

# Improve Your Graduation Rates by Focusing on Your Second-Year Students

Julie Bryant • Mari Normyle



## Improve Your Graduation Rates by Focusing on Your Second-Year Students


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## Our Agenda for Today

1. Framework for Student Success
2. The Voices of Second-Year Students—A Look at the Data
3. Implications for Campus Action
4. Questions and Discussion


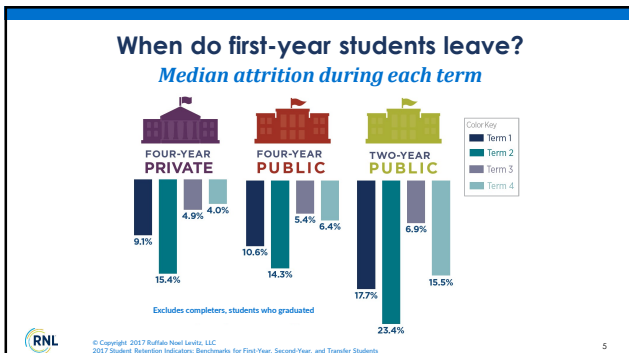



## 1 Framework for Student Success

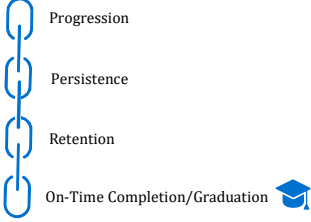
### Theoretical framework for retention management





- Who? Which strategies? → Success strategies during enrollment process (transition to the campus community, assists with yield)
- Who? Which strategies? → Success strategies during year one (affiliation, engagement, integration, transition, assists with first-year retention outcomes)
- Who? Which strategies? → **Success strategies during year two (academic affiliation, career, experiential learning, assists with second-year outcomes)**
- Who? Which strategies? → Success strategies in years three and four (academic satisfaction, career, and graduate school transition, assists with on-time completion)
- Completion

### Key performance indicators



- Progression
- Persistence
- Retention
- On-Time Completion/Graduation 




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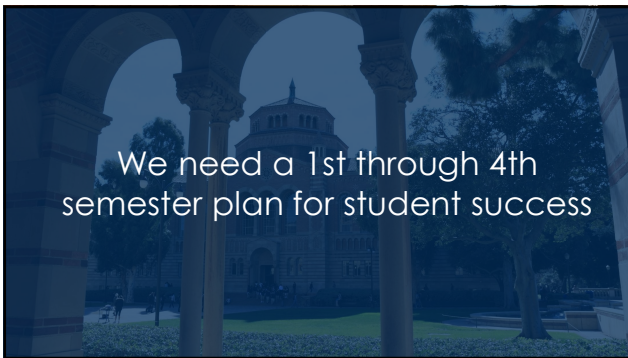

**Institutions with second-year programs  
 2019 (2017)**

Survey Items	Institutions Using Method	Very or Somewhat Effective
<i>Four-year Private Institutions</i> Programs designed specifically for second-year students	28% (40.5%)	47% (69%)
<i>Four-year Public Institutions</i> Programs designed specifically for second-year students	33% (23%)	48% (50%)
<i>Two-year Public Institutions</i> Programs designed specifically for second-year students	22% (14%)	50% (60%)

Retention Practices Survey, 2019, Ruffalo Noel Levitz



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The voices of second-year students: A look at the data



**Student satisfaction is linked with:**

Individual student retention (higher)	Institutional graduation rates (higher)	Institutional alumni giving (higher)	Institutional loan default rates (lower)
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Learn more here: [www.RuffaloNL.com/benchmark](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/benchmark)



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**Retention:**  
Linking Student Satisfaction and Retention (2009) and Predicting Student Retention at Community Colleges (2015)

**Graduation rates:**  
The Relationship of Student Satisfaction to Key Indicators for Colleges and Universities (2014)

[www.RuffaloNL.com/benchmark](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/benchmark)

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**Alumni Giving:**  
The Correlation Between College Student Satisfaction and Alumni Giving (2015)

**Loan Default:**  
Student satisfaction linked to lower loan default rates (A blog published on September 12, 2016 on <http://blogem.RuffaloNL.com>)

[www.RuffaloNL.com/benchmark](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/benchmark)

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With the data, we know what matters most to students and we know which areas have room for improvement

**data analysis**

The class level specific data gives an even clearer view of what needs to be done to improve the student experience

**Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI)**  
*Available since 1994 • Used by more than 2900 institutions with nearly 6.8 million individuals*

- Comprehensive assessment across class levels
- Captures experiences both inside and outside of the classroom
- Completed during the academic year with either an online or paper administration
- Administered by more than 600 institutions annually; most institutions survey on an every-other-year cycle
- Items rated for importance and satisfaction, clustered into scales, versions specific to institution types; opportunity to customize 10 items

Survey options for adult and online learners as well  
Learn more here: [www.RuffaloNL.com/SSI](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/SSI)

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## Comprehensive survey instrument: Inside and outside of the classroom

- Academic advising
- Campus Climate
- Campus Life
- Campus Support Services
- Concern for the Individual
- Instructional Effectiveness
- Recruitment / Financial Aid
- Registration Effectiveness
- Safety and Security
- Service Excellence
- Student Centeredness



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## Definition of Satisfaction:

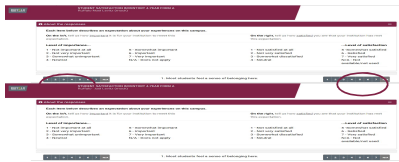
“When expectations are met or exceeded by the student's perception of the campus reality

*Schreiner & Juillerat, 1994*



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## The RNL surveys capture both an importance score and a satisfaction score

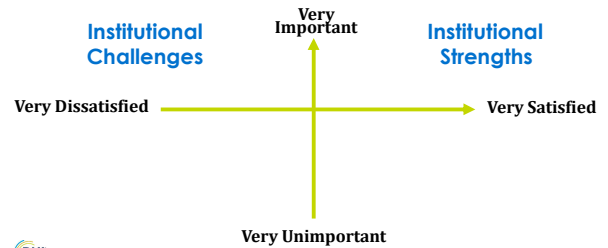


The combination allows you to review your satisfaction results within the context of what is most important to your students.



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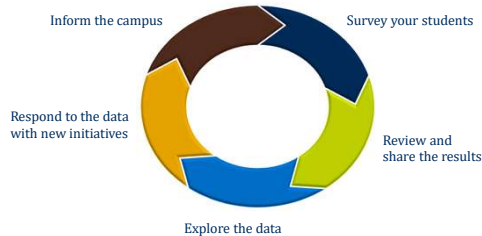
## Matrix for prioritizing action



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## Systematic Assessment Cycle



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## National norm groups for the RNL Student Satisfaction Inventory: Fall 2015-Spring 2018

*Student Satisfaction Inventory™ (SSI) is for traditional students, primarily enrolled on campus*

- Four-year privates: 213,573 students at 318 institutions
- Four-year publics: 64,377 students from 60 institutions
- Community colleges: 142,906 students at 185 institutions

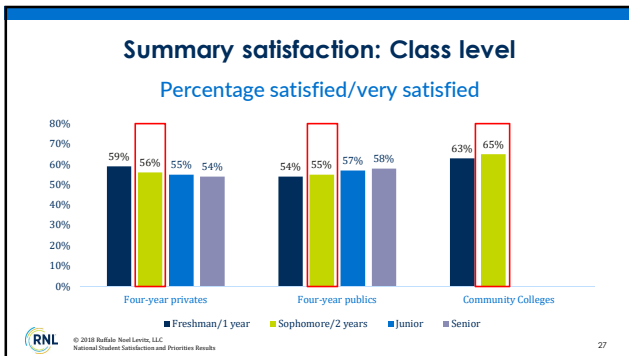
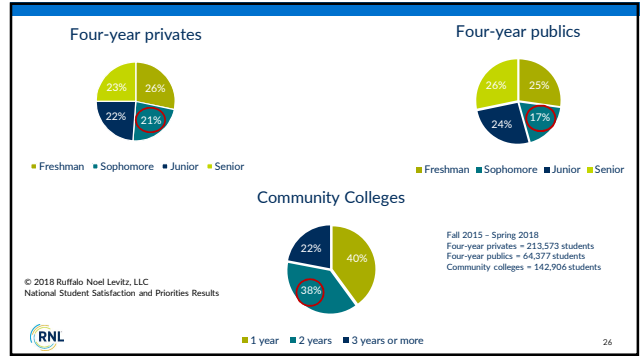


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**Observations:**

Different patterns between private and public institutions:

- Four-year privates: Satisfaction highest for freshmen
- Four-year publics: Satisfaction lowest for freshmen

Community college satisfaction increases slightly the second year and again these students have the highest satisfaction levels overall.

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 National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Results

**Implications:**

Important to review data by class level and target initiatives accordingly.

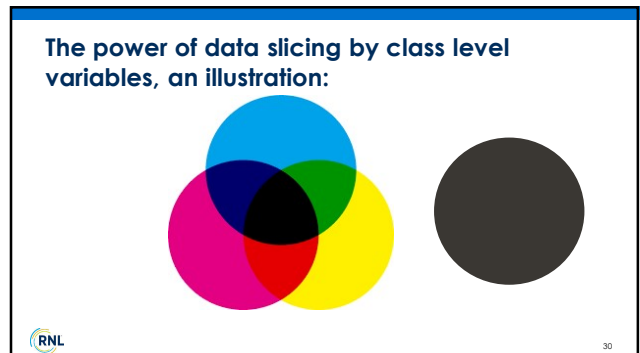
At four-year privates are first-year students better taken care of with institutional programming and policies? Are there opportunities to expand services for upper class students?

What is happening differently at four-year publics and community colleges?

How may attrition impact satisfaction levels by class level?

What are the implications of lower satisfaction levels when students graduate?

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 National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Results



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## Four-year private Sophomore Strengths:

- The content of courses within my major is valuable.
- The instruction in my major field is excellent.
- Nearly all faculty are knowledgeable in the field.
- My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.
- The campus is safe and secure for all students.
- I am able to experience intellectual growth here.
- Major requirements are clear and reasonable.
- My academic advisor is approachable.
- The campus staff are caring and helpful.
- There is a commitment to academic excellence.
- Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.
- Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.
- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.
- This institution has a good reputation within the community.

## Four-year private Sophomore Challenges:

- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
- Security staff respond quickly in emergencies.
- Adequate financial aid is available for most students.
- Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of students.
- Faculty provide timely feedback: student progress in a course.
- Financial aid awards are announced in time to be helpful.
- Financial aid counselors are helpful.
- Living conditions in the residence halls are comfortable.
- Faculty take into considerations as they teach a course.

## Four-year public Sophomore Strengths:

- My academic advisor is knowledgeable about requirements in my major.
- Nearly all faculty are knowledgeable in the field.
- Major requirements are clear and reasonable.
- My academic advisor is approachable.
- I am able to experience intellectual growth here.
- There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.
- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.
- Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.
- There is a commitment to academic excellence.
- Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.
- Tutoring services are readily available.
- Freedom of expression is protected on campus.
- This institution has a good reputation within the community.
- Computer labs are adequate and accessible.

## Four-year public Sophomore Challenges:

- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
- The quality of instruction I receive in most classes is excellent.
- Tuition paid is a worthwhile investment.
- Adequate financial aid is available for most students.
- Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of students.
- Faculty provide timely feedback: student progress in a course.
- This institution shows concern for students as individuals.
- Financial aid awards are announced in time to be helpful.
- Financial aid counselors are helpful.

## Community College Second-Year Strengths:

- I am able to experience intellectual growth here.
- Nearly all faculty are knowledgeable in the field.
- The campus is safe and secure for all students.
- Program requirements are clear and reasonable.
- There is a good variety of courses provided on this campus.
- Faculty are usually available after class and during office hours.
- On the whole, the campus is well-maintained.
- There are convenient ways of paying my school bill.
- Students are made to feel welcome on this campus.
- Computer labs are adequate and accessible.
- Class change (drop/add) policies are reasonable.
- Library resources and services are adequate.
- The campus staff are caring and helpful.

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## Community College Second-Year Challenges:

- The quality of instruction I receive in most classes is excellent.
- I am able to register for classes I need with few conflicts.
- Classes are scheduled at times that are convenient for me.
- My academic advisor is knowledgeable about my program requirements.
- Faculty provide timely feedback: student progress in a course.
- This school does whatever it can to help me reach my educational goals.
- My academic advisor is knowledgeable about transfer requirements.
- Adequate financial aid is available for most students.
- Faculty are understanding of students' unique life circumstances.
- My academic advisor is concerned about my success as an individual.
- The amount of student parking is adequate.
- Students are notified early in the term if they are doing poorly.
- Financial aid awards are announced in time to be helpful.
- Financial aid counselors are helpful.



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National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Results

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## Opportunities for improving the second year student experience

## Opportunities for improving the second-year student experience:

1. Access to classes they need
2. Faculty interaction (fair/unbiased, taking into consideration student differences timely feedback)
3. Financial aid (adequate amount, timely, helpful counselors)



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## Ideas on ways to improve student satisfaction with: ACCESS TO CLASSES

1. Explore what students consider as conflicts
  - Are there conflicts with pre-requisites?
  - Conflicts with the courses all being offered at the same time?
  - Are there not enough sections of high-demand courses?
  - Is there not a clear path to navigate getting all the courses needed for the major in a timely manner?
2. Are the issues based in the general education requirements or in the majors?
3. Review the data by majors/programs to see where these issues may be more or less of a concern for students.



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## Ideas on ways to improve student satisfaction with: FACULTY INTERACTION

Ensure that faculty development programs include high impact classroom practices, experiential learning, classroom assessment and opportunities to learn with faculty outside of the classroom.

1. Embed cultural competencies as part of the faculty development programs.
2. Provide guidelines for expected timely communication with students, and clearly state these expectations for students to see in the syllabus.
3. Review the data by majors/programs to see where these issues may be more or less of a concern for students.



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## Ideas on ways to improve student satisfaction with: FINANCIAL AID

1. Ensure that financial aid staff are trained at the highest levels to minimize any potential run-around.
2. Be intentional with continuing student awards. You should be awarding as the student completes the FAFSA. Don't hold continuing student awards until new students are package.
3. Encourage parents and families to be active participants in the education needed to better understand and apply for financial aid.




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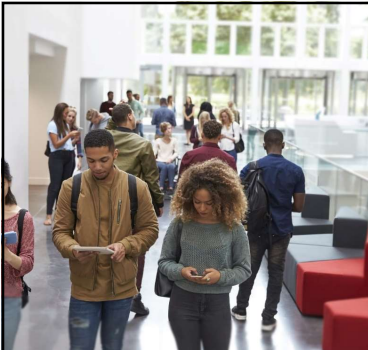
What can you do on your campus to influence sophomore satisfaction?



1  
Assess student satisfaction regularly



2  
Slice the data to view class level results



3  
Determine where subpopulations of students are more or less satisfied:

- Overall
- With specific items regarding their student experience



4  
Conduct focus groups to gather qualitative data to better understand the priority issues and to brainstorm possible actions to take



5  
Work with student affairs, academic affairs and enrollment management to change policies, procedures or perceptions



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## Insights gleaned from the 2017-18 Second-Year Student Assessment™

7,531 • 55 colleges and universities

Second-Year Student Assessment

Welcome Preview Student

Take Survey

Remember, answer every item!

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## What information is captured through the Second-Year Student Assessment?

7 My study plans from year one

- Selected a major to study in that I did not see
- Have not decided on a major to study in
- Have not decided on a major to study in

8 My current decisions on the selection of a major or program in

- Considered options with the major or program I have selected
- Have not decided on a major or program, but I'm thinking about changing it
- Have not decided on a major or program, but I'm thinking about changing it
- Have not decided on a major or program, but I'm thinking about changing it

9 The highest degree or program that I plan to pursue is:

- Four-year bachelor's
- Five-year bachelor's or associate degree
- Master's degree
- PhD or other advanced degree
- Other

10 My current college or program completion plan is:

- Plan to complete this degree or program at this college or university
- Plan to complete this degree or program at another college or university
- Plan to complete this degree or program at another college or university
- Plan to complete this degree or program at another college or university

**Student information, including:**

- Major selection
- Intent to re-enroll
- Study plans

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## Students' attitudes and motivations

14 Not interested in the ideas being taught in most of my classes

15 Have always felt that I'm not doing my best in my classes

16 Most people have a lot of fun in my subject and classes

17 Much of my learning in my classes has been available to me as a person

18 Have many friends and feel close to them

19 I am able to get along with my classmates

20 I don't have any financial problems that will interfere with my studies

21 Enter a 7" for this item

**Motivational Assessment**

Your level of agreement with each of the scales below: (Scale score of 100% = complete agreement)

Academic Motivation	Your Score
Academic Confidence	82.1%
Commitment to College	50.0%
Engaged Learning	78.6%
Social Motivation	
Leadership	78.6%
General Coping	
Transition	45.7%
Family Support	42.9%
Sense of Financial Security	28.6%
Miscellaneous	
Internal Validity	Excellent

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## Students' receptivity to assistance

Business Assistance	Academic Assistance
11A I have a business plan for my business	11B I have a business plan for my business
12A I have a business plan for my business	12B I have a business plan for my business
13A I have a business plan for my business	13B I have a business plan for my business
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49A I have a business plan for my business	49B I have a business plan for my business
50A I have a business plan for my business	50B I have a business plan for my business

**Custom text here**

Health and Wellness	Personal Support	Financial Support
11C I have a health and wellness plan	11D I have a personal support plan	11E I have a financial support plan
12C I have a health and wellness plan	12D I have a personal support plan	12E I have a financial support plan
13C I have a health and wellness plan	13D I have a personal support plan	13E I have a financial support plan
14C I have a health and wellness plan	14D I have a personal support plan	14E I have a financial support plan
15C I have a health and wellness plan	15D I have a personal support plan	15E I have a financial support plan
16C I have a health and wellness plan	16D I have a personal support plan	16E I have a financial support plan
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47C I have a health and wellness plan	47D I have a personal support plan	47E I have a financial support plan
48C I have a health and wellness plan	48D I have a personal support plan	48E I have a financial support plan
49C I have a health and wellness plan	49D I have a personal support plan	49E I have a financial support plan
50C I have a health and wellness plan	50D I have a personal support plan	50E I have a financial support plan

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## Students' institutional impressions

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11B I have a business plan for my business

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50A I have a business plan for my business

50B I have a business plan for my business

**Institutional Impressions**

Level of satisfaction with each of the areas below: (Each item is rated by its satisfaction score (1 = low, 7 = high))

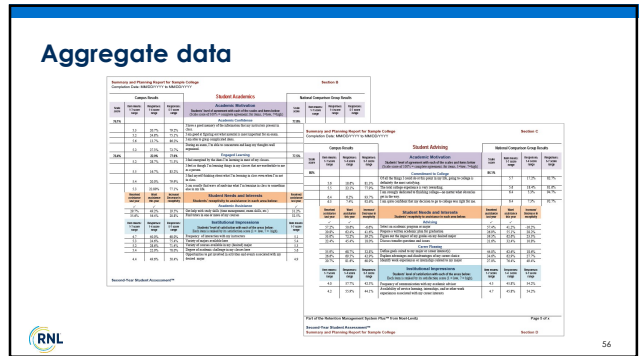
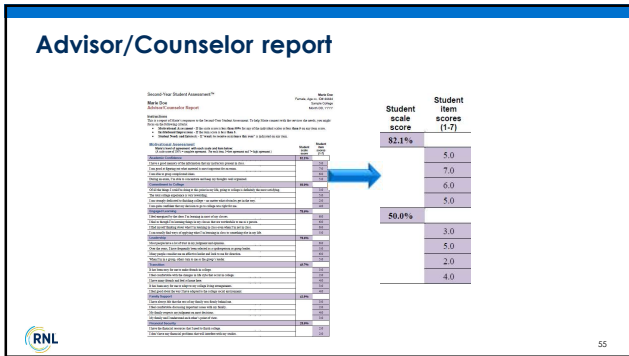
Variety of majors available here	7
Variety of courses available in my (desired) major	7
Degree of academic challenge in my classes here	7
My overall experience as a student at this institution	6
Frequency of interactions with my instructors	5
Frequency of communication with academic advisors	4
Opportunity: events and activities related to my major	4
Availability of review learning, internships, etc.	4
Adequacy of financial assistance available to me	4
Leadership opportunities in student government/other	4
Level of interaction with other students	4
Sense of belonging to the college community	4
Social life (both on and off campus)	3

RNL



# Improve Your Graduation Rates by Focusing on Your Second-Year Students

Julie Bryant • Mari Normyle



### What are our second-year students telling us they need now?

(results from 2017-2018 SYSA responses, n=7,531)

Priority	% Requesting Assistance
Identify work experiences or internships related to my major.	75%
Define goals suited to my major or career interest(s).	62%
Explore advantages and disadvantages of my career choice.	61%
Prepare a written academic plan for graduation.	54%
Figure out the impact of my grades on my desired major.	53%
Discuss options for financing my education.	49%
Find tutors in one or more of my classes.	48%
Find better ways to manage my personal finances.	43%
Get help with study skills (time management, taking notes, etc.).	42%
Find ways to balance the demands of school with work.	41%

### Additional Information:

- 68% (71 percent) Report they will have to study harder this year than last.
- 82% (83 percent) Plan to continue with the major they have selected.
- 73% (73 percent) State they have many friends and feel at home at their institution.
- 61% (59 percent) Report they have the financial resources needed to finish college.
- 86% (88 percent) Intend to complete their degrees at this institution.

### Four areas of challenge for second-year students

- Academics
- Careers
- Advising
- Finances



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## Implications for Campus Action

### Academics

*Connect students to faculty and engage them in the learning process*

- Monitor quality of instruction and content of major classes
- Imbed tutoring in key second-year classes
- Provide mid-term grades in the second year, too
- Welcome second-years to their majors
- Offer faculty-led service learning, global travel, undergraduate research opportunities



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### Advising and career development

*Focus second-year advising on connecting students to present and future identities*

- Continue to practice “intrusive” advising in the second year
- Help students adjust and monitor their educational plans
- Tie advising to career development
- Information on internships
- Exploration of career options within majors
- Sophomore “Summit”: Connect sophomores with alumni



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### Financial resources

- Deliver financial aid awards to students prior to the end of the semester their first year
- Use summer months to follow up with rising sophomores about their financial aid awards
- Provide financial counseling to sophomores
- Target sophomores for on-campus employment
- Investigate ways in which additional scholarship support can be created for sophomores



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### Social engagement

- Create sophomore “Jump” programs
- For residential campuses, partner with residence life staff in creating community for sophomores
- Emphasize leadership and service experiences
- Offer sophomore retreats, alternative spring breaks, global experiences



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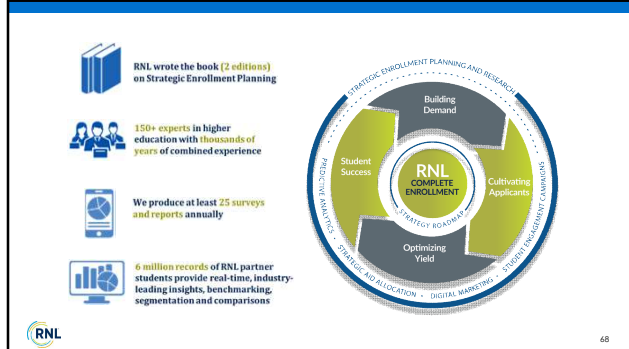
We can make a difference if we employ data-informed planning to create targeted student-success initiatives in the second year

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## Questions and Discussion



- RNL wrote the book (2 editions) on Strategic Enrollment Planning
- 150+ experts in higher education with thousands of years of combined experience
- We produce at least 25 surveys and reports annually
- 6 million records of RNL partner students provide real-time, industry-leading insights, benchmarking, segmentation and comparisons

### Innovation with RNL Student Success

We have led student success initiatives for over a quarter century

450+ campuses administer our assessments annually

We've surveyed 6.2 million students, parents, and personnel at >2,200 campuses (and counting) about their priorities and satisfaction

	During the enrollment process	During year 1	During year 2	During years 3 & 4
<b>AREAS OF FOCUS</b>	Assisting with yield Transition to the campus community	Affiliation Engagement Integration Transition	Academic affiliation Career planning Experiential learning	Academic satisfaction Career planning Graduate school transition
<b>STRATEGIC TOOLS</b>	Incoming student assessment (CSI)	Year 1 early warning assessment (MYSA)	SSI Year 2 early warning assessment (DYSA)	Student Retention Predictor Strategy planning and consulting: 28 days on campus

### www.RuffaloNL.com/SatisfactionSurveyTutorials

SATISFACTION SURVEYS RECORDED TUTORIAL PRESENTATIONS

The series of recorded presentations offers short lessons on topics that are relevant to the implementation of the Satisfaction Survey Strategy. Many of the sessions are live recordings of webinars.

You can follow the whole series or select the sessions that are most relevant to your institution based on the information you need, operating in which year of the process. You can watch at your own pace or you can share the information with a colleague that is working on a satisfaction surveying project.

Each presentation checks on its own but also fits into the larger series of presentations.

**Introduction**

- The other steps in satisfaction assessment - 3 minutes
- Introduction to the Satisfaction Survey Strategy - 10 minutes
- Three main satisfaction data feeds support - 10 minutes
- Major questions collection and how you answer - 10 minutes
- Introduction to the report - 10 minutes

**Survey Introductions**

### Download the current national reports



2018 National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report



2019 National Freshman Motivation to Complete College Report

[www.RuffaloNL.com/Benchmark](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/Benchmark)

### Read our blog and watch our case-study webinar

EDUCATION INSIGHTS BLOG

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**Student success**

**The Case for Extending Your Student Success Program Through the Second Year (Part 1)**

Increasing student success through extending support throughout the first four semesters of the student lifecycle is key for improving graduation rates. Research has shown that only 40 percent of four-year students graduate, 22 percent of four-year public institutions and 14 percent of non-profit institutions have programs designed specifically to extend your success.

<https://www.ruffalonl.com/second-year-student-success-assessment/>

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**The Case for Extending Your Student Success Program through the Second Year**

3 strategies for extending your student success program through the second year of college. The first two strategies are designed to help you extend your success program through the second year of college. The third strategy is designed to help you extend your success program through the second year of college.

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**Blog Site:** [www.RuffaloNL.com/Blog](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/Blog)



Search on the words: Satisfaction and/or Motivation

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## Thank you for joining us today!



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