

# College Student Inventory

Final Report

February 20, 2002

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## **College Student Inventory**

The College Student Inventory, CSI, is an instrument created and operated as part of the Noel-Levitz Retention Management System. Noel-Levitz is the nationally recognized authority on student retention. A primary function of the inventory is to assist college and university personnel identify the needs of their student populations in order to better assist them as they begin their collegiate endeavors. By pinpointing the needs of these students early, within the first six weeks, programs can be formulated and tailored to specifically meet those needs and to begin the process of intervening in areas students target for themselves as potential problems.

By providing an opportunity for the students to participate in the inventory and most importantly by collecting data directly from the students concerning their academic preparedness, study skills, and anticipated social interests, for example, college and university personnel can then highlight areas of concern and work directly with the student to overcome any of these obstacles. Armed with this information, the campus community can begin building stronger relationships and linking incoming students to the campus as well as their peers. The ultimate goal of the entire program is to help students succeed in their academic pursuits and to improve persistence and retention of students.

## **Arkansas Tech University Pilot Study**

### **Purpose and Demographics**

The purpose of this study was to gauge the impact of the CSI as it relates to increased retention of first-time, full-time students. For the purpose of this discussion, a first-time, full-time student is defined as a student that graduated from high school in 2001 and enrolled in a minimum of twelve hours in the Fall 2001 semester. A total of 1,096 students were identified as first-time, full-time students enrolled for the Fall 2001 semester. Of the 1,096 students, three groups were identified and compared in the study. Students selected for participation in the CSI program (n=105) resided on-campus in Brown and Jones Halls. These students were located on the first and third floors of each respective residence hall, both of which are designated as first-year experience halls. Retention rates from this treatment group were compared to those of a control group of first-time, full time on-campus (non-CSI) students (n=554) and a control group of first-time, full-time off-campus (non-CSI) students (n=437).

Arkansas Tech University opted to use Form A of the CSI consisting of 194 questions. The students participating in the study were surveyed during two separate cycles beginning on August 30, 2001. The results were sent to the Noel-Levitz company in Iowa City, Iowa, for scoring on August 31, 2001 and were available for review on September 7, 2001.

## **Intervention**

Noel-Levitz provides a summary report for each individual that participates in the CSI. This report interprets the student's responses and highlights any possible areas of concern. A list of ten suggestions for increased success in college is then provided for the students to review.

One-on-one individual appointments were scheduled with each of the 105 students participating in the CSI beginning the week of September 10, 2001. During these meetings members of the Student Services Department provided a copy of the summary report for the student as well as an explanation of the results. Each session provided an opportunity for the student to make a connection with a member of the Student Services staff who served as their CSI advisor. Sessions provided time for the students to ask questions about college life in general and to receive specialized information that was relevant to his/her specific needs. Additionally, during this time students were advised of the variety of campus support offices and general functions of the university that could assist with their transition into college life. The intervention involved referring students to various departments on campus for additional help in areas such as study skills, tutoring, counseling, and student activities, just to highlight a few. Follow-up sessions were scheduled for those students requesting additional help. Telephone calls and personal notes were sent to many of the students following the one-on-one session to ensure that the student was comfortable seeking any additional support if needed.

The residence hall staff also engaged these students. Resident assistants were pivotal in providing assistance in special programming to meet the student needs that were identified in the CSI reports. Programs targeted at assisting students acclimate to college life and to help foster social growth and the development of new relationships were conducted in both residence halls. The resident assistants provided activities focused on easing the transition of the first-year student. Additionally, the resident assistants spent a great deal of time working one-on-one with each of the residents to answer daily questions that would arise about general campus operations. The resident assistants, serving as peer mentors, encouraged students from the beginning of the semester to attend additional tutoring sessions if necessary. Resident assistants provided extra information to these students about services provided on campus, such as the Math Lab, Writing Lab and the Learning and Testing Center as well as additional tutoring opportunities available through various departments on campus. Tutoring sessions were also held on-site in lobbies of both residence halls.

## **General Conclusions**

Initial data indicates that the students participating in the CSI are returning for the spring semester at higher rates than those that did not participate. Of the 105 students that participated in the CSI, 94 of those students enrolled for the spring semester, representing an 89.52% retention rate. This figure is compared to two control groups. Information on first-year, full-time students that resided on-campus but did not participate in the CSI as well as off-campus students was collected using the 11<sup>th</sup> Class Day Report from the Fall 2001 semester. The on-campus, non-CSI participants had an overall retention rate of 83.94% while the off-campus cohort had a retention rate of 80.09%. Appendix A contains the overall retention data from the three groups.

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Appendix A

## Overall Rates

### CSI Participants (On-Campus)

Total # of First-Time, Full-Time Students that Completed the CSI	Total # Returning for Spring 2002	Retention Rate
105	94	89.52%

### On-Campus First-Time, Full-Time Students (Non-CSI Participants)

Combined Total # of First-Time, Full-Time Students On-Campus	Total # Returning for Spring 2002	Retention Rate
554	465	83.94%

### Off-Campus First-Time, Full-Time Students (Non-CSI Participants)

Combined Total # of First-Time, Full-Time Students Off-Campus	Total # Returning for Spring 2002	Retention Rate
437	350	80.09%