

Bridge to Excellence (B2E)

Year 11 Report

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Bridge to Excellence Retention Program Year 11 Administration

For Year 11 (Fall 2011), the Bridge to Excellence (B2E) program was open to all first-time, full-time students enrolling at Arkansas Tech University's main campus. **Mike Bogue** served as B2E Program Coordinator, the eighth year Mr. Bogue has worked with B2E, until August 2011. Will Cooper joined Student Success as the Coordinator of Retention Services in December 2011, taking on the role of B2E Program Coordinator.

For Year 11, Retention Services used Form B of Noel-Levitz's online College Student Inventory (CSI), just as it had the previous year. The CSI is a standardized survey designed to gauge a student's self-perceived academic, financial, and social readiness for college.

The CSI was administered on a daily basis from May 16, 2011, through October 1, 2011. After freshmen registered for their fall classes in the Academic Advising Center in Rothwell Hall, they took the CSI in Room 247 of the Doc Bryan Student Services Building from May through the end of June.

Students who took the CSI in July and August took the survey in Career Services. In September, students who had not taken the CSI were emailed a user name and password with which to take the CSI.

Bridge to Excellence Retention Program Mission

The B2E program's mission -- to empower freshmen to make a successful transition from high school (or work) to college -- remained the same. The program's continuing goals included:

- (1) increasing Arkansas Tech University's freshmen retention rate,
- (2) boosting freshmen participants' GPA's,
- (3) and improving Arkansas Tech University's graduation rates.

Demographics

For Year 11, B2E defined a program participant as a student who was a first-time, full-time freshman who both (1) took the CSI and (2) met at least one time with his or her assigned mentor during the fall semester. A non-participant was a student who did not meet with his or her mentor.

According to these definitions, 731 first-time, full-time freshmen participated in the program for Year 11. Since 1,511 first-time, full-time

students entered Tech for the Fall 2011 semester, this meant that 780 new students chose not participate. The gender and ethnicity demographics of Year 11 B2E participants were similar to those of the Fall 2011 main campus freshman class as a whole:

FALL 2011	B2E FIRST-TIME, FULL-TIME PARTICIPANTS	ALL ATU FIRST- TIME, FULL-TIME STUDENTS
Female	54.7%	53.56%
Male	45.3%	46.43%
Didn't Report Gender	0.0%	0.0%
Black/African American	6.4%	7.23%
American Indian/Alaskan	1.0%	1.65%
Asian or Pacific Islander	1.6%	1.48%
Hispanic/Latino	2.8%	3.41%
White/Caucasian	85.1%	83.41%
Multi-Ethnic or Other Ethnic Origin	1.3%	1.93%
Prefer Not To Respond	0.9%	0.0%

Intervention

For Year 11 of the B2E program, 136 mentors took part – 90 faculty and 46 staff. The definition of a B2E mentor continued to be a faculty or staff volunteer who helps his or her assigned freshmen to successfully make the transition from high school (or work) to college.

The purpose of B2E Mentors remained the same – helping their mentees understand and evaluate their CSI results and also acting as the student's "go to" person when a mentee had a college-related question or concern. B2E mentors offered mentees encouragement, advice, information, and feedback – in essence, the B2E mentor established a relationship with his or her assigned students and made them feel welcome at Tech.

B2E Coordinator Mike Bogue assigned each first-time, full-time,

main campus freshman to a faculty or staff B2E mentor. For the fifth year in a row, all faculty mentors were assigned mentees whose majors either fell under the faculty mentor's department or, barring that, under the faculty mentor's academic college. Meanwhile, undeclared students were primarily assigned to Student Services staff and non-Student Services staff.

Each mentor was given two CSI Student Reports for each of his or her mentees; the mentor would keep one, then give the other to the mentee during the first mentor/mentee meeting. Based on the student's responses, the CSI Student Report included three sections:

- Student Background Information.
- Motivational Assessment.
- Specific Recommendations.

The mentor could use this information as a springboard to identify and encourage student strengths. In addition, the CSI could be used to determine what (if any) college-related challenges the student might have or anticipate having. When appropriate, the mentor could then refer the student to any relevant campus support service(s) and schedule a follow-up meeting. (Campus support services include academic tutoring labs, administrative departments, clubs and organizations, etc.)

At mid-term, each mentor was provided with his or her mentees' mid-term grades. Mentors were encouraged to use this information to follow-up with their mentees, cheering on those mentees who were doing well academically and offering assistance/advice to those mentees who were struggling academically. After the close of the semester, mentors were also supplied with each mentee's final grades.

General Conclusions

All Fall 2011 B2E participants and non-participants were main campus freshmen only. Although Arkansas Tech does have a community college campus in Ozark, Arkansas, the B2E program is not conducted at the Ozark campus.

For Fall 2011 to Spring 2012, the retention rate for main campus B2E participants (n=731) was higher than that for main campus non-participants (n=780).

According to Arkansas Tech Institutional Research data, 90.97% of Fall 2011 B2E partakers returned for the Spring 2012 semester, while only 78.97% of non-partakers came back. This means that the retention rate for

B2E participants was 12% higher than that of non-participants.

For Fall 2010 to Fall 2011, the retention rate for these main campus B2E participants (n=857) was also higher than that for main campus non-participants (n=565). According to Arkansas Tech Institutional Research data, 75.61% of Fall 2010 B2E partakers returned for the Fall 2011 semester, while only 54.87% of non-partakers came back. This means that the retention rate for B2E participants was 20.74% higher than that for non-participants.

The GPA (Grade Point Average) of both groups was also impacted, with B2E participants having a higher average GPA than non-participants. At the end of the Fall 2011 semester, the cumulative GPA for B2E partakers was 2.943, as compared to the overall GPA of 2.407 for non-participants. This means B2E participants had a fall GPA that was 0.536 higher than the fall GPA of non-participants.

Appendices

- Appendix A contains the retention rate data for Years 1-11 of the B2E program.
- Appendix B contains the fall semester GPA data for Years 1-11.
- Appendix D gives the cohort B2E percentage participation.

BRIDGE TO EXCELLENCE YEAR 10 REPORT

Appendix A

ATU Freshman Cohort Retention Rates by B2E Program Year *

Semester/ Year	Number of B2E Program Participants	B2E Participants/ Retention Rate	Non- Participants/ Retention Rate	Percentage Difference In favor of B2E
FALL TO SPRING				
Year 1 (2001)	105	89.52%	81.91%	7.61%
Year 2 (2002)	310	86.77%	79.53%	7.24%
Year 3 (2003)	751	90.01%	74.83%	15.18%
Year 4 (2004)	811	87.92%	70.10%	17.82%
Year 5 (2005)	855	88.07%	72.47%	15.60%
Year 6 (2006)	764	88.99%	72.07%	16.92%
Year 7 (2007)	885	89.15%	76.40%	12.75%
Year 8 (2008)	890	87.64%	78.65%	8.99%
Year 9 (2009)	1029	90.48%	77.20%	13.28%
Year 10 (2010)	857	90.20%	78.23%	11.97%
Year 11(2011)	731	90.97%	78.97%	12.00%
	AVERAGE:	89.06%	76.48%	12.66%
FALL TO FALL				
Year 1 (2001)	105	82.86%	66.00%	16.86%
Year 2 (2002)	310	72.26%	63.60%	8.66%
Year 3 (2003)	751	76.83%	59.01%	17.83%
Year 4 (2004)	811	73.98%	53.20%	20.78%
Year 5 (2005)	855	74.04%	58.71%	15.33%
Year 6 (2006)	764	73.95%	54.85%	19.10%
Year 7 (2007)	885	73.11%	58.49%	14.72%
Year 8 (2008)	890	75.17%	60.81%	14.36%
Year 9 (2009)	1029	78.23%	62.53%	15.70%
Year 10 (2010)	857	75.61%	54.87%	20.13%
	AVERAGE:	75.60%	59.20%	16.35%

* Data from Arkansas Tech University Institutional Research.

BRIDGE TO EXCELLENCE YEAR 11 REPORT

Appendix B

ATU Freshman Cohort Grade Point Average (GPA) Comparison by B2E Program Year *

* Data from Arkansas Tech University Institutional Research.

Semester/Year	B2E Participants	Non-Participants	Difference
End of Fall (1st Semester)			
Year 1 (2001)	NA	NA	NA
Year 2 (2002)	2.886	2.379	0.507
Year 3 (2003)	2.872	2.321	0.551
Year 4 (2004)	2.780	2.323	0.457
Year 5 (2005)	2.810	2.388	0.422
Year 6 (2006)	2.875	2.240	0.635
Year 7 (2007)	2.746	2.181	0.565
Year 8 (2008)	2.878	2.293	0.585
Year 9 (2009)	2.919	2.269	0.650
Year 10 (2010)	2.815	2.131	0.684
Year 11 (2011)	2.943	2.407	0.536
AVERAGE:			0.508

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Appendix C

**ATU Freshmen Cohort
Percentage Participation
in B2E 2001-2011
(Main Campus, First-Time, Full-Time,
Degree-Seeking)**

Cohort Group (Total Number)	Total Number of Freshman Cohort	Total Number of B2E Participants	Percentage of Freshman Cohort B2E Participants
2001	1205	105	8.7%
2002	1170	310	26.5%
2003	1339	751	56.1%
2004	1296	811	62.5%
2005	1320	855	64.7%
2006	1300	764	58.8%
2007	1368	885	64.7%
2008	1260	890	70.6%
2009	1470	1029	70.1%
2010	1422	857	60.3%
2011	1511	731	48.3%