

**South Plains College
Retention Team
Progress Report**



Spring 2007

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Improvements to Advising Services	3
. Intrusive Advising Pilot	3
. Academic Probation Students	4
. Suspension Appeals Students	5
. Communication with Students	7
. Automatic Assignment of Advisors	7
. Study of New Student Orientation Programs	7
3. Early Alert System	8
4. Future Projects	9
. Individual Learning/Success Plans	9
. Quality Service Professional Development	9
5. Conclusion	10
6. Retention Team Members Fall 2004 – Present	10

1. INTRODUCTION

Since late 2004, the Retention Team at South Plains College has worked diligently to improve services for both students and the institution at large. Following goals set with the help of an external auditor and the results of two administrations of the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory surveys, the Team's efforts resulted in progress in the course completion and retention rate of selected groups of students.

This report summarizes the successes the Retention Team made with targeted programs and student groups, including advising, Early Alert, communication with students, academic probation and suspension students, and first-time-in-college students. Future goals are also presented, along with projects designed to provide professional development opportunities for all SPC employees.

2. IMPROVEMENTS TO ADVISING SERVICES

Intrusive Advising Pilot

South Plains College first piloted its intrusive advising system during the Fall 2005 semester. The pilot followed guidelines as determined by the Title V Grant which funds the program under Year 1 Objective 2:

By January 2006, students participating in a pilot test of the new Intrusive Advising system will demonstrate a 10% higher success rate (course completion with grade A, B, or C) than the non-participant control group.

The performance measures required to meet the objective are listed below:

2.1 By May 2005, at least 90% of Student Retention Team will approve the components (process flowchart, guidelines and forms) of the Intrusive Advisement system. Note: this proposal includes the team-approved philosophy and mission of advising, including goals, roles, and responsibilities of the advisor and student; approved learning outcomes; and, the process flowchart.

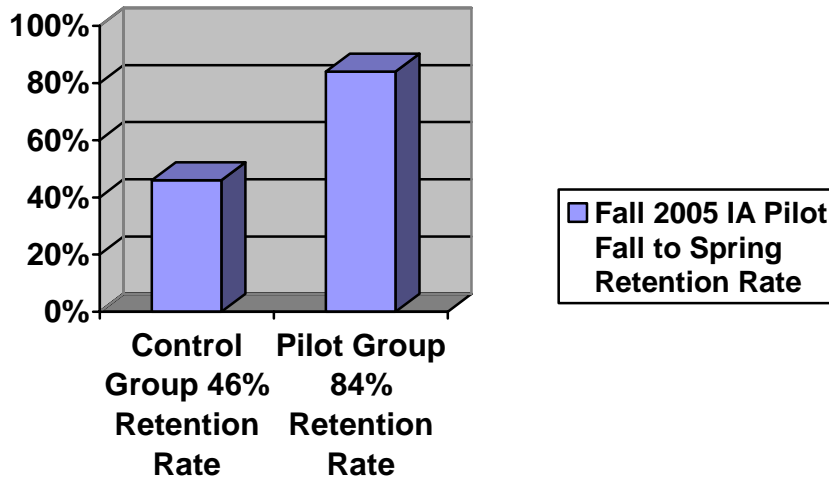
2.2 By November 2005, 100% of pilot student cohort for test of Intrusive Advisement system will be identified and entered into database.

2.3 By December 2005, at least 50% of students participating in the pilot will express satisfaction with the Intrusive Advisement system as verified by student satisfaction survey results.

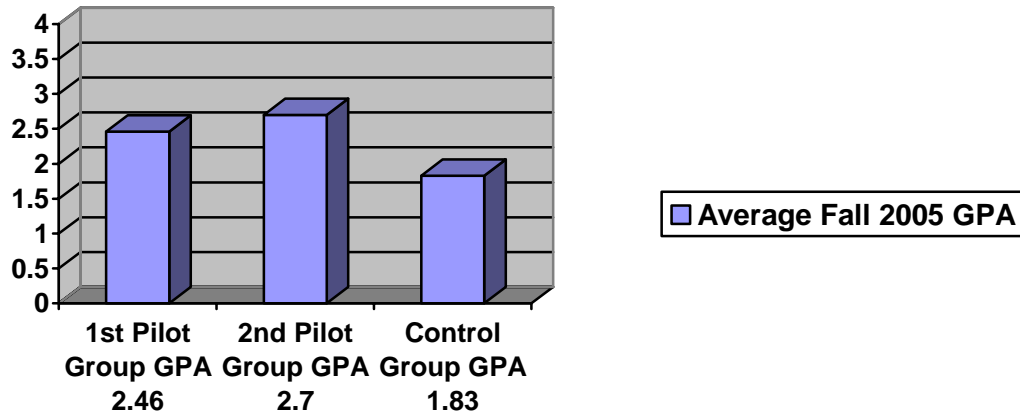
The pilot group consisted of a representative sample of approximately 40 general studies majors who attend New Student Orientation (ORNT 0110.006) on August 9-10, 2005. The non-participant control group was derived from a representative sample of approximately 40 general studies majors whose first semester at SPC was Fall 2005, who do not attend a New Student Orientation session.

Advisors for the pilot were General Studies advisors with previous advising experience. Dr. Laura Graves and Kay McClellan participated in the pilot, and contacted their advisees no fewer than four times during the Fall 2005 semester. Their work and recommendations to improve the pilot were invaluable to the Retention Team.

The table below shows that the Intrusive Advising pilot group was retained for the Spring 2006 semester by 84%, compared with just 46% of the control group.



The next table shows a Fall 2005 GPA breakdown for each of the two pilot advisor groups, compared to the control group.

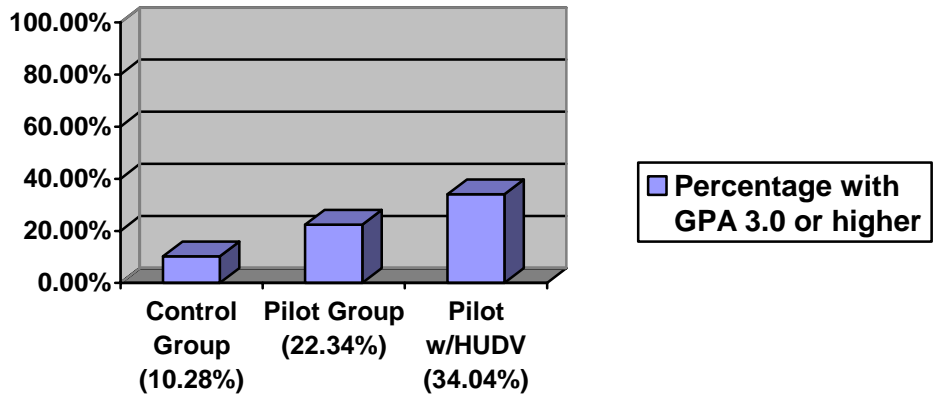
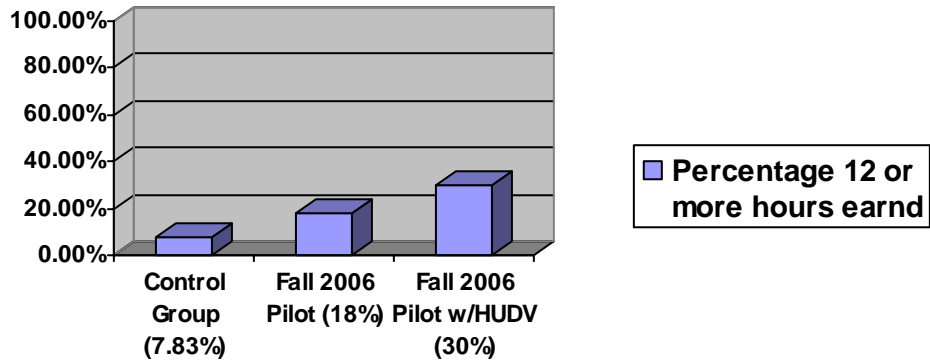


Academic Probation Students

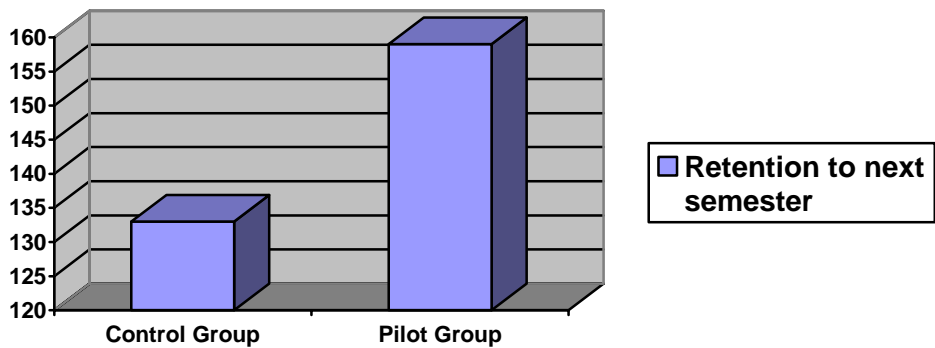
Students on academic probation are now required to meet with an advisor prior to registration. The students are also required to complete a “Student Success Exercise,” which outlines the reasons why they went on academic probation, and helps to clarify goals to attain good academic standing. The student then visits with their advisor or a counselor and develops an “Academic Success Plan,” detailing their semester goals.

The Fall 2006 student pilot cohort consisted of 282 students placed or continuing on probation after Spring 2006 and returned for Fall 2006. The following charts detail the progress of this group compared to the control group, 292 students placed or continuing on probation after Spring 2005 and returned for Fall 2005. In addition, 19% of the pilot group enrolled in an HUDV section, either 1100, 1200, or 1300, and their success rate in

each tracked area is evident; the Retention Team strongly recommends that all students on academic probation enroll in one of these sections, based on their needs.



Retention of the pilot group to the Spring 2007 semester was 56%, an increase of 11.4% from the Fall 2005 control group's retention of 44.6% to Spring 2006.

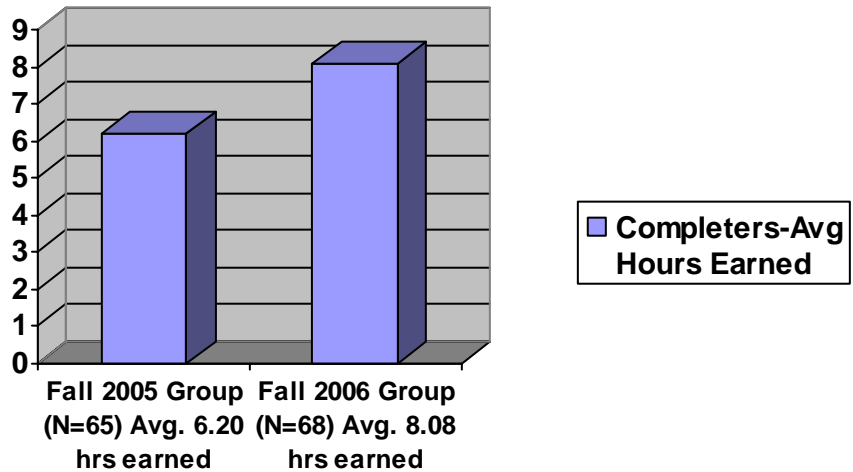


Suspension Appeals Students

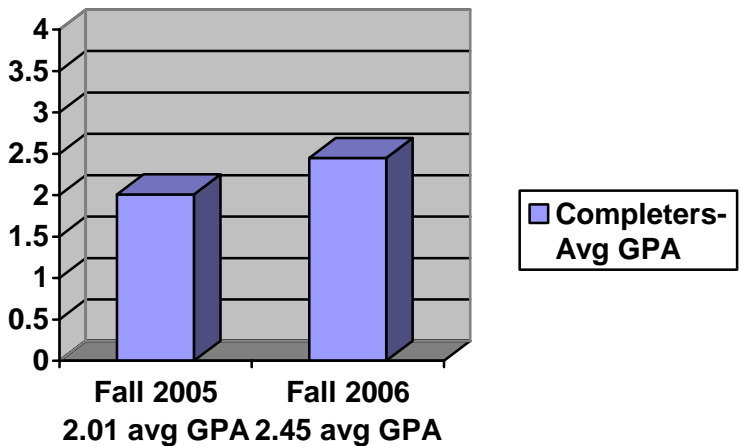
Before the Retention Team's involvement, students on academic suspension appeal were not held accountable to follow the conditions of their appeal. The Retention Team developed a process whereby students approved for academic suspension appeal are required to visit regularly with either the Retention Specialist or an assigned

counselor. The Retention Specialist also audits schedules continually to ensure students are following the conditions of their appeal. Also, the Retention Specialist works closely with faculty who teach the suspension appeals students to check on attendance and other concerns.

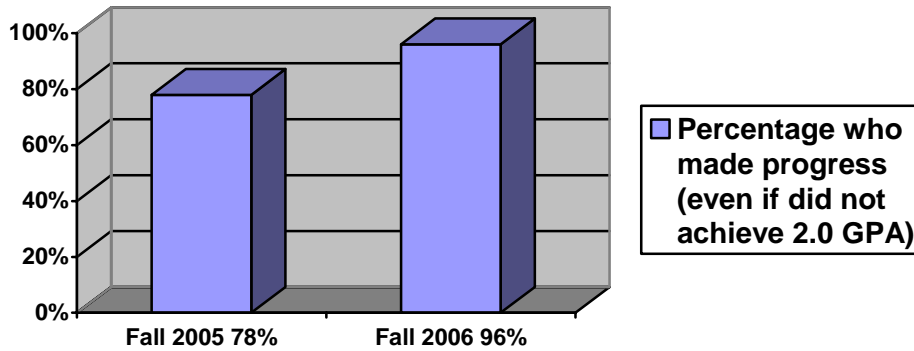
The table below shows the increase in the number of hours earned by the Fall 2006 appeals group, compared to the Fall 2005 group.



The table below represents the average GPA of the completers, comparing the Fall 2005 group with the Fall 2006 group.



The next table shows the percentage of students who made progress by the end of the semester, even if they did not achieve the 2.0 GPA.



Communication with Students

The Retention Team approved a recommendation by the Department of Information Technology to purchase a student portal to enhance communication with students. “MySPC,” was launched during the Spring 2007 semester, with campus organizations utilizing the portal to communicate with students; several faculty are also using it to communicate with their students.

Also launched in Spring 2007 was the student SPC email accounts. The emails are used to communicate with advisees, to send Early Alert notices, and to email reminders to students regarding registration and other updates.

Automatic Assignment of Advisors

In order to provide students with a primary contact advisor at the time of admission, the Information Technology Department developed a program to automatically assign students to an advisor, based on the major they selected on their admissions application. The Office of Enrollment Management worked with department chairs to identify primary contact advisors for all of the 145 programs offered specific to each campus location.

Study of New Student Orientation Programs

Following the recommendations made by Noel-Levitz after review of our 2003 Student Satisfaction Inventory, and developing activities required under the objectives of the Title V Grant, the Retention Team constructed a flowchart of advising at SPC (Appendix A). One of the major components of advising at SPC was determined to be a new student orientation program. The question, then, was raised, “If we see orientation as a critical component of intrusive advising, then what are we doing as an institution to provide this service to all of our new students?”

Under the direction of the Retention Team, the New Student Orientation Task Force was formed to evaluate the current orientation programs offered at South Plains College, in order to determine if all student populations have access to such programs. The Task Force started its work in October 2005. The Task Force used the Council for Academic Standards in Higher Education’s “Assessment of Orientation Programs,” as a guide to

follow in determining if the needs of new students were being adequately met at all campus locations and on-line.

The Task Force made several recommendations to administration regarding improvement of orientation programs, and the Counseling Centers made changes to the delivery of their programs as well. The strongest recommendations made by the Task Force were to require advising for all new students, and to hire a Coordinator of New Student Orientation.

3. EARLY ALERT SYSTEM

South Plains College piloted its Early Alert program during the Fall 2006 semester. The pilot followed guidelines as determined by the Title V Grant which funded development of the program under Year 2 Objective 4:

By January 2007, students participating in a pilot test of the Early Alert and Referral system will demonstrate a 10% higher success rate (course completion with grades of A, B or C) and a 10% higher retention rate (enrollment in the next required course) than the control group.

4.1 By January 2006, 90% of the Student Retention Team will approve the components (process flowchart, guidelines, and forms) of the Early Alert and Referral System.

4.2 By September 2006, 100% of pilot student cohort for pilot test of Early Alert and Referral System will be identified and entered in the data.

4.3 By September 2006, at least 70% of students participating in the pilot will express satisfaction with the Intrusive Advisement system as verified by student satisfaction survey results.

The South Plains College Retention Team developed the initial process for conducting an Early Alert system by researching similar, successful Early Alert programs at colleges nationwide, and also by carefully considering the needs of both students and faculty/staff at SPC. The efficiency of such a program was addressed, as well as the impact on campus resources.

While three departments were targeted for the pilot, anyone who attended an in-service session on the pilot was invited to participate. In total, 21 faculty submitted 173 Early Alert notices using a web-based form developed by the Retention Team.

The three faculty and their Fall 2006 courses who participated in the pilot were:

- Dr. Jay Driver, Professor of Mathematics (Beginning Algebra)
- Jill Haukos, Assistant Professor of Biology (General Biology I)
- Katheryn Townsend, Instructor in Chemistry (Introduction to Chemistry)

The comparison groups for the targeted courses were the same course section that was taught during the Fall 2005 semester.

In the General Biology course, students who received a grade of A, B or C increased by over 27%; for Introduction to Chemistry, the increase in the number of A, B,

or C grades was 7.4%. There was not an increase in the number of A, B, or C grades for the Beginning Algebra section, but the courses used for the comparison were taught by different instructors.

The Spring 2007 pilot of the Early Alert system expanded to include anyone who attended the January in-service workshop on the pilot. As of April 30, 25 faculty submitted Early Alerts for 228 students, covering all campus locations and on-line.

4. FUTURE PROJECTS

Individualized Learning/Success Plans

The Retention Team worked the entire 2006-2007 academic year to develop a comprehensive, yet user-friendly, individualized learning and success plans. This project is a Title V Year-Three grant objective:

7. By September 2007, students participating in a pilot test of the Individual Learning Plan system will demonstrate a 10% higher success rate (course completion with grades of A, B or C) and a 10% higher retention rate (enrollment in the next level course) than the non-participant control group.

7.1 By October 2006, 90% of the Student Retention Team will approve the components (process flowchart, guidelines and forms) of the Individualized Learning Plan System.

7.2 By October 2006, 100% of student cohort for the pilot of the Individualized Learning Plan system will be identified and entered in to the database.

7.3 By September 2007, 50% of students participating in the pilot with express satisfaction with the Individualized Learning Plan as verified by a student satisfaction survey.

Once the components of the success plan were approved by the Retention Team, the Office of Enrollment Management and the Information Technology Department worked together to develop an on-line success module with ESP, the company that owns CampusConnect. The module's estimated completion date is June 1, and the Office of Enrollment Management will work with the Counseling Centers to identify a New Student Experience Session to pilot the plan during Summer 2007.

Quality Service Professional Development

The Retention Team at South Plains College seeks to improve retention rates by improving services to students throughout the institution. This includes improving the quality of services provided to students from all staff institution-wide. Comprehensive training for advising services has been in place for nearly two years, and the next logical step is to include classified staff and other personnel in professional development opportunities.

The Retention Team will foster quality service training by supporting campus-wide efforts to engage all staff in professional development activities. Through Title V funds, the Team purchased a developed quality customer service training video series. The Office of Enrollment Management will work with department supervisors, Deans and Vice-Presidents to facilitate training within each department. Upon successful completion

of the training series, participants will receive a certificate of completion that will also be included in their personnel file.

The Student Services division will be the first division to complete all of the quality service training, with all members of the division going through the training during Summer 2007.

5. CONCLUSION

The Retention Team of South Plains College has made great strides in improving services to students, which in turn improves retention rates. Since the Retention Team began its work, fall-to-spring retention rates of first-time-in-college students have increased from 69% from Fall 2004 to Spring 2005, to 73% from Fall 2006 to Spring 2007. The fall-to-fall retention rates have also seen improvement, from 35% from Fall 2004 to Fall 2005, to 44% from Fall 2005 to Fall 2006.

Future projects include expanding professional development opportunities for all employees interested in participating, for at South Plains College, the Retention Team believes, "Everyone's an advisor." The largest undertaking of the Team will be an upcoming pilot of the Individual Learning/Success Plans, and with the continued support of administration, faculty and staff, the Team is assured of future progress and success with its initiatives.

6. RETENTION TEAM MEMBERS FALL 2004 – PRESENT

Kimbra Quinn, Director of Enrollment Management
Christina Conner, Retention Specialist; Retention Team Co-Chair
Alma Lopez, Assistant Professor of Mathematics; Retention Team Co-Chair
Dr. Gail Platt, Director of the Teaching & Learning Center, Title V Project Director
Lee Cox, Associate Dean of Student Services
Claudine Oliver, Director of Guidance and Counseling
Gracie Quinonez, Director of the Plainview Center
Vicki Bordelon, Recruiter and Instructor for Nursing
Pamela Burnett, Associate Professor of Physical Education
Jesse Day, Assistant Professor of Computer Information Systems
Robyn Inmon, Assistant Professor of Psychology
Iris Keeling, Assistant Professor of Biology
Wayne Langehennig, Assistant Professor of Foreign Language
Johnny Lopez, Data Tracking Specialist
Maria Lopez-Strong, Diversity Coordinator & Career Counselor
Benny Morris, Instructor of Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Technology
Brenda McKelvey, Title V Secretary
Dr. Laura Graves, Professor of History
Katheryn Townsend, Instructor of Chemistry
Dr. Sara English, Assistant Professor of Psychology
Jeff David, Instructor of Automotive Technology
Christopher Neal, Instructor of Sound Technology
Dr. Stephanie Jones, Associate Dean of Distance Education and Instructional Support
Vanessa Moffett, Instructor in Psychology
Kara Martinez, Assistant Professor of Speech