Retention for Rookies

Sherri Erkel, Ph.D.

Vice President, Consulting, Student Success

Today's Session

1. Definitions and Framework

2. Benchmarks and trends

3. Essentials in student success planning

1

Definitions and Framework

Defining Retention

Federal Definitions

- **Retention:** the percentage of students who return *to the same institution* for their second year;

- **Persistence:** the percentage of students who return to college *at any institution* for their second year;

- Institutions that receive federal financial aid are required to report student success data to the U.S. Department of Education via annual surveys (IPEDS)
  - Part of a larger set of information that is also shared with students and families through the College Navigator website

Defining Retention

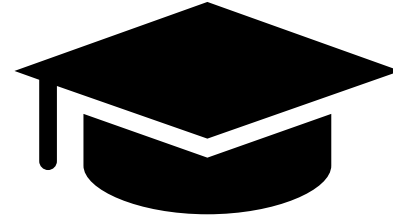## *Performance Indicators*

Persistence:
Term-to-term return
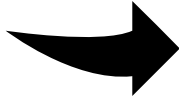
Progression:
Activity that correlates with persistence, such as course completion and academic probation rates

Retention:
Fall-to-fall return

Completion/Graduation

Student Success Relationship Management Model™: Four-Year School

Who? Which strategies? → Success strategies during enrollment process (transition to the campus community)

Who? Which strategies? → Success strategies during year one (affiliation, engagement, integration, transition)

Who? Which strategies? → Success strategies during year two ("situation", academic affiliation, career, experiential learning)

Etc → Success strategies in years three and four (academic satisfaction, career, and graduate school)

→ Graduation/completion

RNL

Student Success Relationship Management Model™: Two-Year School

Who? Which strategies? → Success strategies during enrollment process (transition to the campus community)

Who? Which strategies? → Success strategies during term one (affiliation, engagement, integration, transition)

Who? Which strategies? → Success strategies during term two ("situation", academic affiliation, career, experiential learning)

Etc → Success strategies in years two and beyond (academic satisfaction, career, and graduate school)

→ Graduation/completion/transfer

Guiding Questions
Planning for Student Success

- What does student success look like at your institution?

- How do you measure student success?

- To what extent are you meeting the goals that you have established to-date?

  - Are these goals appropriate for the specific populations you wish to impact?

- What barriers exist in working toward your goals?

- How do you communicate progress toward and achievement of student success goals?

2

Benchmarks and Trends

Incoming First-Year Students

Key Findings from our latest research

- Nearly 30% of students question whether college is worth it.

- 75% of incoming students want to meet new friends at college.

- About 1 in 6 want to talk to a counselor.

- Two-thirds of students want help selecting an educational plan that will help them get a good job.

- Nearly all students are committed to college.

Students' perception of value: Change over time

Question: "I often wonder if a college education is worth the time, money, and effort that I'm being asked to spend on it."

4-YEAR PRIVATE	4-YEAR PUBLIC	2-YEAR PUBLIC	OVERALL
27%	28%	30%	28%

26%
2021
(mid-pandemic)

25%
2019
(post-recession)

17%
2009
(mid-recession)

Top Ten Requests for Assistance: New Students

Friends, Study Habits, and Degree Planning

Incoming students: Top 10 requests for assistance

①	Would like to meet new friends at an informal gathering	**73%**
②	Help selecting an educational plan to get a good job	**69%**
③	Receive help to improve study habits	**67%**
④	Talk about qualifications needed for certain occupations	**67%**
⑤	Find out more about clubs and organizations at college	**66%**
⑥	Would like instruction on how to take college exams	**65%**
⑦	Talk with someone about getting a scholarship	**63%**
⑧	Talk with someone about salaries for future occupations	**58%**
⑨	Meet an experienced student to seek advice	**55%**
⑩	Help selecting an occupation suited to my interests	**54%**

RNL

Top Ten Requests for Assistance: Mid-Year

Careers and Academic Support

Middle of first-year: Top 10 requests for assistance

1. Receive help with an educational plan to prepare for a good job................................ **52%**
2. Discuss qualifications needed for various occupations................................ **52%**
3. Discuss salaries and future outlook for various occupations................................ **52%**
4. Discuss advantages and disadvantages of various occupations................................ **51%**
5. Receive help selecting an occupation suited to my interests and abilities................................ **47%**
6. Help in improving my study habits................................ **42%**
7. Instruction in effective ways to take college exams................................ **40%**
8. Help improving my math skills................................ **39%**
9. Help improving my writing skills................................ **39%**
10. Get information about opportunities for holiday or summer jobs................................ **38%**

Top Ten Requests for Assistance: Second Year

Careers and Completion

Second-year students: Top 10 requests for assistance

①	Identify work experiences or internships related to my major	**67%**
②	Define goals suited to my major or career interests(s)	**55%**
③	Explore advantages and disadvantages of my career choice	**54%**
④	Prepare a written academic plan for graduation	**49%**
⑤	Discuss options for financing my education	**48%**
⑥	Figure out the impact of my grades on my desired major	**48%**
⑦	Find tutors in one or more of my courses	**43%**
⑧	Get help with study skills (time management, taking notes, exam skills, etc.)	**42%**
⑨	Find better ways to manage my personal finances (incl. loans, work, credit cards)	**42%**
⑩	Find ways to balance the demands of school with work	**42%**

Student Motivations Differ by Type
Adult vs. Traditional Students (2021 Report)

ITEM	ADULT	TRADITIONAL
Prepared to make the sacrifices needed to reach goals	96%	89%
Have found an occupation that interests them	90%	83%
Greater family understanding and support	85%	76%
Perceive educators more positively	84%	77%
Have developed a solid system of self discipline	73%	60%
See the benefits of tutoring in one or more of their classes	67%	59%
Have a career action plan that guides their studies	61%	52%
Greater pleasure from reading	60%	37%
Ability to manage finances without having to work more hours	55%	45%
Less doubt about the value of earning a college degree	19%	36%

N = 3,458 Adult Learners (25+)
N = 5,604 Traditional Students (18-24)

15

Top 10 areas of assistance for adult learners (2021 Report)

1. Get information about qualifications for various careers **81%**
2. Tutoring would benefit me in one or more of my classes **67%**
3. Help improving my writing skills **63%**
4. Help improving my math skills **60%**
5. Help improving my test-taking skills **58%**
6. Learn more about salaries/opportunities for various careers **50%**
7. Talk with a counselor about additional financial assistance **49%**
8. Help improving my study skills **48%**
9. Help improving my reading skills **44%**
10. Weigh the advantages/disadvantages of various careers **36%**

What do our Student Satisfaction Data Tell Us?

Results from **639** colleges and universities

Four-year privates

105,684
students from **217** institutions

25% Freshmen   23% Juniors
22% Sophomores   24% Seniors

Four-year publics

44,090
students from **52** institutions

23% Freshmen   26% Juniors
18% Sophomores   25% Seniors

Community and technical colleges

79,049
students from **128** institutions

60% Full-time   40% Part-time

Adult students

38,220
students from **96** institutions

39% Undergraduate   61% Graduate
74% Full-time   26% Part-time

Online learners

95,512
students from **146** institutions

67% Undergraduate   33% Graduate
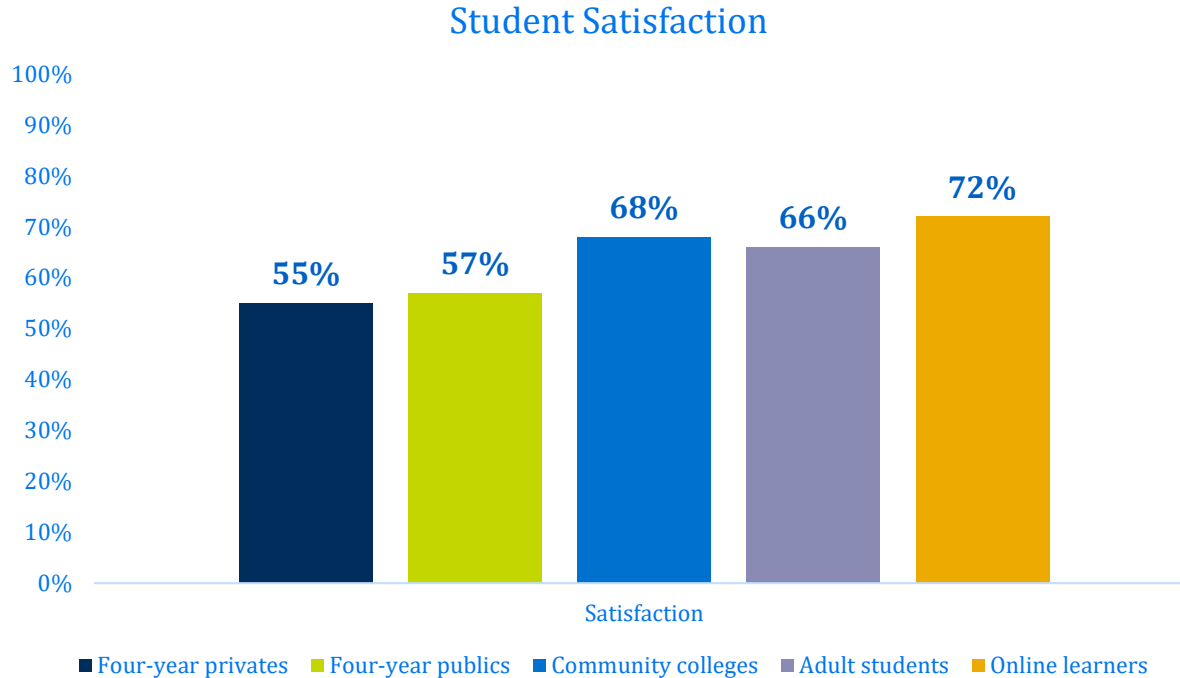94% Primarily online   6% Primarily on ground

research report
2022 National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report

How satisfied are college students?

Student Satisfaction

Student Satisfaction bar chart:
- Four-year privates: 55%
- Four-year publics: 57%
- Community colleges: 68%
- Adult students: 66%
- Online learners: 72%

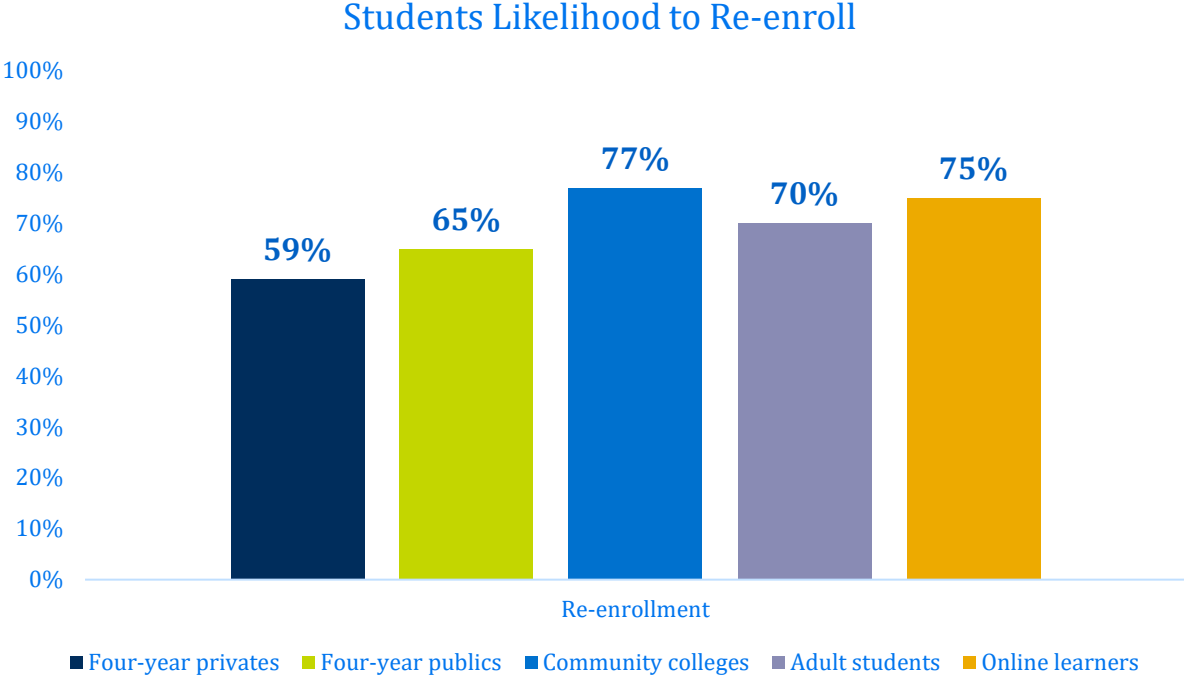Rate your overall satisfaction with your experience here thus far

SCORING
- Not satisfied at all
- Not very satisfied
- Somewhat dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat satisfied
- **Satisfied**
- **Very satisfied**

Percentages indicates the proportion of "satisfied" or "very satisfied" scores

How likely are students to re-enroll?

Students Likelihood to Re-enroll

All in all, if you had to do it again, would you enroll here?

SCORING ⬍
Definitely not
Probably not
Maybe not
I don't know
Maybe yes
Probably yes
Definitely yes

- Four-year privates — 59%
- Four-year publics — 65%
- Community colleges — 77%
- Adult students — 70%
- Online learners — 75%

Re-enrollment

Percentages indicates the proportion of "probably yes" and "definitely yes" scores
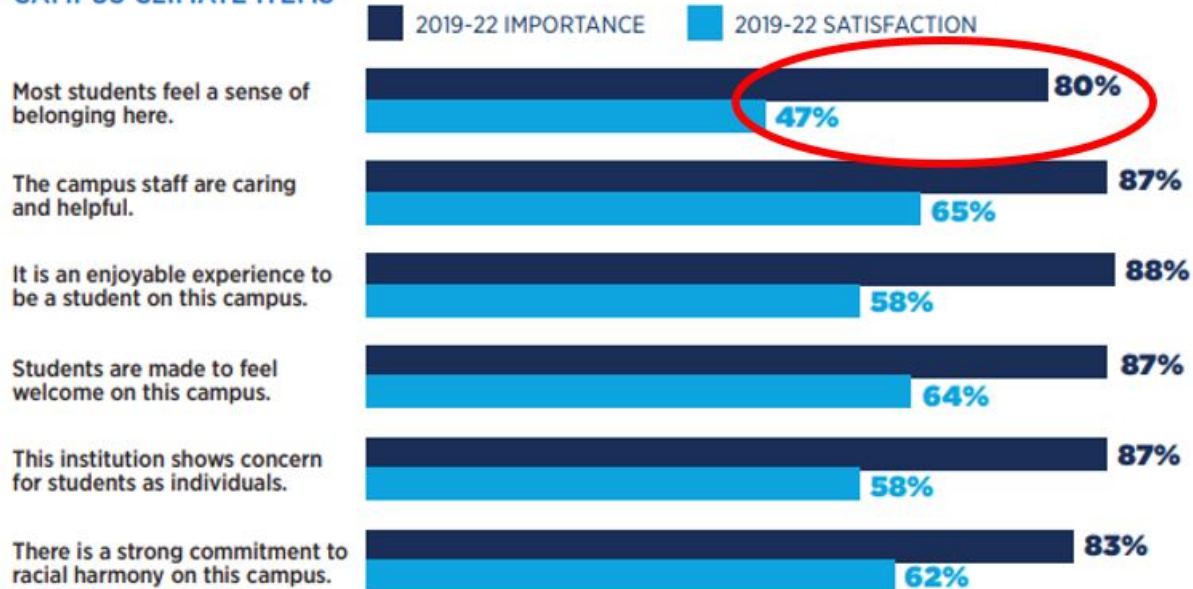
Campus Climate and Retention

Campus Climate Items: 2019-2022 results

- Students at 4-year public and private institutions and community colleges all cite 'a sense of belonging' and a 'caring and helpful staff' as important

  – 2-year students report the highest levels of satisfaction with these items

- Adult students want 'to feel welcome' on campus

- Online learners emphasize access to information, timely response, and technical support

2022 National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report

Campus Environment

Importance & Satisfaction: 4-Year Privates

CAMPUS CLIMATE ITEMS

2019-22 IMPORTANCE   2019-22 SATISFACTION

Most students feel a sense of belonging here.
- 80%
- 47%

The campus staff are caring and helpful.
- 87%
- 65%

It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.
- 88%
- 58%

Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.
- 87%
- 64%

This institution shows concern for students as individuals.
- 87%
- 58%

There is a strong commitment to racial harmony on this campus.
- 83%
- 62%

Campus Environment

Importance & Satisfaction: 4-Year Publics

CAMPUS CLIMATE ITEMS

	2019-22 IMPORTANCE	2019-22 SATISFACTION

Most students feel a sense of belonging here.
- Importance: 75%
- Satisfaction: 51%

The campus staff are caring and helpful.
- Importance: 85%
- Satisfaction: 60%

It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.
- Importance: 85%
- Satisfaction: 61%

Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.
- Importance: 85%
- Satisfaction: 66%

This institution shows concern for students as individuals.
- Importance: 84%
- Satisfaction: 55%

There is a strong commitment to racial harmony on this campus.
- Importance: 82%
- Satisfaction: 66%

Campus Environment

Importance & Satisfaction: Community Colleges

CAMPUS CLIMATE ITEMS

2019-22 IMPORTANCE 2019-22 SATISFACTION

Most students feel a sense of belonging here.
- 75%
- 66%

The campus staff are caring and helpful.
- 86%
- 76%

It is an enjoyable experience to be a student on this campus.
- 85%
- 73%

Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.
- 88%
- 78%

This institution shows concern for students as individuals.
- 83%
- 64%

Campus Environment

Importance & Satisfaction: Adult Students

CAMPUS CLIMATE ITEMS

2019-22 IMPORTANCE   2019-22 SATISFACTION

Item	Importance	Satisfaction
Adult students are made to feel welcome on this campus.	87%	75%
The staff at this institution are caring and helpful.	91%	75%
This institution responds quickly to my requests for information.	89%	71%
This institution provides timely responses to student complaints.	87%	62%
I am aware of whom to contact for questions about programs and services.	85%	65%

Campus Environment

Importance & Satisfaction: Online Learners

Benchmarks and Retention Planning

Start with the first two years

- Benchmarks are helpful for comparing your outcomes and making realistic goals

Continuation Rates	FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE	FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC
Persistence from term one to term two, 2019-20 academic year	88.5%	87.0%
Persistence from term two of the 2019-20 academic year to term three (first term of 2020-21 academic year)	87.0%	83.0%
Persistence from term three to term four, 2020-21 academic year	93.0%	91.5%
Persistence from term four of the 2020-21 academic year to term five (first term of 2021-2022 academic year)	93.0%	91.5%

RNL

2022 Student Success and Retention Benchmarks

For first-year, second-year, and transfer students at four-year private and public institutions
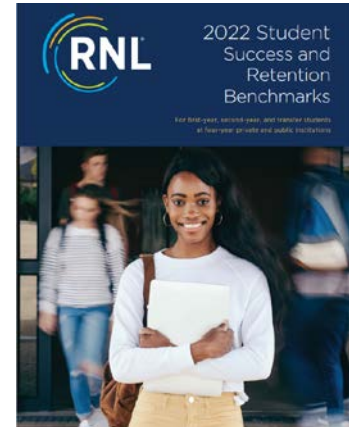
FTIC Fall-to-Fall Retention Rate: 2020 to 2021

Retention Ratios	FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE			FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC
	ALL	HIGHER SELECTIVITY	LOWER SELECTIVITY	ALL
25th Percentile	69.5%	73.0%	62.8%	67.5%
Median	**76.0%**	**77.5%**	**74.5%**	**73.5%**
75th Percentile	82.5%	84.8%	80.0%	91.0%

RNL

2ⁿᵈ Year Fall-to-Fall Retention Rate: 2020 to 2021

Retention Ratios	FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE			FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC
	ALL	HIGHER SELECTIVITY	LOWER SELECTIVITY	ALL
25th Percentile	79.5%	81.3%	75.0%	82.0%
Median	82.0%	82.0%	82.0%	84.0%
75th Percentile	88.0%	87.8%	87.0%	87.0%

New Transfer Fall-to-Fall Retention Rate: 2020 to 2021

Retention Ratios	FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE			FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC
	ALL	HIGHER SELECTIVITY	LOWER SELECTIVITY	ALL
25th Percentile	71.0%	69.0%	73.3%	70.0%
Median	78.0%	78.0%	79.0%	75.5%
75th Percentile	87.0%	89.0%	81.8%	86.3%

FTIC Students on Academic Probation: 2020-21 cohort

Progression Metrics		FOUR-YEAR PRIVATE	FOUR-YEAR PUBLIC
Proportion of students on probation at end of term one, 2020-21 academic year	25th Percentile	6.3%	6.1%
	Median	**11.0%**	**11.5%**
	75th Percentile	22.4%	18.4%
Proportion of students on probation at end of term two, 2020-21 academic year	25th Percentile	7.0%	4.0%
	Median	**9.5%**	**5.3%**
	75th Percentile	21.5%	16.0%

Effective Practices for Student Success, Retention, and Completion

2023 Poll Coming August 2023

Situating Retention Efforts
Align with institutional priorities and planning

Institutional Strategic Plan

Strategic Enrollment Plan

Annual Marketing and Recruitment Plan

Annual Retention Plan

Clear Goals

Key Strategies

Detailed Action Plans
Objectives – Timetables
Responsibility – Budgets
Evaluation

Guiding Principles for Effective Retention Efforts

Build your strategies on a foundation of student success

Be intrusive and intentional	Integrate with other programs	Gather and integrate student feedback
Provide quality classroom engagement	Ensure student-centeredness	Empower students to develop relationships

Steps for retention planning

Conduct a SWOT analysis, including data collection
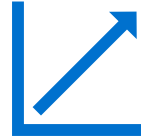
Set goals

Formulate strategies

Develop action plans

Celebrate wins!

Retention situation analysis

Don't forget to collect data in this step

- Review the mission statement and strategic plan

- Assess driving forces and inhibiting factors

- Compile and review historical enrollment and retention data

- Review appropriate demographic trends

- Conduct a program-by-program analysis

- Develop a list of retention planning assumptions

- Review project and consultant recommendations

- Clarify definitions that may be used in the planning process

Adopt a first-fourth semester planning paradigm

Focusing on student relationships and engagement

- Provide early identification.

- Provide a tool for advisors to enhance communication and relationship-building.

- Provide individual and aggregate data for developing and targeting customized communications.

- Continue to take the "pulse" of your students.

Formulate Strategies to Achieve Goals

And assign specific individuals/groups to each one!

- Do students experience problems with the process/system?

- Is the process important to ongoing institutional effectiveness and quality?

- Can the college control the improvement of the process?

- Will students benefit or care about the improvement?

- Is the college willing and able to dedicate the appropriate financial and human resources to improve the process?

Develop Action Plans

Keep your goals at the forefront

What exactly are you going to do?

•Specific description of the activity that is generally quantifiable and measurable

When will it be completed?

•Timetables that clearly show key dates and deadlines

Who will be responsible?

•Clear assignments of responsibility for performing important tasks

How much will it cost?

•Budget information showing the cost of implementation

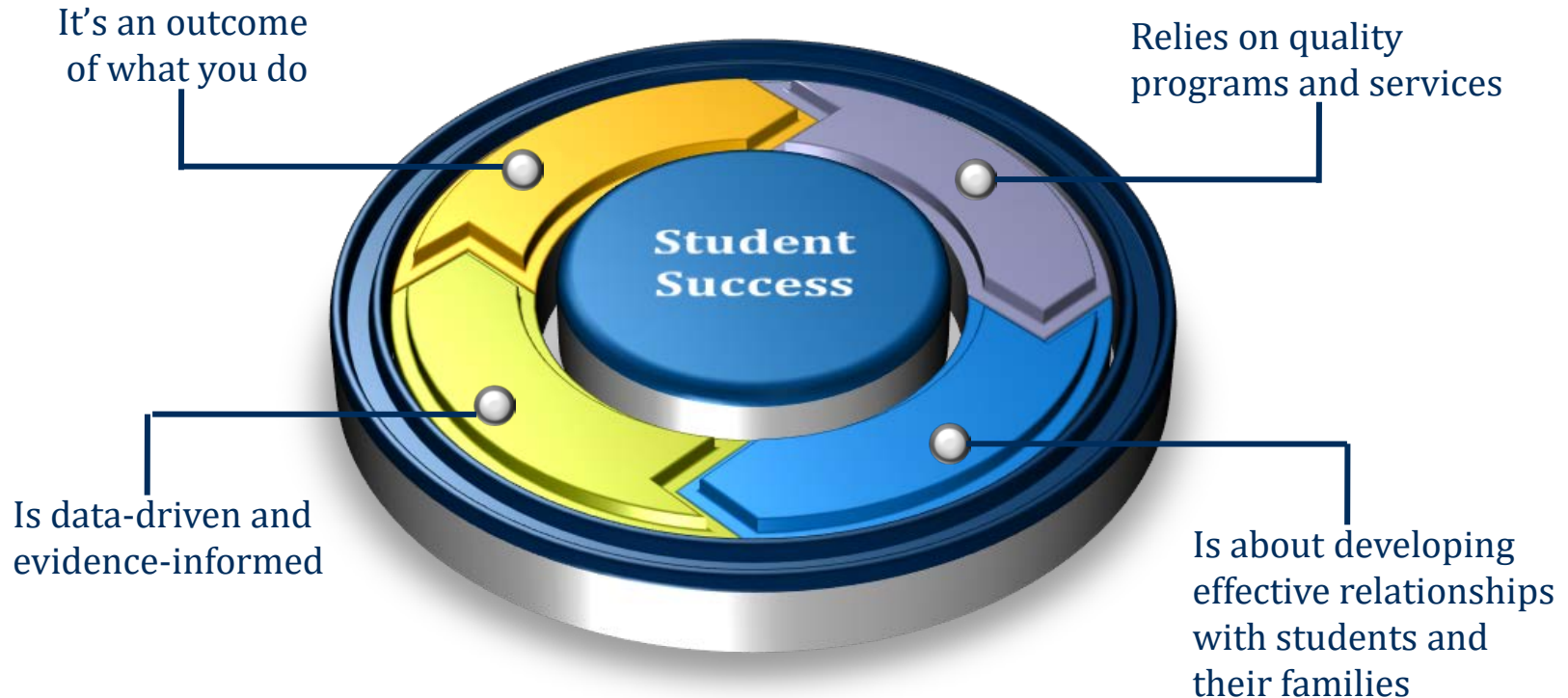**How will you know whether it has been accomplished?**

•The methods of assessment, evaluation, or control that will be used to monitor progress, or measure success or failure of the actions

Focus on Results

Activity-Oriented	Results-Oriented
Redefining problems/issues	Recommending specific actions to address problems/issues
Failing to set priorities	Establishing top priorities
Focusing on trivial and non-critical problems/issues	Selecting the problems/issues that are the most important and that make the biggest difference
Working to improve too many procedures simultaneously	Working to improve a small number of critical processes
Over-analyzing and disputing the data	Using the data to develop plans

RNL

Retention is one part of Student Success

So much more than a metric!

It's an outcome of what you do

Relies on quality programs and services

Student Success

Is data-driven and evidence-informed

Is about developing effective relationships with students and their families

RNL

Back to our guiding questions…
Planning for Student Success

- What does student success look like at your institution today?

  – How closely does this align with your vision for student success over the next three years?

- What barriers exist to improving student success on your campus? How do you know?

- How will you measure student success? Do you have the tools you need?

- Are current goals appropriate for the specific populations you wish to impact?

- How will you communicate progress to the campus community?

Thank you!

Sherri Erkel, Vice President
Student Success
Sherri.Erkel@RuffaloNL.com