The College Student Inventory Coordinator's Guide

The Retention Management System Plus

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Introduction

Welcome to the Retention Management System *Plus* TM (RMS Plus)

You're now a part of a group of dedicated RMS *Plus* professionals who are helping their campuses identify and respond to the motivational strengths and needs of their students. This community of educators uses the RMS *Plus* to inform both the individual and programmatic interventions for students making the initial transition to college and as they progress through their first and second years of enrollment.

This guide draws heavily upon the experiences of those RMS *Plus* professionals whose institutions have enjoyed success with this program. We're confident you will benefit from their insights as you assume your role as your institution's RMS *Plus* representative. Additional information is available to you at the client resource site of *my*Ruffalo Noel Levitz (www.ruffalonl.com/RMSclient).

As you work through the implementation of the Retention Management System *Plus* for your college or university, contact Ruffalo Noel Levitz retention solutions team at any point you have a question (RMSTech@ruffalonl.com)

What is the Retention Management System Plus?

The Retention Management System *Plus* (RMS *Plus*) refers to a combination of analytics, assessment tools and a data dashboard that are designed specifically to support increased completion rates through earlier, more focused student interventions. The RMS *Plus* provides a wealth of data to make interventions more meaningful, more focused, and more successful. Campuses may choose to use one or a combination of the System offerings.

The RMS *Plus* provides critical information to promote student success, at the time you need it. You'll understand the strengths and challenges of each student, as well as their levels of receptivity. With this information you will be able to target your outreach efforts and resources more strategically. More specifically, this proactive approach to comprehensive student retention planning is designed to enable institutions to:

- Assess students' needs and strengths
- Identify students who may be at risk of leaving college
- Recognize students' motivational patterns, such as receptivity to assistance
- Use information to implement successful referrals and intervention programs
- Help advisors and other educators to have effective and rewarding contacts with students

The six primary components of the Retention Management System *Plus* are intended to inform a broad range of student programs, services, and interventions.

1. College Student Inventory™—Prioritize your interventions more efficiently by assessing the strengths and challenges of each student.
2. Mid-Year Student Assessment™—Compare the strengths and challenges of your students at the mid-point of their first year, and adjust your interventions accordingly with this follow-up survey.
3. The Second-Year Student Assessment™—Extend and strengthen your interventions beyond the first year using this survey for second-year students.
4. Student Retention Predictor™—Gauge the precise likelihood of each student persisting and the factors that may be putting them at risk.

5. Retention Data Center™—Manage and analyze all of your student success data more strategically through this comprehensive online portal.
6. Consulting—Understand how to interpret your results and use the data to shape your retention strategies.

The College Student Inventory (CSI)™

Background

The College Student Inventory is the foundation of the RMS *Plus* and was designed especially for incoming first-year students. In 1971, the author of the CSI, Michael L. Stratil, Ph.D., initiated his research in the area of academic and social motivation with the goals of:

- Creating a coherent framework for understanding human motivation in general;
- Identifying the specific motivational variables that are most closely related to persistence and academic success in college; and
- Developing a reliable and valid instrument for measuring these variables (Stratil, 1988).

When surveyed, CSI clients report that their use of the program results in increases in retention, improved satisfaction with advising, increased use of campus services, and increased student engagement. Further data from the program provide compelling justification for resources that support student success.

Motivational Assessment

Students complete the survey either online or on paper. The questions are then comprised into scales. These scales are constructed from the inventory items to provide a detailed view of each student's motivation, coping ability, and receptivity to assistance, as well as additional demographic information about the students. The table below shows the scales available on each of the different CSI versions.

The Scales

Table 1. Scales for College Student Inventory Forms A, B, and C

CSI Form A	CSI Form B	CSI Form C
Academic Motivation		
Study Habits	Study Habits	Study Skills
Reading Interests*	Reading Interests*	Reading Habits
Academic Confidence	Verbal and Writing Confidence	Verbal Skills
	Math and Science Confidence	Math Skills
Commitment to College*	Commitment to College*	Commitment
Interactions with Previous Teachers*	Interactions with Previous Teachers*	Attitude Toward Educators
		Use of Technology
General Coping Ability		
Family Support*	Family Support*	Personal Support
Financial Security*	Financial Security*	Financial Security
Capacity for Tolerance*	Capacity for Tolerance*	
Career Plans*	Career Plans*	Life and Career Planning
Ease of Transition	Social Engagement	
Receptivity to Support Services		
Academic Assistance	Academic Assistance	Academic Assistance
Personal Counseling	Personal Counseling	
Social Engagement*	Social Engagement*	
Career Guidance	Career Guidance	Career Planning
	Financial Guidance	Financial Guidance
Social Motivation		
Self-Reliance		
Social Engagement*		
Leadership		

*Indicates scale names that were updated summer

Table 2. Demographics for Form A, B, C

Demographic Differences Between CSI Forms	Form A	Form B	Form C
Academics			
High School Graduating Class Size	X		
High School Class Preparation	X		
Average Senior Year/Previous Academic Grades	X	X	X
High School Academic Standards	X		
General Academic Knowledge – compared seniors	X	X	
General Academic Knowledge compared to population	X	X	
ACT Score	X		
SAT Score	X		
Academic Ability	X		
My Academic standards	X		
Background Information			
Current Academic Standing (Fresh, Soph, Junior, Senior)	X		X
Primary Language	X		
Racial/Ethnic Origin	X	X	X
Mother's Highest Level of Education	X	X	X
Father's Highest Level of Education	X	X	X
Age Category			X
Home Life			
Living Arrangement	X		
Expected Study Time	X		
Marital Status	X		X
Distance between College and Home	X		
Extra-Curricular Activities	X		
Employment Status/Time Spent Working		X	X
Household Dependents			X
Plans			
Degree I plan to Pursue		X	X
Timing of Decision to Apply		X	X
Enrollment Status (Part-Time/Full-Time)			X
Full-Time/Part Time Enrollment Status			X
Preferred method of studies (online, on campus, etc)			X
Previous Credits earned from			X

The College Student Inventory (CSI)™ Reports

For a sample, Form B report, click on the report title.

If you would like sample reports for your specific survey type, Login to your Retention Data Center account, Go to Client Communities, Retention Data Center, and review the section titled, "Interpreting your Results". Within the designated form type of samples of all the reports.

The CSI Coordinator Report (Report Sample)

The CSI Coordinator Report is a one-page synopsis of each student's strengths, needs, and background.

The Summary Observations provide a preliminary overview of a student's levels of risk and receptivity, which helps you to prioritize your interventions. Though this sensitive information should never be shared with students, it may be shared with advisors, success coaches and counselors at the coordinator's discretion.

Motivational Assessment allows advisors to identify the student's areas of greatest strength and need at a glance. The motivational scales are reported in two ways: as a percentile rank and with a bar graph.

Student Background Information provides a context for discussing motivational patterns within the scales.

Specific Recommendations for each student provide action steps based on need and receptivity scores. The strength of each recommendation is indicated by its priority score.

The CSI Advisor/Counselor Report (Report Sample)

This report parallels the Coordinator Report with one exception: the Advisor/Counselor Report does not include the Summary Observations.

The CSI Student Report (Report Sample)

This report parallels the Advisor/Counselor Report, but includes supplemental narrative that explains the student's score on each scale and is written in second person. Clients can add information about specific resources they offer to include in the student's report. Used during the individual student conference, this report validates the student's need for services.

The CSI Summary and Planning Report (Report Sample)

The Summary and Planning report provides aggregate data on the students who have completed the CSI in three key areas: mean scores on the scales by gender and in comparison with national norms, distribution statistics on all of the demographic items and the means scores on all of the areas in which students are asking for assistance.

The Summary & Planning Report has two versions: one with lists of students with needs and interests in specific areas and one without the excerpt lists (many clients produce their own export lists, with student email addresses, using the export function in the Retention Data Center).

Clients use the Summary & Planning Report to help faculty and staff understand the non-cognitive trends of their entering students, to target students based on demographic characteristics and to prioritize program/services planning based on the students' expressed needs, aligning campus resources with the priority needs of incoming students.

The Integrated Summary Observations with Receptivity Report

This report provides an integrated view of your students' scores across the summary scales and the individual receptivity scales. Desire to transfer is indicated for students at four-year institutions only. In addition, the Excel table with your students' scores may be downloaded for additional filtering.

Students with percentile scores of 80 and above on one or more of the summary scales **and** scores of 65 and above on one or more of the receptivity scales are highlighted in the table. For these students, scores of 80 and higher on the desire to transfer are highlighted (four-year institutions only).

The Mid-Year Student Assessment (MYSA)™

Background

As a result of client requests, the Mid-Year Student Assessment was developed as a post-test to the College Student Inventory, Forms B and C (online only). Students complete questions similar to the CSI, but updated to reflect the time they have spent in college. The results show the scores from the CSI and the scores from the MYSA indicating personal growth and development on each of the scales for the student. In addition, students report their commitment to earning a degree from their current information or indications they plan to leave the institution or transfer to another institution prior to graduation.

The Mid-Year Student Assessment (MYSA)™Reports

The MYSA Advisor Report (Report Sample)

The MYSA Advisor Report shows the student's CSI results compared with their MYSA results (pre/post test) as well as updated information about the students changes with regards to plans to study, plans to work, anticipated GPA at the end of the term, degree aspirations and intent to graduate or transfer.

The MYSA Student Report (Report Sample)

The MYSA Student Report parallels the Advisor report and shows the student's CSI results compared with their MYSA results (pre/post test) as well as updated information about the students changes with regards to plans to study, plans to work, anticipated GPA at the end of the term, degree aspirations and intent to graduate or transfer.

The MYSA Summary and Planning Report (Report Sample)

The Summary and Planning Report presents the full MYSA results in the aggregate. The mean percentile scores for each of the scales are shown compared to the mean percentile scores from the CSI results. The areas of request for assistance are shown with the number of students reporting in what areas they have received help already and in what areas they are now seeking assistance. Students study needs and intent to transfer are also updated on the MYSA.

Clients use the Summary data for reporting on the growth and development of their students from the beginning of the semester, planning second term initiatives based on the needs expressed by the students for additional assistance, and reporting on where students have received help to date. Identifying students who are planning on transferring or not sure about their continued enrollment allow clients to directly address the concerns of these students and create possibilities of more students continuing their enrollment.

The Second-Year Student Assessment (SYSA)™

Background

Because improving the success rates of second-year students is a critical part of improving completion rates, RNL developed the Second-Year Student Assessment. It is used in three ways: 1) as the third survey taken by the same cohort of students as they move through their first and second years of college; 2) as a stand-alone survey for clients who want a needs assessment of their second year students as they design a second year program and 3) for entering transfer students.

The scales measured on the SYSA include: academic confidence, commitment to college, engaged learning, leadership, transition, family support and financial security. The areas of assistance students can indicate include: academic assistance, advising, career planning, financial support and personal support.

The Second-Year Student Assessment (SYSA)™Reports

The SYSA Advisor Report (Report Sample)

The SYSA Advisor report shows the student's results as a percentile score, the areas in which the student reports having already received help and the areas in which they now want help as well as the student's sense of satisfaction in thirteen key areas. Advisors gain an understanding of their second-year students including if the student intends to stay with his/her current major or change as well as the student's intent to graduate from this institution.

The SYSA Student Report (Report Sample)

The SYSA student report allows the student to reflect on their motivation in key areas of student success and engagement as well as identify the areas in which they need assistance and their satisfaction with essential components of student life.

The SYSA Summary and Planning Report (Report Sample)

The SYSA Summary & Planning report presents the aggregate data on the students who completed the SYSA by showing the mean scores for each of the scales (and the items comprising each of those scales), the distribution of responses between 1-4 and 5-7 as well as national comparisons. The information on needs for assistance are indicated by areas in which they have already received assistance and areas in which they want assistance now.

The Export function of the Retention Data Center allows clients to sort the data on any criteria, or combination of criteria, from the SYSA and prepare outreach lists to be shared with campus partners for outreach.

Resources Available to You

As a client using our Retention Management System (RMS), you have access to both the Retention Data Center and our Client Communities website. The Retention Data Center is where all things related to the implementation of the survey are located (survey setup, report/data retrieval). The Client Communities is a website with resources available to best assist you with using the product.

Our resources are organized to meet your needs based on where you are at in the planning or implementation process.

- Planning for Your Administration
- Implementing Your Survey
- Interpreting Your Results
- Reviewing Results with Students
- Sharing RMS Results on Your Campus
- Share Your Success Story
- Additional Resources and Research
- Retention Data Center Documentation

Logistics of your survey administration/pulling reports

How do students complete the survey?

For the CSI, students can complete the surveys online (Forms A, B or C) or on paper (Forms A and B only). . For clients who want to use paper versions (, students read the questions in a booklet and answer the questions on a scantron sheet.

How are reports generated?

For online surveys, results are available immediately after a student has completed the inventory. Aggregate results (Summary and Planning Reports) are also available as the students complete the survey and available through the "summary" section of the retention data center.

For paper surveys, after the completed answer sheets are received by Ruffalo Noel Levitz for processing, they are scanned and scored. An email is then sent to the coordinator notifying them that they are ready and may be accessed at their Retention Data Center.

The individual reports are sorted alphabetically by students' last names, but can easily be sorted by the other fields visible via the grouping fields on the student grid in the retention data center.

The Integrated Summary Observations and Receptivity Report and the filtering options are available online at no extra charge to assist you in prioritizing or focusing your outreach to students.

How do we access Reports?

You will be able to view, print, or save individual reports or sets of reports as students complete the survey. Summary results and exportable data will also be available. You also have the ability to retrieve filtered sets of students for report retrieval, summary reports or outreach.

For more information on this, within the How To… button of the Retention Data Center, see the documents titled: Report Retrieval with Summary Results, Filtering Student Records or Exporting

Data. Once the answer sheets are scanned and scored by Ruffalo Noel Levitz, an online link to your reports, along with your user name and password to the Retention Data Center, will be e-mailed to the person identified on the Scoring Request Form.

- Within a few business days after your answer sheets arrive to Ruffalo Noel Levitz, an e-mail message from RMS.Tech@RuffaloNL.com will notify you that your results are ready.
- Be sure to enter this address in your e-mail contacts so that our address is not perceived as spam.
- The reports are generated in a .PDF format which you can access, save, and print.
- Instructions for accessing the reports can be seen in Report Retrieval within the Quickstart documents of the Retention Data Center.
- You may print as many copies of reports from the online link as you choose.
- Contact the retention solutions team at Ruffalo Noel Levitz to access and discuss your reports.

How do we share the CSI Reports with our advisors?

The term "CSI advisor" is used throughout this guide and denotes any faculty member, professional advisor, counselor, or mentor who may be responsible for discussing the results of the CSI with students. You are responsible for providing them with access to the appropriate CSI Reports.

- Decide which type of report(s) the advisor should be able to access and for which students.
- Grant the advisor permission rights for viewing these reports online or print them for the advisor.
- If you allow the advisor access to the Coordinator's Report, the Summary and Planning Report, or the Integrated Summary Observation with Receptivity Report (with the more sensitive Summary Observation scores), then provide additional instructions concerning these reports.
- *Special Note*: Ensure that the Restricted Reports, i.e. those from students who have responded "No" to item 194 on CSI - Form A, item 100 on CSI - Form B, or item 74 on CSI - Form C, are not distributed.

How do we share the Reports with our students?

We recommend that advisors share the CSI Student Report in a one-on-one meeting with students. Additionally, instructors in freshman seminar courses often ask students to write a reflective paper and establish personal goals and action steps based on their CSI results.

If you choose, the option exists within survey administration of the Retention Data Center for students to have immediate viewing of their student report upon completion of the online CSI.

Regardless of the forum for sharing the report, it is important to be sensitive when discussing results with students.

CSI/MYSA/SYSA Interventions

How do advisors interface with students?

The main purpose of meeting with each student to discuss the Student Report is to establish a connection between the student and the services he or she needs. Therefore, each student should receive a full, personal explanation of his or her results.

The following strategies are provided to guide your decisions on how to facilitate the advisor's interface with students:

- The Advisor/Counselor Reports are provided to the appropriate advisors to facilitate one-on-one meetings with students about their Student Report. The most effective means of using the CSI is to schedule individual interviews of approximately 30 minutes' duration with each student.
    - At some smaller institutions, advisors individually approach each student to schedule an initial interview and others use the sign-up method.
    - The important point is that individual conferences provide the most effective means of using the CSI and addressing students' needs.
    - To be of greatest value to students, these individual conferences should be completed early in the term.
- When individual interviews with students are not possible, some institutions distribute the reports through small groups (10-15 students) and then explain the meaning of the scores, allowing ample time for questions during and after the meeting. If this is the option you choose, it would be most effective to schedule one and a half to two hours for this meeting and emphasize *referral resources*. An invitation for one-on-one meetings could be offered as well.
- Coordinators at some institutions have organized one hour group sessions to familiarize students with the CSI before conducting student-advisor conferences. This approach is quite beneficial, as it allows an advisor to focus on the student's *results* during individual sessions rather than on the meaning of the scales.
- Another highly effective variation used on many campuses is to deliver the student reports through a student success course if one is available.
    - The instructors should meet with students individually or at least provide opportunities for such contact.
    - The individuals conducting such groups or courses should receive the same training in the use of the CSI as they would under the advisor plan.
- Whatever strategies are adopted for interfacing with students, *results must be interpreted in context* of all information available.

Who is responsible for managing student referrals?

Referrals allow you to extend the value of the CSI/MYSA/SYSA by directing students to those services that provide them with the skills, opportunities, and support they need to become independent learners. Many campuses are able to increase the number of referrals by matching students with the services they indicated as relevant or desirable on the CSI.

Student referrals to appropriate educational resources are managed through partnerships between campus service professionals, advisors, and you, the Coordinator. Your role will include:

- Providing campus-specific supplemental text to insert under the primary categories of the student reports' narrative. These categories include: Academic Support, General Coping, Social Motivation (for Form A), Miscellaneous, and Receptivity to Support Services.
    - It's especially important to list these service offices under the category of Receptivity to Support Services, to display in the CSI student report narrative text.
    - Sample text is noted below. Campuses list service offices, contact names, inspirational service messages, and encouraging words about the importance of visiting student success centers, for instance.

Category	Narrative	Campus-specific Language
ACADEMIC MOTIVATION	Information on resources and services in this area is available to you in the Academic Resource Center located in XXX, room xxx. Contact xxx at xxx-xxx-xxxx or XXX@xxx.edu	
GENERAL COPING	Information on resource and services in this area is available to you in the Office of Student Affairs located in XXX, room xxx. Contact XXX at xxx-xxx-xxxx or XXX@xxx.edu.	
MISCELLANEOUS	We are here to help you. Visit us any time at the Student Center.	
RECEPTIVITY TO SUPPORT SERVICES	Information on resource and services in this area is available to you in the Academic Resource Center (xxx-xxx-xxxx), Counseling Center (xxx-xxx-xxxx), Office of Student Affairs (xxx-xxx-xxxx), and the Career Center (xxx-xxx-xxxx)	

- Taking the lead in updating your resource and referral guides and customized report text annually and sharing it with advisors.
- Meeting with the referral offices to develop a strategy for using the outreach lists from the Summary and Planning Report, Summary Observations with Receptivity Report, and reports you establish through the use of the powerful filtering options in the Retention Data Center.

How can the Summary and Planning Report help us get organized for referrals?

The CSI/MYSA/SYSA Summary and Planning Report can help facilitate the management of referrals. An in-depth discussion of this valuable aggregate report is available in Understanding and Using the CSI Summary and Planning Report. This aggregate report contains two sections of information that comprise a powerful method of addressing students' needs.

1. A motivational profile of your incoming class

The motivational profile presents a simple, straightforward analysis of your students' group tendencies on the CSI/MYSA/SYSA. You receive the means for your group on all major scales and demographic or background items. For example, the report compares your students' motivational patterns with the national norm and also provides such background information as the level of parental education.

The information in this section is useful in identifying any special strengths or challenges of your students as a group. You can identify the strengths and challenges of your incoming class. For instance, your class may have a high desire to finish college, but low study habits. This would help as you plan how to prioritize your services and position your student success initiatives. Or if your aggregate report indicated some lower coping scores, you might wish to incorporate a college adjustment component into your orientation program.

Also included in this section is a list of the possible specific recommendations for students (Forms A and B of the CSI have 25 and Form C has 14 recommendation statements). These recommendations are weighted by how often they appear in individual student reports. This list is helpful in identifying the most needed services and programs for students inventoried with the CSI.

2. Outreach lists of students with specific needs

The second section of the Summary and Planning Report consists of detailed lists of students with particular needs.

One potential use of the lists is for selecting students to receive a personal invitation from special services. The purpose of the invitation is merely to inform certain students of an activity that appears to have special value for them. Such an invitation will often attract students to an activity that they may not otherwise feel sufficiently motivated to attend. These invitations are not meant to imply that other students should be excluded.

Additionally, the names and data of students who responded "No" to the last item of the CSI are not included in these outreach lists; however, their data is included in the preceding statistical summary.

When clients were asked to indicate how they used the Summary and Planning Report(s) and accompanying outreach lists, the following strategies were mentioned most frequently:

- 28 percent use the *list of potentially at-risk and receptive students* to prioritize our outreach activities.
- 23 percent share *lists of students interested in campus services* with appropriate offices for special outreach.
- 18 percent share *aggregate motivational assessment and demographic data* with our retention committee on a regular basis.
- 16 percent structure *campus programming* to address the top recommendations for action (such as "get help with study habits" or "discuss the qualifications for occupation") with each incoming cohort.
- Nine percent look at subgroups of our aggregate data by *specific classes and majors* to focus our interventions.

The Summary and Planning Report outreach lists include **explanations** that provide helpful perspectives indicating motivational patterns in the CSI/MYSA/SYSA data. You can use these **patterns** to inform how you apply the filters in the Retention Data Center, thus supporting your interventions.

How can we use the Integrated Summary Observations with Receptivity Report to inform referrals and interventions?

The summary scales provide a balanced overview of potential risks for first-year students. The overall risk index considers the student's background and historical patterns of achievement. Desire to transfer indicates the students' initial intentions to remain at your institution to complete a degree or program of study.

Together, these scales form a unique picture of the students' perceived needs and their receptivity to your help. Unlike the *Summary and Planning Report*, this report allows you to identify patterns of need and receptivity for your most at-risk students in table format.

Color highlights are applied to student scores of 80 or above on the summary scales and 65 and above on the individual receptivity scales to reveal the patterns. Scores of 80 and higher on desire to transfer for these students are also highlighted.

If you choose to print this table, only the scores within the parameter defined above will appear on the printed copy, even though you are able to see the lower scores in the online view of the table.

You may apply your own filter to the data by defining the value (scale) and range of the scores in the drop down menu. The Excel table may be downloaded for additional analyses, as well. For the thought behind this report, please see the white paper, *The Integrated Nature of the Retention Management System*, at www.ruffalonl.com/RMSclient for more detail.

How do we partner with colleagues?

There are a number of options to consider in working with your colleagues, including professional advisors, student success coaches, counselors, residence hall directors, and others in student services. Nevertheless, you should take steps to ensure that everyone is adequately informed about the CSI/MYSA/SYSA. Providing the Advisor's Guide and Resource Guide will present them with information for interpreting and effectively using the Advisor/Counselor Reports. An array of resources are available for your reference at the client communities site.

You may wish to encourage all involved colleagues to leave some open blocks of time to confer with students who have been identified as needing help with specific areas. You can also encourage them to plan special group activities for students with certain types of needs.

You may want to schedule focus groups with students who have lower scores that you want to understand in order to facilitate appropriate referrals.

Your colleagues in all support areas will need to be prepared to receive referrals based on the CSI results, especially those based on high receptivity scores.

Some examples of special workshops that have been developed for groups of students with similar needs indicated by the CSI reports include:

- Managing Test Anxiety
- Enhancing Exam Skills
- Reading for Comprehension
- Developing Effective Study Habits
- Fostering Self-Esteem
- Charting Your Career path
- Strategies for Problem Solving
- Managing Your Money
- Managing Your Time
- Overcoming Addictions
- What You Need to Know About Financial Aid

- Relationship Building in College
- Cultivating Communication Skills
- Developing Your Leadership Potential
- Stress Management Techniques

Assessing CSI/MYSA/SYSA Outcomes

Why is it important to assess CSI/MYSA/SYSA outcomes?

The pressure is increasing for institutions to retain and graduate more of their students. There must be continual follow-up of referrals, accurate record keeping, and accountability to ensure that students' needs are addressed in the most constructive manner.

Properly implemented, the CSI/MYSA/SYSA can help to facilitate those efforts. Unfortunately, the implementation often stops short of assessing the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of the CSI/MYSA/SYSA interventions. To ensure maximum benefits to both students and the institution, it is important to establish desired outcomes of the interventions early on and to develop a process for assessing these outcomes.

Sometimes the scores on the Summary and Planning Report can suggest the need for additional resources in key service areas. For example, if a campus has low scores on math confidence and high scores on receptivity to academic assistance, this information can be used to support budget requests for additional resources to accommodate more student interventions.

Several creative coordinators have pointed out that they were able to subsidize first-year advising, purchase equipment, and add counseling, advising, or academic support staff by demonstrating to their administrators that the increased retention rate had saved the institution thousands of dollars in one year alone, money which could be spent, at least in part, on necessary services and staff to address students' needs. The Retention Revenue Estimator at the Ruffalo Noel Levitz website can help you determine potential savings at your institution.

What are the desired outcomes of the CSI/MYSAS/SYSA?

Identify the outcomes you intend to achieve before the CSI is implemented. It is beneficial to seek input from those who will be involved in implementing the program and collecting data.

When asked, clients identified their primary goals in using the CSI as follows:

- 67 percent want to *foster student success through early alert and interventions*.
- 55 percent want to *increase retention and graduation rates*.
- 22 percent want to *inform their student-centered advising practices*.
- 18 percent want to *increase student satisfaction with advising and campus services*.
- 14 percent want to *inform their assessment initiatives*.

Other outcomes mentioned in the survey included: to have *a starting point for conversation* and follow-up, to assist in *a more meaningful conversation,* to help students make *a personal connection with a faculty or staff member,* and to begin *dialogue with students about their motivation in college and the goals they plan on setting*.

How do we measure our desired outcomes of the CSI/MYSA/SYSA?

After you and your colleagues identify the desired outcomes you hope to achieve with the CSI, you must then decide how you will measure those outcomes. You need to identify how the outcomes data will be collected.

When CSI adopters were asked to indicate *the measures* they used to assess their effectiveness in reaching the goals they had established, their responses were as follows:

- Retention rates
- Graduation rates
- Student satisfaction with advising and other academic services
- Grade point averages
- Qualitative feedback from students
- Qualitative feedback from advisors or mentors
- Number of students on probation
- Number of referrals to campus services, such as academic support, career counseling, personal counseling, etc.
- Qualitative feedback from referral offices
- Improvements in institutional revenue from higher retention and graduation rates.

The Advisors

Who are the advisors?

The term "advisor" is used throughout the Retention Management System *Plus* guides and denotes any faculty member, professional advisor, counselor, mentor, or success coach who may be responsible for discussing the results of any of the surveys with students.

Some of the most desirable qualifications of the advisors are:

- Strong concern for students' well-being
- Genuine interest in student development
- Generosity in their approach and guidance
- Willingness to work with the relevant reports
- Credibility as a student advocate
- Ability to establish rapport with students

Generally speaking, advisors are characterized as those who are willing and interested in using the survey and analytical to work effectively with students. It is counterproductive to work with advisors who do not wish to use the tool.

Do advisors need special instruction?

You are the point person for selecting and guiding the advisors through the content presented in the relevant Advisor and Resource Guides. Once your advisors are selected, you need to arrange for special instruction on how to effectively use the instruments and results. This is most often accomplished by planning a workshop or a set of workshops to facilitate the instruction. (

The purpose of the workshop is to prepare advisors to interpret and utilize the Advisor/Counselor Reports and the Student Reports. By the end of the workshop, the goal is to have the advisors feel reasonably comfortable with: the instrument, patterns of motivation as indicated in the reports that are generated, and their use of this program in student development initiatives.

You will want to consider the following questions as you prepare for your advisor workshop:

- What is the best time to schedule the workshop?
- How much time is recommended for the workshop?
- Who conducts the workshop?
- What preparations do advisors need to make before the workshop?
- What information should be covered?
- Are follow-up sessions worthwhile?
- What's included in a typical workshop agenda?

What is the best time to schedule the workshop?

We recommend that the workshop be scheduled before classes begin in the fall or after classes have ended in the spring to eliminate the challenges of scheduling a half-day session with advisors after classes begin. If you are unable to schedule the workshop in one session, we find that two separate sessions can work equally well.

How much time is recommended for the workshop?

If possible, the workshop should be scheduled for four hours on one day or for two hours on two days. The absolute minimum amount of time required to adequately cover the CSI content and allow time for hands-on experience with the reports is two hours. Three hours is recommended for the CSI Coordinator who has limited experience conducting workshops.

Who conducts the workshop?

As the Coordinator, you may conduct the workshop(s) yourself or you may choose to contract with a Ruffalo Noel Levitz associate consultant to come to your campus. If you contract with Ruffalo Noel Levitz, this day-long workshop includes an investment of $2,700 plus expenses. In addition, a 90 minute webinar option (for $600) is also available. To learn more about this option, contact a RMS *Plus* program manager at 800-876-1117.

What preparations do advisors need to make before the workshop?

Advisors are encouraged to read the Advisor's Guide and Resource Guide prior to the workshop. You can access the CSI Advisor's Guide from the *my*Ruffalo Noel Levitz RMS *Plus* client resource site and distribute the PDF to each participant. It is helpful for the advisors to review the items on the College Student Inventory as well. Toward this end, the CSI can be viewed at www.ruffalonl.com/RMSSamples

What information should be covered?

The Advisor's Guide is the primary source of information for the workshop, with an emphasis on the meaning of the scales in the CSI, effective ways of discussing reports, role-plays of advisor-student conferences, and referral management.

Are follow-up sessions worthwhile?

Follow-up sessions after mid-term are helpful for both coordinator and advisor. It is an opportunity for the coordinator to encourage advisors to track the progress of their advisees, especially with regard to referrals. As part of this discussion, you may want to consider the Mid-Year Student Assessment as an accompaniment to your interventions.

Through on-going discussions, advisors are able to share their experiences with the program and provide feedback that can help to inform the workshop agenda for the next term/year, thereby helping you to attain the most benefit from this initiative.

What's included in a typical workshop agenda?

The typical agenda includes examining the components of the CSI, interpreting sample CSI reports, role playing the advisor-student conference, and updating the resource and referral guide.

Planning for your own workshop

As you prepare your advisors for their training, we suggest that you take a bit of time to gather the pieces that they will need as well as considering what you want to share with them. The Advising Resource Document might be helpful.

What information do my advisors need?

1. Survey Scale Descriptions
2. Overview documents/powerpoint piece
3. Survey Samples
4. Information on additional resources that are available to them
    a. Report Retrieval instructions for pulling reports from the Retention Data Center
    b. Overview Documents
    c. Conversation Starters
    d. Worksheets and Assignments
    e. Referral Form
    f. Student Contract for Next Steps
    g. Emailing Students (from the Retention Data Center)