

Breakout Session Notes: Family Engagement

I. What does the research show us?

Glossop says that the main reasons students leave college are:

1. Financial difficulties
2. Family problems
3. Academic difficulties
4. Wrong career choices

Rickinson/ Rutherford maintain that the 3 areas of concern behind students leaving are:

1. Students are unprepared academically
2. Students are unprepared emotionally
3. Students have family problems

Research on **retention** indicates these 4 four items will help:

1. Develop study and other transferable skills
2. Help develop stress management skills
3. Help students reality test the demands of the school program
4. Improve the quality of the learning experience for students

Student characteristics having the greatest impact on leaving school have been:

1. Lack of motivation to succeed
2. Inadequate financial resources
3. Inadequate preparation for college
4. Lack of educational goals and aspirations
5. Inadequate personal coping skills
6. Poor study skills

Social integration within the college or university increases the likelihood of student persistence to graduation. This is particularly important for students:

1. Who are first generation college attendees
2. Who have limited English proficiency
3. Who are from a cultural or minority background

II. What can we do to help?

We have to begin where we are! What can we do now to increase the chances of persistence? What can families do to help?

1. Dance of Separation-- Build a box around them with good boundaries, but let them explore and fail within the box.
2. Support and encourage them to discover their resources, to reality-test their skills, and develop realistic goals for the short term and the long term.
3. Help them develop structure in their days/lives that includes visible accountability.
4. Do not foster unrealistic expectations with false praise and encouragement that is not objectively framed.
5. Non-traditional means non-traditional. Do not foster fantasy expectations of Biff and Tiffany going off to join the fraternity or sorority and play their way through college. This is work. It is hard work.