left to Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Express Registration Day</td>
<td>✅ Reminds public about opportunity to enroll</td>
<td>❌ Incentivize earlier application submissions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Service Staff Training</td>
<td>✅ Avoids confrontation between students, staff</td>
<td>❌ Reduce amount of effort needed to complete intake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Added Channels of Communication</td>
<td>✅ Acknowledges needs of incoming Millennials</td>
<td>❌ Nudge students to best communication option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Stop Student Services Shops</td>
<td>✅ Makes navigating campus easy for visitors</td>
<td>❌ Reduce number of steps needed to complete intake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Learning By Doing

Forum Researchers Gather Student Experiences of Intake Processes

Back-to-School Secret Shopping

Enrollment Pain Point Visits

- 130+ member college campuses visited during peak registration
- 20+ states visited in total by research and technology teams
- 400+ observation hours completed during Enrollment Pain Point Audits

Adopting the Student Perspective

Guiding Principles for the Research Team

- Assume Nothing
  Follow campus signage and staff instructions to navigate intake as new student would
- Consider the Outliers
  Document experience of several student archetypes to capture nuances in intake practices
- Aim for Enrollment
  Complete as many enrollment steps as possible over the course of a single campus visit

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Four Key Findings

Major Flaws in Current Practice

1. Self-Service Intake Doesn’t Work
   - Delays during most unexpected times
   - Websites lead to more questions than answers
   - College terminology difficult to interpret
   - Staff assistance comes from all over campus

2. Financial Support Incomplete
   - Applicants do not complete FAFSA form
   - Verification catches students by surprise
   - Local and federal benefits go unused
   - Students accept loans without knowing costs

3. Academic Decisions Made at Random
   - Students select courses at random
   - Time constraints force haphazard goal selection
   - Course registration happens in a vacuum

4. Life Factors Often Disrupt Completion Goals
   - Students don’t access on-campus services
   - Course withdrawal occurs anonymously
   - Mid-semester dropouts lose all progress made

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Guiding Students to the Right Choice

Choice Architecture Theory Highly Applicable to the Intake Process

Government and Private Industry Makes Preferred Option the Default

But Higher Education Misses Chance to Encourage Completion Behavior

Framing
“Medium” most popular coffee size, even when actual size manipulated

Not Enough Credits
Students take “full load” of 12 credits, assume they’ll graduate on time

Path of Least Resistance
Consumers more likely to purchase food easily reached at eye level

Unguided Course Selection
Students pick courses based on flawed criteria, delay graduation requirements

Burdening Bad Choice
Motorcyclists must pass extra test and prove insurance to forgo helmet

No-Fault Withdrawals
Students able to drop out or deviate from plans with easy transaction

Understanding Cognitive Depletion

Behavioral Economics Explains Why We Make Poor Choices Under Pressure

Lessons from Around the World

*World Bank 2015 World Development Report*

State the color of each word:
Orange Blue Gray Orange Blue Gray
Orange Blue Gray Orange Blue Gray

Consider this math problem:
A bat and ball cost $1.10. The bat costs $1.00 more than the ball. How much does the ball cost?

Findings Hold Stateside

“When your bandwidth is loaded... you’re just more likely to not notice things, you’re more likely to not resist things you ought to resist, you’re more likely to forget things, [and] you’re going to have less patience.”

Eldar Shafir, Professor of Psychology
Princeton University

### How Can We Optimize New Student Intake?

The Destination Remains Clearer than the Path for Most

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Today</th>
<th>Future</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pace</strong></td>
<td>Stop and Start</td>
<td>Streamlined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
<td>Confusing Jargon</td>
<td>Easily Understood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>Personalized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Locus of Support</strong></td>
<td>Fragmented</td>
<td>Comprehensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Assistance</strong></td>
<td>Opt-In</td>
<td>Intrusive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Decisions</strong></td>
<td>Random</td>
<td>Guided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Services</strong></td>
<td>One-Size-Fits-All</td>
<td>Aligned with Needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Preventing Early Attrition

1. Making Self-Service Work
   - Immediate ID Provision
   - Follow Up Channel Recommendation
   - Jargon Reduction Audit
   - Registration Case Manager

2. Supporting Optimal Financial Decisions
   - Onsite FAFSA Completion Lab
   - SMS Verification Updates
   - FAFSA Benefits Eligibility Screens
   - Mandatory Pre-Loan Workshop

3. Guiding Intentional Academic Decisions
   - Meta Major Scheduling Menus
   - Completion Mapping Course
   - Multi-Term Registration

4. Minimizing First Semester Dropout
   - Personalized Resource Nudges
   - Cross-Trained Add-Drop Counselors
   - Compressed Mini-Semesters

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Making Self-Service Work
The New Normal

Today’s Consumer Self-Serves in All Aspects of Life

From Taxes to Medical Diagnoses

- Food delivery
- Real estate
- Self-diagnosis

College Research Often Done Online

Surveys Reveal Shift Among HS Students

- 85% High school students using the Internet to research colleges
- 86% High school juniors wishing to submit online applications
- 51% Age students prefer live support over self-service

But Intake Not Easy Alone

Students Face Significant Challenges Trying to Self-Navigate

Primary Obstacles Impeding New Students from Self-Service

*Lessons from Adopting the Student Perspective*

- **Unexplained Delays** slow movement from step to step
- **Generic Information** given to students with diverse needs
- **Confusing Terminology** makes intake even more intimidating
- **Countless Transfers** between departments to answer inquiries

---

Administrative Redesigns Boost Throughput from Application to Enrollment

**Streamlined Admissions**
*Immediate ID Provision*
- From notoriously long wait times to instant notification
- Case Study: Mt. Hood Community College (OR)

**Understandable Language**
*Jargon Reduction Audits*
- From confusing terminology to clearly understood online content
- Case Study: Travelocity

**Follow Up Channel Recommendation**
*Directing Student Inquiries*
- From confusing options to clear guidance
- Case Study: MasterCard

**Reduced Transfers**
*Registration Case Managers*
- From run around campus to true one-stop experience
- Case Study: Rogue Community College (OR)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Stopping Students at Step One

Delay in Receipt of Student ID Adds Extra Time and Steps

Even Short Admissions Delay Has Negative Effects

24-48 Hour Wait Period

Halts Progress: Cannot take placement exams without a student ID number

Damages Confidence: Students expect immediate acceptance to open-access college and may discontinue enrollment

Requires Rescheduling: Unanticipated delay interferes with time commitments, forcing new travel arrangements

90%

Colleges profiled in CCEF Enrollment Pain Point Visits with 24-48 hour minimum waits to receive student ID numbers after application submission

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Practice #1

Journey to Immediate ID Provision

Mt. Hood Community College Now Sends ID Numbers Within Minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wait Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>5+ Days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>48-72 Hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>&lt;2 Hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wait time for student to receive student ID numbers and access to Navigate

Empowering Students from Day One

- Student can now immediately log in to Navigate and review MyPath to understand next enrollment steps before advisement
- New automated process uses SSN to avoid creating duplicate records
- Lessens transactional advising and increases advisor capacity during peak enrollment months

11% of Applicants

Registered within the 3 day window previously spent waiting for student ID number

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Students Unfamiliar with College-Specific Jargon

Seemingly Foreign Language
Common Higher Education Terminology

- Prerequisite
- FAFSA
- Credit Hours
- Syllabus
- Semester
- Course Catalog
- Bursar
- Course Sequence
- Registrar
- Liberal Arts
- Distribution
- Developmental
- Disbursement
- Program of Study

Jargon Abundant on Student Portals
Community College Journal Study of Accessibility and Usability of College Websites

70% of students surveyed who were confused by higher education terms on institutional websites.

“We realized that we were explaining things from the point of view of the college, but new students don’t know that language yet.”

Dr. Joyce Romano, Vice President Student Affairs
Valencia College

Simplifying Content Reduces Call Volume

In 2001, measured spike in call and email volume for FAQs answered online

Gunning-Fog Index calculates reading level required to read online content

Removed jargon, used active voice, and simplified language used on website

Drop in Travelocity helpline call volume after website improvement

Translating Financial Aid Language

**Before:** The Carolina Computing Initiative ensures that students have access to high-quality and affordable technology. Through CCI, all students are required to own a laptop computer, and grants are available to help eligible students purchase their laptops.

*Gunning Fog Index Score: 17.2*

**After:** UNC requires you to have a laptop computer. If you can’t afford one, grants are available.

*Gunning Fog Index Score: 10.7*

Choosing the Right Service Option

Many Forms of Support, No Guidance on Optimal Modality for Issue

Students Given Free Reign of All Support Modalities...

...Leading to Suboptimal Communication About Enrollment

Hey I have a question about my financial aid. I don’t know how much I’m eligible for.

Thanks for reaching out! First, have you filled out the FAFSA?

I’m not sure how to fill it out.

Ok sure, well why don’t we start with your EFC.

What’s my EFC?

Maybe it would be easier if we talk over the phone. Can you call me at (202) 123-4567?

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Clear Directives on Next Steps

MasterCard Guides Web Users to Best Channel for Follow-Up Questions

Follow-Up Modality Recommender

*MasterCard Redesigns Website to Address Channel-Switching*

- **Channel-Switching Breeds Discontent:** Transferring between people, departments, or communication methods to resolve an issue creates excess effort for customers

- **Guiding Users’ Next Steps:** Each FAQ answered on website has prompts for reaching representative with more questions

**Have a Question About Your Bill Pay?**

- Recommended: Chat with a Representative
- Call Us: 1 (800)- MYE-ABCC
- Email Us

**66%**

Percentage of MasterCard web users who select the prompted option for reaching a representative

**30%**

Decrease in MasterCard email volume after introducing Follow-Up Modality Recommender

Students Directed Between Multiple Offices to Complete Enrollment

Choose Your Metaphor

Chutes and Ladders, Spaghetti, or Ping Pong?

15 Average number of stops to student services offices per campus visit across 20+ CCEF Enrollment Pain Point Visits

Exerts Unnecessary Effort
Feels Confused, Frustrated
Drops Out of Pipeline

“[A student gets handed off from one building to another building and then back again. It’s a bit like a ping pong match. We truly need to make enrollment process more seamless.]”

Allison Martin, Director of Institutional Effectiveness
Bossier Parish Community College

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Rogue Community College’s Enrollment Case Manager Model

Central Case Manager Key to Minimizing New Student Effort

- Peer ambassadors greet incoming students to Rogue Central
- Students input ID number and reason for visit into tracking system and wait for assistance
- Ambassadors guide students to self-service channels when appropriate (e.g., print schedule, submit form)
- All case managers located in separate room from wait area to protect student privacy
- Case manager works with student one-on-one until inquiries answered
- Visits short, typically lasting ~6 minutes
- In few cases, case manager may not be able to answer student questions
- Case manager calls staff in student services offices to inquire on behalf of student
- **Students do not interact with back-office staff, even if inquiries are complex**

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
One and Done

Case Manager Model Eliminates Cross-Department Student Transfers

100 Students Walk Into Rogue Central...

*Average Intervention Experience for New Students at Rogue Community College*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Inquiries Resolved by One Staff Person</th>
<th>Inquiries Solved Only by Peer Ambassador</th>
<th>Inquiries Solved Only by Case Manager</th>
<th>Inquiries Require Back-Office Phone Support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Empowering Peer Ambassadors**

- 12-14 Peer Ambassadors
- Work 20 hours/week in paid positions
- Current students at Rogue Community College

**Cross-Training Case Managers**

- Must have at least an A.A. degree and some customer service background
- Undergo 1 year of immersive cross-training

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Supporting Optimal Financial Decisions
Financial Aid Greatest Barrier to Success

Enrollment and Persistence Threatened by Student Finances

Pointing the Finger at Finances

EAB Survey of 125+ CCEF Presidents

Which Step of the Intake Process is Biggest Student Leakage Point?

1. Financial Aid
2. Placement Testing
3. Academic Advising
4. Mandatory Medical Forms
5. Lack of Motivation

Student Survey Numbers Don’t Lie

Ivy Tech Student Survey of Top Reasons for Seeking Enrollment Support, 2014

Get Financial Aid Information
Discuss Issue with FAFSA
Complete FAFSA form

“Young people who fail to finish college are also substantially less likely to have received scholarships or financial aid, loans or even good advice about how to get help. About 7 in 10 of those who leave school report that they did not have scholarships or financial aid, compared with about 4 in 10 of those who graduate.”

Source: “With Their Whole Lives Ahead of Them: Myths and Realities About Why So Many Students Fail to Finish College,” Public Agenda, 2009; EAB interviews and analysis.
Not Our Fault, But It is Our Problem

Federal Aid Process Open to Consequential Student Missteps

(Very) Simplified Overview of a Complex Process

Top 5 Student Missteps Along the Way to Aid Disbursement

1. **Do not complete FAFSA application**
2. **Unaware when FAFSA selected for federal verification**
3. **Do not consider public benefits as available aid**
4. **Accept loan offer far exceeding college costs**

**Applicant Submits FAFSA**
Student creates PIN and completes FAFSA form with help from family

**Dept. of Ed. Creates ISIR**
Completed FAFSA sent to Dept. of Education for formal review; based on information on the form, students may be selected for federal verification

**Institution Sets Aid Package**
College aid officers upload Institutional Student Information Records (ISIRs) to college-specific platform; aid packages set according to college prioritization of all possible aid sources

**Student Receives Aid**
Student accepts final award package; all loan recipients must complete loan entry interview process before receiving funds based on timing of FAFSA submission

Source: Debbie F. Cochrane, Andrew LaManque, Laura Szabo-Kubitz, “After the FAFSA: How Red Tape Can Prevent Eligible Students from Receiving Financial Aid,” The Institute for College Access and Success, 2010; EAB interviews and analysis.
Supporting Optimal Financial Decisions
Providing the Right Information at the Right Time to Secure Financial Aid

Completed Aid Application
Onsite FAFSA Completion Lab
- From confusion-fueled inaction to guided aid application
- Case Study: Fresno City College (CA)

Connected to Available Support
Benefits Eligibility Screens
- From missing out on support to earning full benefits
- Case Study: LaGuardia Community College (NY)

Informed of Next-Steps
SMS Verification Updates
- From obscure proceedings to fully transparent aid process
- Case Study: West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WV)

Secure Best-Fit Award Package
Mandatory Pre-Loan Workshop
- From blind acceptance to careful examination of aid offer
- Case Study: Broward College (FL)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Complexity Breeds Confusion

FAFSA Deters Aid-Eligible Students from Applying for Financial Support

Not So Simple

Students claim to have insufficient information on how to apply for financial aid

23%

Pell-eligible community college students never complete a FAFSA

42%

Total amount of aid unclaimed by Pell-eligible students who did not submit FAFSA in 2014

$3B

"More than 20 million college students will complete the dreaded 108-question FAFSA...some pay someone to help them. Colleges hire thousands of staff members to assist. Too many students are so intimidated by the form that they don’t bother to apply."

Senators Lamar Alexander (R-TN) and Michael Bennet (D-CO)

1) n= 114,000 undergraduate students, n= 14,000 graduate students

Onsite FAFSA Completion Lab

Fresno City College Creates Central Location for Financial Aid Inquiries

Resources for All Students

- Apply for PIN
- Complete FAFSA
- Check Aid Status
- General Questions

Lab Increases Efficiency and Effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students Assisted</th>
<th>FAFSAs Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Lab</td>
<td>23K</td>
<td>26K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Lab</td>
<td>25K (+9%)</td>
<td>31K (+21%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lab enables main office counselors to focus on advisement and outreach.

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Onsite FAFSA Completion Lab

Clackamas Community College Creates Central Location for Aid Inquiries

- Apply for PIN
- Complete FAFSA
- Check Aid Status
- General Questions

Lab enables main office counselors to focus on advisement and outreach

Stained by Aid Assistants

Growth in Number of CCC Students Receiving Assistance in Financial Aid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2,514</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EAB Interviews and Analysis.
There’s More Than One Step?
Verification Creates Unforeseen Barrier to Aid, Costly to Institution

Applicants Caught Off Guard | No Guide for Next-Steps | Aid Loss for the Smallest Reasons | High Costs to Verify Students

62% | 15% | $39M | $130K

Students selected for federal verification who thought financial aid application process was complete | Students selected for federal verification who did not know how to correct errors on aid application | Amount of available Pell funds denied to applicants whose FAFSA forms are rejected due to missing signatures | Average annual cost to the college to verify student aid applications beyond minimum required by Dept. of Ed.

“The challenge for me was verification. I didn’t know I needed to submit more stuff. They emailed me at the college’s email address, but I didn’t even check it until the first day of class! By then I paid for my textbooks myself, which was a lot of money.”

Student

SMS Application Updates Remind Students to Check Aid Status

Texting Leads Communication Pack

Teens, Smartphones, and Texting: Communication Behaviors Among Young Adults

- **SMS Counseling Project Begins:** WVHEPC partners with UVA’s Ben Castleman in 2014 to directly message new college students
- **Salient Messages Prompt Action:** State system and partner colleges send timely and urgent messages to prompt students to move forward with application and enrollment
- **Text Nudges About Aid Process:** Students reminded to check college email for financial aid updates once they select a college

$1.15 Monthly cost to text each student, totaling about $21 per student over intervention

87% Signal Vine recipients who said texts prompted them to complete previously unknown enrollment tasks

## A Helping Hand, Not a Handout

Students Avoiding Social Stigma Miss Widely-Available Public Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Many Government Support Services</th>
<th>...But Public Benefits Underutilized</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TANF</td>
<td>Lack of awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Care</td>
<td>Fear of social stigma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Insurance</td>
<td>Perception of benefits as charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women and Children Programs</td>
<td>Assumption of ineligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplemental Nutrition Assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

14% Community college students eligible for maximum Pell grants who receive public benefits


1) n=6,203
LaGuardia CC Flags Needy Students for Public Benefits Screenings

**FAFSA Inputs Inform Benefits Flags**

*LaGuardia CC Sends Needy Students to Single Stop Benefits Screens*

- **Origin:** Partnered with Single Stop USA in 2009, a national non-profit that connects students with public benefits, legal support, and financial counseling.

- **Flags Based on FAFSA:** Students flagged at FAFSA processing based on income, size of household, and financial dependency status.

- **Screens for Benefits Eligibility:** Flagged students encouraged to visit Single Stop for in-depth benefits consultation and support.

**95%**

Students flagged for benefits screenings who visit Single Stop

**75%**

Students who visit Single Stop who receive public benefits

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
## Crushing Debt Load

Community College Students Fall Victim to Loan Mismanagement, Default

### Students’ Financial Mismanagement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="School Building" /></td>
<td>Community College 3-year Cohort Default Rate (2011) <strong>17.1%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Dollar Sign" /></td>
<td>Total federal loans borrowed by students in FY 2014 <strong>$100B</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image" alt="Graduation Cap" /></td>
<td>Average community college student debt in 2015 <strong>$10,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Influencing Public Evaluation of CCs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION</td>
<td>More Metrics, More Problems: Breaking Down Obama’s College-Ratings Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSIDE HIGHER ED</td>
<td>Looming Default Rates Could Penalize Community Colleges Where Few Students Borrow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bloomberg Businessweek</td>
<td>This Fed Official Just Perfectly Described Why Student Loans are a Terrible Investment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE HUFFINGTON POST</td>
<td>Student Loan Debt Crisis in America</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scared Straight
Mandatory Pre-Loan Workshops Humanize the Effects of Debt

Broward Aid Recipients Learn Real Impact of Financial Decisions

- **Mandatory**: All new students and current students planning to take out loans must attend
- **Flexible**: 100+ sessions offered annually at times to accommodate work schedules
- **Realistic**: Personal stories of people struggling to manage debt major reason for workshop’s effectiveness

Workshops Shrink Student Loan Burdens and Cohort Default Rates

*Average Size of Student Loan Debt, 2011-15*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Subsidized Loans</th>
<th>Unsubsidized Loans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$4,186</td>
<td>$3,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$3,356</td>
<td>$2,718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$2,718</td>
<td>$2,753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,796</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Guiding Intentional Academic Decisions
Intake Conversations Suffer When Advisors Have Limited Time Per Student

Much to Cover in 15 Minutes

Idealized Agenda for Intake Advising Appointment

- What major do you want to pursue?
- What are your goals in coming to college? Why are you here?
- What are you good at? What are your weaknesses?
- What do you care more about—job satisfaction, salary, free time, etc.?
- What other responsibilities do you have outside of school?

Advising Considered Universally Important...

91

Percent of CCSSE respondents who report that academic advising and planning is an important service¹

...But Few Students Get the Attention They Need

38

Percent of SENSE respondents who agree that an advisor helped them set and plan for academic goals

¹ n= 414,646; n=73,502

Haste Makes Waste

Poor Academic Decisions at Intake Have Consequences Down the Road

**Short-Sighted Course Choices**
*Selected at Random*

- Average course catalogue contains 300+ pages
- Total freedom of choice now results in excess credits later

**Last-Minute Scheduling**
*Determined Just Ahead of Semester*

- Registration for upcoming semester opens during finals period and last day of class for current semester
- Fragmented planning sessions result in erratic path to graduation

**Peer-Pressured Goal Setting**
*Influenced by Social Network*

- Students have limited information about careers outside of personal connections
- Poorly chosen goals lead to major switches and attrition

**Opting for Lightest Load**
*Based on Personal Feasibility*

- Full-time enrollment (15 credits per semester) not possible for many non-traditional students
- Part-time students less likely to graduate than full-time peers

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Guiding Intentional Academic Decisions

Structured Supports Set Foundation for On-Time Graduation

Intentional Course Choices

*First-Year Meta-Major Schedules*
- From random decision to guided, constrained selection
- Case Study: Georgia State University (GA) and Queensborough CC (NY)

Pacing Time to Completion

*Multi-Term Registration*
- From last-minute hustle to thought-out academic plan
- Case study: Cleveland State University (OH)

Informed Goal Setting

*Completion Mapping Course*
- From peer pressure impulse to self-exploration and reflection
- Case study: Cuyamaca College (CA)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
No Major? No Aid

New Regulation Bars Undecided Students from Federal Financial Aid

U.S. Department of Education
34 CFR 668.32 – Student Eligibility

“A student is eligible to receive Title IV, HEA program assistance if the student...is a regular student enrolled, or accepted for enrollment, in an eligible program at an eligible institution.”

Quick Decisions Easy, But Costly

“Just pick one. My sister was here last week and spent an hour reading all the programs they have here. I’m not like that—if I have to pick a major, I just pick an easy one and switch later.”

Community College Student

20+ Average excess credits earned pursuing a 60-credit A.A./A.S.

$7.7B Total annual cost to students for excess credits

$11.5B Total annual cost to U.S. taxpayers for excess credits

Colleges Condense Program Offerings to Ease Major Selection Decision

200+ Programs Grouped into a Handful of Choices

Sample of Valencia College’s Meta Major Options

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business</th>
<th>STEM</th>
<th>Health Science</th>
<th>Public Safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accounting Technology A.S.</td>
<td>Computer Information Technology A.S.</td>
<td>Cardiovascular Technology A.S.</td>
<td>Public Administration A.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics A.A.</td>
<td>Marine Biology A.A.</td>
<td>Nursing A.S.</td>
<td>Paralegal Studies A.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Office Administration A.S.</td>
<td>Network Engineering Technology A.S.</td>
<td>Health Information Technology A.S.</td>
<td>Fire Science Technology A.S.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Meta Majors Catch on across Community Colleges Nationally

- CUNY Lehman College
- Valencia College
- Palm Beach State College
- Ivy Technical Community College
- Queensborough Community College
- Monroe Community College
- Macomb Community College

A Failure to Articulate

Students Can’t Assess “Versatility” of Early Courses

First-Year Math Options

- Business Calculus
- Statistics
- General Calculus

Possible 4-Year Majors

- Business
- Humanities
- Engineering
- Nursing

Can’t switch to Engineering as a junior and still graduate in four years

Reducing Consequences of Exploration or Bad Choice

The curriculum can be difficult to navigate, and the advisors’ role is to be realistic about where a student’s choices can lead to. We talk to students early on and enroll them into classes that work for larger groups of majors.”

—Amy Treboni
Director of University Exploration
The Ohio State University

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Three Strikes Against Meta-Majors
Narrow Impact and Many Objections to Traditional Meta-Majors

**Turns Off Students in Admissions Process**
- New vocabulary doesn’t match major or course preferences
- Perceived as restriction of choice

**Policies Prevent Scale**
- Limited to undeclared students
- Optional: students advised on course choices, but no mandate

**Burdensome to Faculty**
- No time or incentive to streamline curricula
- “We’re not a community college”

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
## Practice #5: First-Year Meta-Major Schedules

### Fixing the Bugs in Meta-Majors 1.0

Restrict Course Choice Now to Increase Major and Career Choices Later

#### Advisors: Introduce as Career Exploration Guide

- Students can select major upon application
- Introduced to meta-majors at first-year orientation

#### Health Sciences

- Exercise Science
- Nursing
- Behavior and Health Science
- Occupational Therapy
- Radiology

- Students attend sessions on job opportunities related to majors in meta-major

#### Registrar: Mandate Pre-Set Schedules for First Year

- Mandatory for all students, not just undeclared
- Class selection ensures timely academic progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Set Schedule</th>
<th>Health Sciences, Term 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Literature</strong></td>
<td>General education requirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Calculus</strong></td>
<td>Required for all STEM majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First-Year Seminar</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### A Light Lift for Faculty

- Academic advisors design clusters
- No change to curricular requirements

#### Results

30% Reduction in major changes since implementation

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
CUNY Queensborough Offers Prefabricated Meta Major Scheduling Menus

Highlighting Most Relevant Course Options

Illustration of QCC’s Newest Scheduling Model

New students select from 10 schedule menus during orientation

Health Related Sciences Schedule
- BIO110  Fund. of Life Science
- ENG101  English Composition I
- PSY101  Psychology

Class schedules crafted to guide students to enroll in:
- Half of recommended first semester credits
- English Composition I
- Distribution requirement areas

Tip: If historical data shows that a significant number of students switch between meta majors, this is cause to ensure some overlap of scheduling menus across meta majors (e.g., the scheduling menus for the STEM and Health Related Sciences meta majors share ENG101 and MAT119)

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
A Narrow Definition of Success Skills

Student Success Courses Plentiful, but Miss the Mark

Courses Suffer from Low Utilization and Limited Scope

Results from 2011 CCSSE and CCIS Surveys

Top 5 Components of Success Courses

- Study skills
- Time-management skills
- Note-taking skills
- Test-taking skills
- Use of library resources
Redefining Elements for Success

Course Focused on Career Exploration Draws Crowds, Boosts Persistence

Cuyamaca’s Completion Mapping Course

- **Exploring Personality Type**
  *Do What You Are* self-assessment

- **Determining Learning Style**
  *Productivity Environmental Preference Survey (PEPS)*

- **Defining Multiple Intelligences**
  Student journaling class activities

- **Articulating Career Interests**
  *O*NET exploration assignments

First-year students participating in optional PDC 124 course annually

**2,000**

**Boost Course Enrollment with Perks**

*Flexible*
- Offered online, face-to-face, hybrid

*Transferrable*
- Applicable to A.A. and A.S. general education requirements
- Transfers to California State University System and University of California system as general education electives

85% Fall-to-spring persistence rate for career mapping course completers, versus 65% for non-enrollees

Extending Registration’s Reach

Multi-Term Commitment Enables and Encourages Long-Term Planning

Immediate Benefits to Students

- Students able to plan further ahead to accommodate complex schedules, requirements, and plans
- Fall to spring retention increased 3% in first year
- Departments able to forecast section demand

Broader Impact on Campus

- Academic units realize cost-efficiency gains, better aligning resources and instructor workload with enrollment

Student Participation is Voluntary, But Substantial and Growing Quickly

- 60% Student participation in 2012
- 82% Student participation in 2013

Source: Allie Grasgreen, “Registering Toward Completion,” Inside Higher Ed, April 2014; “Cleveland State University - Multi-Term Registration: Course Scheduling for Student Success,” AASCU Innovations Exchange; EAB interviews and analysis.
The Time is Now

Experts Recommend Multi-Term Registration

“I’m kind of surprised it’s not more widespread, because it’s not technologically a challenge. I think it makes a lot of sense if you can do it. It’s good resource planning.”

Michael V. Reilly, Executive Director
American Association of College Registrars

“This is almost zero effort from a registrar’s perspective.”

Janet Stimple, University Registrar
Cleveland State University

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Getting Multi-Term Registration Right

Three Key Pieces of Advice from Cleveland State University

1. Maintain System of Pre-Requisite Checks

Registrar checks student information system (SIS) during the term to monitor if students are still eligible to take the courses they have enrolled in for future semesters.

Registrar checks SIS 3x per semester:
- After the course add/drop date
- After the last date of course withdrawal
- After the last day of the semester

2. Reduce Number of Course Scheduling Meetings

Faculty assemble once annually to plan a full year’s worth of courses, rather than meeting two to three times per year to plan the schedule for each semester.

All other term deadlines remain the same:
- Deadlines for course add/drop
- Payment plans for tuition financing
- Financial aid eligibility

3. Create Simple Departmental Schedule Grids

Schedule grids prevent department faculty from scheduling required courses during the same time slots. Faculty may fill remaining slots with electives.

“We had classes that were off-grid that put students in danger of not graduating: they were idle for two class periods because one course cut into both of them. They could have been progressing toward a degree.”

Carmen Brown, VP Enrollment Services

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Minimizing First Semester Dropout
Odds Against Them

New Students Enter College Exhibiting Historically Risky Profiles

Snapshot of Community College Students¹

- **First-Generation**
  - 36%
  - First in their families to attend college

- **Employed**
  - 74%
  - Work at least part-time while taking college classes

- **Family Duties**
  - 33%
  - Care for family dependents at least one hour per week

- **Low-Income**
  - 72%
  - Apply for financial aid to cover college expenses

**Difficult Class**

- "I’m not smart enough"

**Short on Cash**

- "I’ll work more hours"

**Overwhelmed**

- "My family needs me"

**At-Risk Student**

**Unclear Outcomes**

---

¹ n = 318,391; n=116,067

Minimizing First Semester Dropout

Aligning Services to Students Based on Demonstrated Need

**Connecting with Services**

*Personalized Resource Nudges*

- Proactive communication of campus services best-suited for student profile
- Case Study: Mount Wachusett Community College (MA)

**Intervening Pre-Dropout**

*Cross-Trained Add-Drop Coordinators*

- Designated staff help students explore alternatives to dropout
- Case study: Manchester Community College (CT)

**Reducing Cost of Deviation**

*Compressed Mini-Semesters*

- Condensed courses across new academic calendar reduces impact of credit loss during dropout
- Case study: Trident Technical College (SC)

**Peering into the Black Box**

"A student enters into the admissions process, we get them registered for classes, and then they disappear into the crowd! You think you’ve got all your ducks in a row, but the reality is you lose people along the way.”

*President, Midwest Community College*

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
If You Build It…?

Despite Significant Investments, Student Services Often Underutilized

Campus Services Fail to Recruit Participants

*Results from 2011 CCSSE and CCIS Surveys*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Colleges Offering Services</th>
<th>Students Participating in Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Tutoring Centers</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Success Courses</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First-Year Experiences</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What Prevents Use of Services?

- **Options Feel Overwhelming**
  Average community college has 200+ student services offices, special programs, and clubs to choose from

- **Services Easily Dismissed**
  Most students don’t self-identify as needing additional support to avoid stigma of “being stupid” or “taking handouts”

- **Easy Choice Not Best Choice**
  Students more likely to select extracurricular activities that seem ‘easy’; groups requiring greater commitment neglected

Proactive Service Matching

Using Intake Survey Results to Identify and Push Relevant Resources

Mount Wachusett’s Personalized Resource Nudges

New Student Intake Survey

30-question survey collects information about risk factors like family support, transportation, financial literacy, etc. Survey required during placement test.

Campus Services Referral Matrix

Assistant Dean of Student Services assembles team to create matrix. Each question on intake survey corresponds with relevant services.

Personalized Resource Nudges

Nudges follow four key rules:
- Element of personalization
- Relevant information
- Timeliness or urgency
- Call to action and next step

Improved Student Performance

Increase in fall-to-fall persistence rate of first-time, full time 2013 cohort, compared to 2012 cohort.

↑20%
Mid-Semester Melt

One-Quarter of Community College Students at High Risk of Dropout

...And All Students Present Some Attrition Risk

Responses to CCSSE 2011 Survey Item: “When do you plan to take classes at this college again?”¹

The Best Laid Plans...

Nearly one-quarter of current students are at high-risk of dropping out. Even students who have plans to take classes within the next 12 months are at-risk of mid-semester attrition due to:

- Academic difficulty
- Personal challenge
- Unanticipated life event

Relative level of risk of mid-semester attrition

An Intentional Student Barrier

College Deploys Designated Staff to Dissuade Potential Drop-Outs

Last-Touch Intervention Strategy

Manchester’s Add-Drop Coordinators Prevent Unnecessary Withdrawals

Student Attempts to Drop Courses

Coordinator Presents Alternatives to Drop

Student Remains Enrolled in Classes

Common reasons for withdrawal:
- Avoiding a failing or low course grade
- Disliking an instructor
- Feeling overwhelmed by number of responsibilities

Primary characteristics of add-drop counselor role:
- Cross-trained: Add-drop coordinators rotate between admissions, registrar, and financial aid offices
- Intrusive: Students must speak with coordinator before submitting withdrawal form

Withdrawals plunge as counselors introduced:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spring 2014</th>
<th>Spring 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>130</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Personal Touch Key to Success

Students Need Connection to College to Reconsider Withdrawal

Real Conversation Makes a World of Difference

“The Enrollment Services Coordinator position gives students an opportunity to talk with someone, even if it’s only for a few minutes...

But if they can build that rapport in five minutes and really make a connection to the college, then the student might rethink their decision to leave.”

Peter Harris,
Director of Enrollment Management
Manchester Community College

Manchester’s Staff Investment
Background Profiles of Add-Drop Coordinators

5
Number of full-time coordinators integrated into college’s student services offices

All coordinators have at least a B.A. degree and some counseling experience

Staff stationed in financial aid, admissions, and registrar 3 days per week; rotate 2 days

Coordinators staffed in one-stop shop before fall term to help with new student enrollment

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
New Mexico Junior College Alerts Faculty of Withdrawal Attempts

Faculty Driven Effort to Increase Course-Level Success

- Faculty Senate concerned by high DFWI rates
- Realized lack of insight into reasons for withdrawal
- Asked administration to provide alerts when students attempt to withdraw
- Designed withdrawal “Cooling Off Period” interventions

Withdrawal “Cooling Off Period” Allows for Faculty Intervention

1. Student withdrawal takes 48 hours to process
2. Faculty immediately notified of student withdrawal request
3. Faculty intervene and connect students with resources and improvement plans
4. Most students who choose not to withdraw successfully complete courses

Change in Withdrawal Rate

- 2012: 14.5% withdrawal rate
- 2014: 10.3% withdrawal rate
- 786 more students completed in six semesters
- 2,000 more completed classes over five semesters

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Middle class students are sufficiently resourced to contain outside life circumstances, so that they do not overflow into every aspect of that student’s life. On the other hand, when something goes wrong for low-income students, the effect surpasses a safety-net threshold which then cascades across their life triggering additional consequences. For this reason, a roadblock that only causes minor tremors in a traditional student’s academic performance is more likely to be insurmountable for a non-traditional student. Unfortunately, many of these roadblocks occur mid-semester, putting these non-traditional students at risk of losing all progress made towards completing credits and reducing their odds of ever returning.”

William Watson, Director of SparkPoint Skyline College

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Reducing the Penalty for Stopping Out

Compressed Mini-Semesters Give Dropouts Chance at Credit Attainment

- **15-Week Fall Semester**
  - New student enrolls in four 3-credit courses; each course runs 15 weeks
  - Completes 12 weeks of Fall semester before unavoidable withdrawal

- **7-Week Fall Semester I**
  - New student enrolls in two 3-credit courses; each course runs 7 weeks
  - Earns six credits at end of Week 7

- **7-Week Fall Semester II**
  - Completes 4 weeks of Fall II semester before unavoidable withdrawal
  - 6 credits earned total; only makes up two courses to earn 12 credits

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Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Transforming the Academic Calendar

Mini-Semesters Boost Outcomes, But Require Careful Campus Redesign

Compressed Mini-Semesters Keeps Students Engaged

↑13 Percentage point increase in course pass rates from 62% in Fall 2011 to 75% in Fall 2014

Fall-to-Spring Retention Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Full-Time FTIC</th>
<th>Part-Time FTIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TTC Historical Data</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014-Spring 2015</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Transition Elements

1. **Campus Advertisement of Changes**
   Must communicate new schedule to new and returning students. Trident recommends in class, online and paper announcements

2. **Faculty Professional Development**
   Faculty can apply for small funding to pursue professional development on compressed scheduling

3. **Financial Aid Disbursement**
   Financial aid office must designate a staff member to manage disbursement of funds and track students that meet the criteria for return to Title IV funds

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.
Preventing Early Attrition

1. Making Self-Service Work
   - Immediate ID Provision
   - Follow Up Channel Recommendation
   - Jargon Reduction Audit
   - Registration Case Manager

2. Supporting Optimal Financial Decisions
   - Onsite FAFSA Completion Lab
   - SMS Verification Updates
   - FAFSA Benefits Eligibility Screens
   - Mandatory Pre-Loan Workshop

3. Guiding Intentional Academic Decisions
   - Meta Major Scheduling Menus
   - Completion Mapping Course
   - Multi-Term Registration

4. Minimizing First Semester Dropout
   - Personalized Resource Nudges
   - Cross-Trained Add-Drop Counselors
   - Compressed Mini-Semesters

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.