Student Retention
“Accountability is here to stay. I truly believe the only way that MnSCU will be supported as an organization is if we are accountable and able to measure outcomes. We need to be able to explain to people of Minnesota the difference the organization makes.”

--James H. McCormick, Chancellor MnSCU, 2004
“Approximately 45% of students enrolled in two-year colleges depart during their first year”

--American College Testing Program, 2001
Retention is everybody’s business!
Higher Education Philosophy about Retention

Academic Darwinism
Academic Darwinism: Survival-of-the-Fittest Model

“We [Higher Education] use a kind of a Darwinian perspective: We provide opportunities for people, and ‘if you can't hack it, that's your tough luck.’

Something, somewhere went terribly wrong
How do our students fit us?
Two Views of Retention

“Retention is a measure of how valued and respected students feel on your campus”
Vincent Tinto

Distinguished University Professor
Chair, Higher Education Program
School of Education
Syracuse University
“We must be intentional, proactive, and intrusive. We cannot leave the education of our students to chance.”

- Vincent Tinto
Vincent Tinto

To be serious about student retention, institutions would recognize that the roots of attrition lie not only in their students and the situations they face, but also in the very character of the educational settings, now assumed to be natural to higher education, in which they ask students to learn.
“High expectations are a condition for student learning. Students learn best in settings that hold high expectations for their learning, provide clear and consistent standards for their learning, and do so in ways that apply to all students, not just some.”

--Vincent Tinto

NCTC’s Institutional Learner Outcomes
Alexander Astin

Alexander W. Astin is director of the Higher Education Research Institute and Allan M. Cartter professor of higher education at UCLA. He is nationally known for annual polling of freshmen over the past 34 years, revealing that youthful goals have changed strikingly: “Saving the world has become less important to them than getting ahead in business.”
Astin’s Model

“If we take them, we must serve them.”

“People who are in need of a lot of educational help and intervention are the very people to whom we ought to be devoting our greatest resources, because the stakes are so high in terms of what happens to these people.”

“It's just a question of whether we value them enough to invest what we need to invest to help get them through the system.”
“In academia we don't know ourselves very well. We're not reflective. We don't ask, ‘What's our work all about; what are we really trying to do?’ And I think if we are able to create better opportunities for faculty and staff to talk openly and honestly about such matters, a lot of things would start to get better.”

--Alexander Astin
Challenges and Problems that Retention Programs face:

**Learning Obstacles**

- Personal Circumstances
  - Financial
  - Balancing family, work, school
  - Health
  - Marital
  - Child care
  - Low motivation
  - Low self esteem
  - No, wrong or realistic goals
  - Immaturity
  - Lack of involvement
    - in College Life

**Academic Circumstances**

- Poor study habits
- Low grades
- Poor academic preparation
- Lack of advising
- Inadequate career exploration
- Heavy class loads
- Poor class attendance
- Inaccurate college expectations
NCTC Retention Committee

Purpose: To initiate and establish a college retention plan to assist students in accomplishing their goals by incorporating...

1. Academic stimulation and assistance
   - Challenge in and support for academic performance
2. Personal future building
   - Identification and clarification of student goals and directions
3. Involvement experiences
   - Student participation and interaction with a wide variety of programs & services

What works in student Retention: Two-year public Colleges, 2004 ACT
Defining Retention

There is currently one standard national retention definition that was established by the federal government and must be reported by all colleges on an annual basis:

“Program Retention”

“Tracks the full-time student in a degree program over time (3 years for a two-year college) to determine whether the student has completed the program.”
This retention definition does **not** include:

1. Students who start part-time then move to full-time

2. Attendance

3. Those who are attending college part-time, which in many cases is over 50% of some college populations
Legislation to improve graduation rates could have opposite effect

• If IPEDS rates are the standard that colleges are held to, then colleges will create more stringent admissions requirements

• If there are state/federal mandates for admissions, then colleges will have to learn how to restrict admissions (e.g., U of M’s recent dissolution of their General College)
Government leaders must create a system in which institutions are measured by their improvements rather than by comparing them with peer institutions.

Federal government should support and distribute research on student retention because college administrators need models that work.

--Scott Swail, 2005
## Recent NCTC Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State Colleges Total</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer out Rate</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Rate</td>
<td>57.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Greater MN C &amp; TC Colleges Total (includes NTC)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer out Rate</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Rate</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Northland Community &amp; Technical College (TRF)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
<td>49.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer out Rate</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Rate</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MnSCU’s Definition of Student Success

“Success: The cumulative percentage of students in the cohort that have graduated or transferred plus the percent enrolled during a specific term.”

Overview of NCTC’s Retention Efforts

• February 28, 2005, first committee meeting

• Make-up of the committee includes but is not limited to:
  -- 1 administrator
  -- At least two teaching faculty representatives from each campus 
    (not including the counselors)
  -- At least two Counselor representatives
  -- At least two MAPE Academic Advisors
  -- At least 3 representatives from Learning Services Center
  -- Two representatives from Enrollment Management
  -- May include two students representatives (TBD)

Kelsy Blowers     Jane Anderson     Dean Dalen
Gene Klinke       Terry Wiseth      Mary Fontes
Bonnie Andrys    Ellen Brehmer     Rocky Ammerman
Janet Gontarek   Rick Nikunen      Kate Schmalenberg
Pam Schorsch     Mike Normandin    Lisa Bottem
#1. Academic stimulation and assistance

Challenge in and support for academic performance

- Use of assessment & cut-scores for proper placement
- Required developmental coursework
- Learning Services
  -- Tutoring, One-on-One/Groups
  -- Writing Center (TRF)
  -- “Early Alert” (will implement college-wide)
- Multicultural Student Services (college-wide)

John Hardy, Director of Multicultural & Diversity
#1. Academic stimulation and assistance

Challenge in and support for academic performance

--To deal with Under-prepared/At-Risk Students

**Corvus Campus ToolKit** (--the most powerful and comprehensive suite of student success tools; holistic approach to improve communications, enhance student self-understanding, and at-risk student identification and support)

- A Student Service Strategic Initiative championed by Jane Anderson
- The pilot will start this fall semester but Jane will continue to be their “coach” throughout the entire year
#2. Personal future building
Identification and clarification of student goals and directions

--To improve communication

Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS)

• Student Service Strategic Initiative championed by Lisa Bottem

• Students (and advisors) can check to see what is needed to complete their degrees; a way for students to stay informed about their status
Northland Community and Technical College

Degree Audit Reporting System

The Degree Audit Reporting System (DARS) is designed to help you identify and understand your current academic requirements for degree or program completion. We think you will find the DARS report simple to read and understand once you have taken the time to review the sample audit and familiarize yourself with its contents.

What is DARS?
DARS is a tool designed to assist program advisors, academic counselors, and students in selecting courses and showing academic progress towards educational goals.

What DARS is not!
The DARS report is not a transcript. It is not intended to report a student's academic record to outside parties. If you need a student copy of your transcript, you may obtain one from the NCTC website www.northlandcollege.edu. As with a transcript, federal law prohibits transmission of a DARS report to a third party without the student's permission.

How will DARS help me?
DARS is a computer-based system that lists the college requirements for your program to help you plan and monitor your progress. DARS does this by identifying all of the requirements needed to complete your program, indicating NCTC transfer courses you have already completed and how they pertain to your requirements; and specifying what you still need to complete your program.

What is included in my DARS report?
Header Information
This section at the top of the report contains your name, ID number, the date the report was prepared, and your program.

Requirements
Requirements identify components of your program that must be completed. The report begins with the number of credits and the GPA required for your program. It then progresses into the specific courses needed. Requirements may be broken up into smaller, numbered segments called sub-requirements.

The completion status of a requirement is indicated by an "OK" or "NCT". The completion status of a sub-requirement is indicated by a '+' or '-'

Coursework
Your NCTC course work listed in a requirement shows the term taken, department number, credits earned, grade, and course title:

SOE ENGL 111 3.0 08 Computation

Transfer course work is designated with a "T" preceding the grade and the transfer school initials under the course title. Any course substitutions or waivers in a student's program must be submitted to the Records & Registration Office upon approval so the student's DARS report can be updated.

The DARS report needs to be closely checked for any discrepancies or omissions. It is your responsibility to complete all the requirements for your selected program, whether or not they have been identified on the NCTC DARS report. You are encouraged to review your Northland Community and Technical College catalog and report any inaccuracies found on your NCTC DARS report to the Records Office staff.

How Can I Get My DARS Audit?
Go to the NCTC website www.northlandcollege.edu. Click on My NCTC and then the Registrar. Log in to the web registration system with your NCTC Student ID and PIN. Click on the Student Tab. On the left hand side click on Degree Audit Report.

This document can be made available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by contacting Ellen Beckner at (218) 773-4626 or 1-800-461-3441, or TTD (218) 773-4541 at the East Grand Forks campus; or Dean Cales at (218) 581-0910 or 1-800-919-4266, or TTY (218) 581-0990 at the Thief River Falls campus.

An Alternative Job/Interim Opportunity Coordinator: Employer

111 (218) / 773-4626 111 (218) 581-0990
www.northlandcollege.edu

NCTC is a committee to the policy of nondiscrimination in employment and education opportunities. No person shall be discriminated against in the terms and conditions of employment, personal practices, or access to and participation in programs, services, and activities with respect to race, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, sexual orientation, or membership in a local labor organization as defined by law.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AREA</th>
<th>REQUIREMENT</th>
<th>COURSE</th>
<th>EARNED</th>
<th>CREDIT(S)</th>
<th>TAKEN</th>
<th>1 CREDIT</th>
<th>2 CREDITS</th>
<th>3 CREDITS</th>
<th>4 CREDITS</th>
<th>5 CREDITS</th>
<th>6 CREDITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>ENGL 111</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1 COURSE</td>
<td>1 CREDIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>Critical Thinking</td>
<td>SPCH 111</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1 COURSE</td>
<td>1 CREDIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>Natural Science</td>
<td>MATH 112</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1 COURSE</td>
<td>1 CREDIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>History &amp; Social Sciences</td>
<td>304 MAT 102</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1 COURSE</td>
<td>1 CREDIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK</td>
<td>The Humanities &amp; Fine Arts</td>
<td>MUS 104</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>1 COURSE</td>
<td>1 CREDIT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Elective Credits for Graduation**

- Minimum: 24 credits may be elective.
- Maximum: 16 credits must be applicable toward the degree.

**American Sign Language**

- Maximum: 3 credits must be in American Sign Language.
- Minimum: 2 credits must be in American Sign Language.

---

**Note:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 provides the right of students to request access to and consent to any third party without the consent of the student.
#2. Personal future building
Identification and clarification of student goals and directions

--To increase efforts in career exploration opportunities & information

Kuder Career Planning System

• Student Service Strategic Initiative championed by Kate Schmalenberg

• The Kuder System is focused to target NCTC’s courses and programs to all local secondary students (grades 7 – 12) by providing the most comprehensive college and career planning tool available

• The Kuder System will help NCTC to (1) pinpoint students matching our recruiting profile, (2) create placement with a purpose (the “right course, the right career;” and, in turn, (3) increase student retention and placement rates.
#2. Personal future building
Identification and clarification of student goals and directions

--To understand why students are leaving or staying

“Total Withdrawal” Student Form

• Revised the “Total Withdrawal” student form to capture why students are leaving the College

• Faculty can play an important role in this
Exit Survey

• Lisa Bottem & Kelsy Blowers sent out a survey to students who graduated asking them what helped them to stay with NCTC
1. What types of positive experiences did you have as a NCTC Student?
2. What types of negative experiences did you have as a NCTC Student?
3. Please indicate your satisfaction with the following NCTC services by checking appropriate box:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Did not use</th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Dissatisfied</th>
<th>Very dissatisfied</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic advising</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admissions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookstore</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business office</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intramurals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning center/tutoring services</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student organizations/clubs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Were there are services that you did not receive that would have been helpful?
5. Please rate your experience at NCTC on a scale on 1 to 5 with “1” being the least positive and “5” being the most positive.
6. Other comments?
The Retention Committee added two questions to the Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey administered last spring:

1. *Previous academic experiences have properly prepared me for college*

2. *Personal responsibility is a factor in my own academic development*
#2. Personal future building
Identification and clarification of student goals and directions

Marketing CDs

- Student Service Strategic Initiative championed by Lindsey Wangberg & Mark Johnson

- Created specific program CDs to incorporate modern technology into recruitment efforts for prospective college students
#3. Involvement experiences
Identification and clarification of student goals and directions

Student participation/interaction with a wide variety of programs and services on the campus

Service Learning
- Offers students real-life experiences in the community

Intramurals
- Coordinators on both campuses

Student Club Activities
- Enhanced Student Club activities
“Involvement is a condition for student retention... The more students are academically and socially involved, the more likely they are to persist and graduate. A wide range of studies in a variety of settings for a range of students have confirmed that the more frequently students engage with faculty, staff, and their peers, the more likely, other things being equally, that they will persist and graduate. Simply put: involvement matters.”

--Vincent Tinto

Other Retention Efforts

Professional Development in Retention

• The Retention Committee has hosted several Audio Conferences:
  -- Future Trends in Higher Education
  -- Best Practices for Online Student Services
  -- Marketing to Adult Students: The future is already here!

• Demonstration for “Campus Tool Kit”

• The Committee hosted Student Retention Dialogue Sessions for faculty & students (March 2005)
Other Retention Efforts

Professional Development in Retention

• Mary Fontes attended conference:
  Retaining students in higher education: A framework for improvement (June)

• Pam Schorsch & Gene Klinke attended conference:
  -- As part of a Student Service Strategic Initiative
  -- 20th Annual Enrollment Planners Conference
  -- Hosted by ACT (July)
What’s Next?

• If the data is non-existent, we’re not going to capture anyone’s attention (anecdotal information only goes so far...)

• Faculty & College Leadership must become engaged in retention efforts

• Review of the literature suggests that retention committees work best when chaired by senior faculty members

• Be patient!

• Don’t get hung up on numbers!
Retention is everybody's business!

Some helpful hints about retention… with our compliments!
Thank You!
Five Components of the Student Retention Framework
Swail, 1995
Five Components of the Student Retention Framework
Swail, 1995
Five Components of the Student Retention Framework
Swail, 1995
Five Components of the Student Retention Framework
Swail, 1995
Student Services

Five Components of the Student Retention Framework
Swail, 1995
Five Components of the Student Retention Framework
Swail, 1995

Financial Aid
Student Retention
# NCTC’s Retention Committee

- **February 28, 2005, first committee meeting**

- **Committee (2008-09):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kelsy Blowers</th>
<th>Maureen O’Connell</th>
<th>Dean Dalen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gene Klinke</td>
<td>Ellen Brehmer</td>
<td>Mary Fontes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lynell Wayne</td>
<td>Nicki Carlson</td>
<td>Rocky Ammerman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barb Forrest</td>
<td>Kate Schmalenberg</td>
<td>Sue Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pam Schorsch</td>
<td>Hank Roehrich</td>
<td>Lisa Bottem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niki Brenny</td>
<td>Jason Pangiarella</td>
<td>Susie Harrie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nic Thompson</td>
<td>Shannon Bolden</td>
<td>Brenda Olson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norma Konschak</td>
<td></td>
<td>Steve Crittenden</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NCTC Retention Committee

**Purpose:** To initiate and establish a college retention plan to assist students in accomplishing their goals by incorporating...

1. **Academic stimulation and assistance**
   - Challenge in and support for academic performance

2. **Personal future building**
   - Identification and clarification of student goals and directions

3. **Involvement experiences**
   - Student participation and interaction with a wide variety of programs & services

*What works in student Retention: Two-year public Colleges, 2004 ACT*
#1. Academic stimulation and assistance

Challenge in and support for academic performance

--To identify students who are struggling

Early Alert

• 3rd year collegewide (campus teams)

--To work with Underrepresented Students

Success Coordinators

• Intrusive Advising
#2. Personal future building
Identification and clarification of student goals and directions

--To improve communication

**Poster Series**
- Timely Top Tidbits

--To improve readiness

**Success Coordinators**
- Student Success Week (Fall)
#2. Personal future building
Identification and clarification of student goals and directions

---To promote preparedness

**Get Your Stuff Together (GYST)**

- Preparation for summer and fall enrollment

---To identify graduate perspective

**Graduate Exit Survey**

- Surveys sent to graduates requesting feedback on experiences and satisfaction of services.
#3. Involvement experiences
Identification and clarification of student goals and directions

Student participation/interaction with a wide variety of programs and services on the campus

**Student Dialogues (April 29)**
- Offers students opportunity to participate in identifying needs

**Student Ambassador Program**
- Offers students opportunity to gain leadership skills (Nicki Carlson, Nic Thompson)
#3. Involvement experiences
Identification and clarification of student goals and directions
Student participation/interaction with a wide variety of programs and services on the campus

Student Activities

- Survey of Academic and Social Needs
- Target activities based on identified needs
- Offer and promote identified activities, i.e. workshops, tutoring, recreational opportunities
Other Retention Efforts

• Online Orientation – Gold Paragon award (3 yr collaborative effort), continuous improvements being made

• Redesigned Orientation/Assessment/Registration process collegewide

• Subgroups:
  - Data Subgroup (Student Dialogues)
  - Immigrant Subgroup

New Ideas:
- Email “Lessons”
- Stopout Followup Subgroup
Overview of NCTC’s Retention Efforts

- Investigate Best Practices
- Continue to incorporate purposeful strategies
- Try a few new projects each year
- Many services and activities are inexpensive

- Try something...if it doesn’t work...try something else

- Key is to try a variety of activities and services
“Involvement is a condition for student retention... The more students are academically and socially involved, the more likely they are to persist and graduate. A wide range of studies in a variety of settings for a range of students have confirmed that the more frequently students engage with faculty, staff, and their peers, the more likely, other things being equally, that they will persist and graduate. Simply put: involvement matters.”

--Vincent Tinto