



## Interpreting Your Results

### 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. Providing the CSI Advisor's Guide and Resource Guide will present them with information for interpreting and effectively using the CSI 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

## How important is it to Gain Faculty Support for the CSI?

In a survey of Coordinators, the advice most frequently given to those beginning a retention effort was to gain faculty support. Faculty are often in an ideal position to recognize the students' academic needs.

## How can we Encourage Collaborations between Academic and Student Affairs?

There are many strong models that involve the talents of colleagues from either academic or student affairs. Regardless of which division leads the initiative, the focus must be on proactively reaching out to students through programmatic and individualized interventions.

If you began your CSI initiative in the student affairs division, you may now be planning to expand it to academic affairs. According to Dr. Gary Biller, the following steps may be helpful:

Compile data about your institution's retention rate and how it compares to similar institutions in your area.

Translate attrition numbers into financial loss.

Gather data and information from your retention task force to present to the faculty.

If no retention task force exists, create a student success task force for the CSI that includes at least two key faculty members.

Schedule meetings with key faculty (i.e., advisors, departmental heads, instructors of first-year courses, advising coordinators, committee leaders, mentors, etc.).

In your meetings with key faculty (either one-on-one or in small groups), solicit their thoughts about, and advice on, retention before explaining the CSI to them. Ask if they think the CSI sounds useful to them.

Ask one or two key faculty to present your plans for the CSI to the faculty as a whole; alternatively, have them schedule you to deliver a presentation, either to groups of faculty (by department or college) or to the faculty as a whole.

When formally presenting the CSI to faculty, keep it short and to the point and present the retention data so that the need for action is clear.

Emphasize the important role faculty have in student satisfaction and retention:

Point out the power they have to affect the budget by increasing retention.

Demonstrate to them the benefits of increased student satisfaction and persistence.

Clarify your role as CSI Coordinator:

Explain how the CSI results will be used.

Promise feedback on the progress of the CSI each term.

Solicit input throughout the year.

## How Can we Gain and Maintain Administrative Support?

Communication is key to gaining and maintaining administrative support. This support can strengthen your early intervention initiatives by linking the CSI program to the campus-wide mission of student success,

A retention task force on your campus is a critical component in gaining support from administrators and colleagues. Once this task force has endorsed the CSI and budgetary approval has been gained, dissemination of all CSI-related information should come through the task force.

It is advisable to send updates and reports from the task force to appropriate colleagues and administrators at regular intervals. The campus should be apprised routinely of what's happening in the area of retention. Some strategies you might consider include the following:

- Articles in the campus newspaper and faculty/staff newsletter
- Regular reports sent to all administrators and public relations office
- Collaborative campuswide planning sessions to identify current strengths and concerns, to share successful early intervention practices, and to define desired outcomes and directions for retention in general
- Sharing best practices gleaned from other campuses through listserv and networking in a variety of forums.

## What are Some Common Communication Challenges to Avoid?

Communication and coordination of efforts is vital if administration of the CSI is to proceed smoothly and if referrals are to be made effectively. *All appropriate institution personnel should be notified of the date(s) for administering the CSI, the purpose of the administration, and how the results will be used.*

## How can the Summary Observations with Receptivity Report Enhance our Interventions?

The Summary Observations with Receptivity Report provides a visual representation of your student across the summary scales and the individual receptivity scales. This allows you to identify patterns that may inform specific interventions. For example, if you observe high receptivity to institutional help and high receptivity to financial guidance when scores on the remaining summary scales are relatively low, this suggests a review of other independent scales, like family emotional support and sense of financial security to further refine the intervention for groups or for an individual.

Because your data can be filtered on any of the summary scales, receptivity scales, and desire to transfer, this report can be extremely helpful in defining need, receptivity, and opportunities to intervene. You can locate this feature in the Retention Data Center.

## Assessing CSI Outcomes

### Why is it Important to Assess CSI 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 can help to facilitate those efforts. Unfortunately, the implementation often stops short of assessing the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of the CSI interventions. To ensure maximum benefits to both students and the institution, it is important to establish desired outcomes of the CSI 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?

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?

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

Recent results indicated the following: [INSERT RECENT SURVEY RESULTS ON FILE]