

A Retention Overview (and 5 Reasons to Choose Truman)

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What is retention?

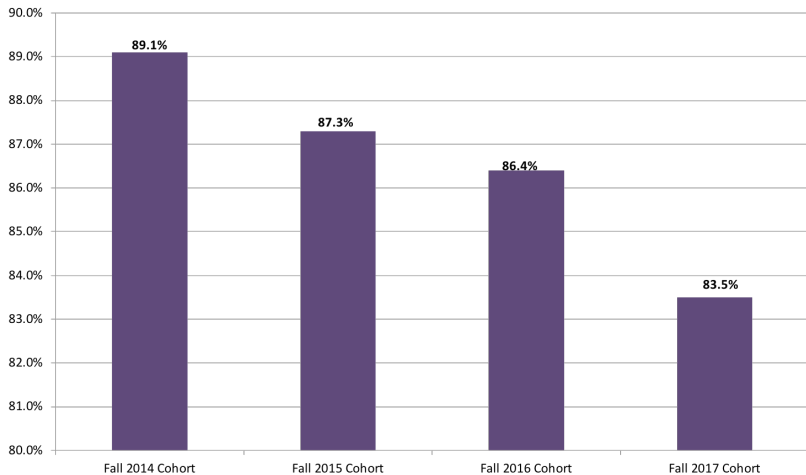
- *A university's ability to hold on to its students*
- Influenceable by the institution
- Complex but well-studied phenomenon for which best practices have been established
- A function of the student experience

When students feel connected, they stay.

Key Retention Metrics

- *Fall-to-fall retention rate*: proportion of a university's first-year students who return for their second year
- *Six-year graduation rate*: proportion of a university's students who earn a degree from that institution within six years

What is Truman's current retention rate?



Context for Truman's current retention rate

- Currently: 83.5% (2018)
- Historically: 88-89%
 - ▶ Within Missouri: near the top
 - ▶ Within COPLAC: at or near the top
- National average for four-year publics: 81% (2017)
- Schools most similar to Truman: 87% (2017)

What affects retention?

- Individual factors

- ▶ Level of academic preparation
- ▶ Expectations for college
- ▶ Interest in coursework/major
- ▶ Presence of well-defined personal goals
- ▶ Personal challenges (financial/family)

What affects retention?

- Institutional factors

- ▶ Academic advising (at all levels)
- ▶ Social connections with peers
- ▶ Social connections with college personnel
- ▶ Common experiences in curriculum
- ▶ Culture of student success (and availability of appropriate services)
- ▶ Classroom practices
- ▶ Business practices

Best practices in retention largely consist of being intentional (as an institution) with respect to the above factors.

We have a great deal of influence over our retention rate.

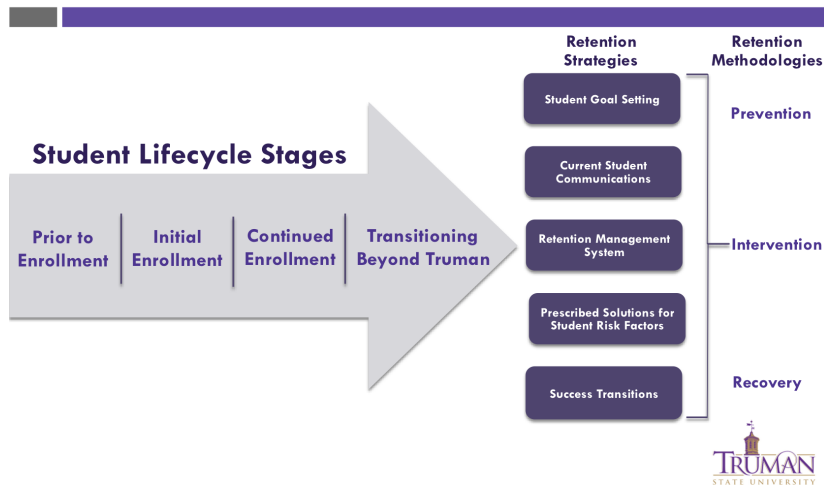
What has Truman been doing to address retention?

- 2016: Retention Council
- 2018: Retention Task Force
- 2018: SEM Works
- 2019: Director of Retention position created

The Director of Retention coordinates retention efforts, but successful retention efforts must be university-wide.

What will Truman's future retention efforts look like?

Truman's Student Retention Model



What will the Director of Retention focus on this fall?

Initial, incomplete list of priorities.

- Develop a comprehensive retention plan (with measurable goals)
- Gather and analyze retention data
- Develop regular reports for key stakeholders
- Conduct communication audit
- Review Retention Management software options
- Revise exit survey
- Review advisor reassignment process

What can we do immediately?

- Faculty: use the Any-Time, Any-Student Warning System (academic concerns) and SOC (behavioral concerns, serious academic concerns).
- Have a 30-second conversation with one new student each day.
- Normalize struggle. Share your failures.
- Send thoughts and feedback to the Director of Retention (vieker@truman.edu)
- Advise and mentor. There is *nothing* like good faculty advising.

Conclusion

- Retention is influenceable by the institution.
- Retention is everyone's job.
- Retention is about connection.

Questions/Comments?

5 Reasons to Choose Truman

SEM Works: Truman needs to identify “5 Reasons to Choose Truman,” and all personnel must commit them to memory. What should those 5 reasons be? Let’s brainstorm in groups of 3-4.

- 1 What does Truman do better than competing institutions?
- 2 Are there any “Truman strengths” that don’t get enough attention?
- 3 If you were talking to a friend’s son or daughter about choosing a college, how would you sell Truman?