

# **Bridge To Excellence**

Year 2 Report

March 22, 2004

Prepared by: Mike Bogue, Retention Counselor

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## **Arkansas Tech University Pilot Study Continues**

The Year 1 (2001) pilot study utilizing Noel-Levitz's College Student Inventory (CSI) to improve student retention proved promising, so a Year 2 (2002) pilot study followed. Amy Pennington was again in charge of the program, at this point still called simply "CSI." Form A of the CSI (194 questions) was again employed.

Only first-time, full-time students were included in the Year 1 pilot study. The retention rate for the CSI Year 1 cohort (n=105) from Fall 2001 to Spring 2002 had been 89.52% as compared to 82.24% for non-participants (n=991). This pattern of higher retention for CSI participants continued from Fall 2001 to Fall 2002 when 82.90% of CSI students returned compared to only 66.90% of non-CSI students. The Year 2 pilot study would determine if retention differences showed up between program participants and non-participants when the number of participants was increased.

## **Purpose and Demographics**

The purpose of the pilot study – to gauge the impact of the program on the retention rate of first-time, full-time students – remained the same for Year 2 (2002). As with Year 1, only first-time, full-time students were included in the study. This meant that any freshman taking fewer than twelve class hours was not included.

The number of program participants expanded; for Year 1 of the CSI program, 105 freshmen were randomly selected from Brown Hall and Jones Hall. However, that number increased to 310 randomly selected, on-campus, first-time, full-time freshmen for Year 2. The total number of first-time, full-time students for Fall 2002 was 1,170, meaning that the number of non-program participants was 860. Retention rates of this control group (n=860) were compared to those of the treatment group (n=310).

## **Intervention**

Each Year 2 program participant, or mentee, was assigned to a faculty or staff mentor. A mentor was a faculty or staff volunteer who worked with CSI students to help them understand and evaluate their CSI results and to

act as a campus contact person to provide support and guidance. At this point, the mentors were expanded from the Student Services staff to a number of faculty members, resulting in 38 mentors in all.

Each mentor was given a CSI Student Report for his or her mentees. Based on the student's answers, these reports included three sections: Student Background Information, Motivational Assessment, and Specific Recommendations. The mentor could use this information as a springboard to determine what (if any) college-related problems the mentee might have or anticipate having. Then, the mentor could refer the mentee to any and all appropriate campus support services and schedule a follow-up meeting. (Campus support services include academic help labs, administrative departments, clubs and organizations, etc.)

### **General Conclusions**

The retention rates for the treatment group (n=310) were higher than those for the control group (n=860) for both Fall 2002 to Spring 2003 and Fall 2002 to Fall 2003:

- For Fall 2002 to Spring 2003, 86.77% of program participants returned, while only 80.61% of non-participants came back.
- For Fall 2002 to Fall 2003, 71.93% of program participants came back as compared to 63.60% of non-participants.

The GPA (Grade Point Average) of both groups was also impacted, with the treatment group showing a higher GPA than the control group:

- At the end of the Fall 2002 semester, the average GPA of program participants was 2.886, while the average GPA of non-participants was 2.379.
- In addition, the program participants' overall GPA at the end of the Spring 2003 semester was 2.888, while that of non-participants was 2.51.
- Finally, the GPA at the end of the Fall 2003 semester was 2.955 for program participants, 2.67 for non-participants.

Appendix A contains the overall retention rate data for Year 2 participants and non-participants, and Appendix B contains the overall GPA data for Year 2 participants and non-participants.

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Year 2 (2002) Report

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Appendix A

## Retention Rates for Year 2 B2E Participants and Non-Participants

Time Period	B2E Participants (n=310)	Non-Participants (n= 860)	Percentage Difference
Fall 2002 to Spring 2003	86.77% Returned	80.61% Returned	6.16%
Fall 2002 to Fall 2003	71.93% Returned	63.60% Returned	8.33%

## **Bridge to Excellence**

Year 2 (2002) Report

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Appendix B

### **GPA for Year 2 B2E Participants and Non-Participants**

<b>Semester/ Year</b>	<b>B2E Participants (n=310)</b>	<b>Non- Participants (n= 860)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>End of Fall 2002</b>	<b>2.886</b>	<b>2.379</b>	<b>0.507</b>
<b>End of Spring 2003</b>	<b>2.888</b>	<b>2.51</b>	<b>0.378</b>
<b>End of Fall 2003</b>	<b>2.955</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>0.285</b>