



## A Shift in Focus

### Four Simple Steps to Improve Retention and Student Success

Higher education is evolving rapidly. One of the lasting effects of the great recession is shift in focus at the federal and state level from access to success: not only getting students into college, but also getting them through college and into jobs. And the conversation has shifted to focus intensely on specific measures aligned to outcomes: retention rates, graduation rates, and job placement rates.

### The Days of Sink or Swim are Over

Remember the old adage “look to your left, look to your right...one of you will not be here next year?” In today’s environment, this mindset is no longer acceptable. With an increasing focus on student outcomes and the rise in performance based funding, colleges and universities are shifting their focus to improving retention, graduation, time to degree, and job placement rates.

In addition to the shift in focus from access to success, colleges and universities must also adapt to meet the increased expectations of modern students. Prospective students make decisions differently. They research and select their institution based on social comments and peer reviews, not brochures and college fairs. They expect a personalized, consumer-like experience, and when they don’t get it, they transfer or drop out. It’s a vicious cycle – because every lost student is a negative review, making it more difficult to recruit new students.

It’s clear that institutions have a long way to go to improve outcomes. According to ACT, over 30% of first year students don’t make it to the second year, and over 50% of students don’t complete their degree in three or five years, respectively. Something has to change, and fast.

### Four Simple Steps to Help Every Student Succeed

To meet the daunting task of improving retention, completion, and job placement rates, it truly takes a village. Every faculty and staff member plays a critical role in helping students reach their academic goals. And they must work together – across departments and campus – to truly make a difference.

#### Step 1: Identify

Modern technology gives colleges and universities the ability to personalize every student

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#### **A RISE IN OUTCOMES-BASED FUNDING**

- 30 states in the US have a performance-based funding model in place today
- Four more states are transitioning to this model

**NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATORS**  
JANUARY 2015

#### **INCREASING ATTAINMENT IN THE EU**

- The European Union has set a target that the share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary educational attainment or equivalent should be at least 40% by 2020
- Increasing attainment levels in higher education is identified as one of the key issues for Member States and higher education institutions

**MODERNISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN EUROPE**  
ACCESS, RETENTION AND EMPLOYABILITY 2014

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success plan and pathway. And the first place to start is identification. Traditionally, institutions managed student success by cohorts or student types: first generation students, economically-disadvantaged students, minority students, etc. Today, institutions need to look beyond these traditional cohorts and student types, and recognize each student and his circumstances individually.

### Step 2: Engage

Once institutions have identified the students to target, the next step is to engage these students with highly-personalized content and interactions. Modern students expect their institution to know who they are and what they need at every step of their journey. And using technology, colleges and universities can deliver content in context. It's this type of targeted content that shows student that their institution knows who they are and what they need to succeed.

### Step 3: Empower

Students today want to take action and manage their outcomes. They want to act on their own in the same way they want to sculpt their own programs and be entrepreneurial. Now that students have personalized content tailored to their unique needs, the next step is to empower them to take action. By putting in place processes for students to follow, they can easily take advantage of the resources available to keep them on track to achieving their goals.

### Step 4: Intervene

Despite delivering highly-targeted, relevant content when students need it most, some students will still veer off track. Identifying these students early and reaching out to them immediately is critical to getting them back on the path to success. Having a well-defined intervention strategy, supported by enterprise collaboration and knowledge management, is a key step to getting these students back on track and improving retention and completion rates.

## Start Small and Grow

Improving outcomes takes time. And shifting the mindset and processes across the institution doesn't happen overnight. That's why it's important to identify the right technology to support the institution as it works to improve retention, completion, and job placement rates. Oracle's solutions provide flexibility that enables institutions to start with the area of greatest need, and grow across campus in a way that aligns with your campus priorities. And, it provides the adaptability needed to support student success programs today, and in the future.



### BENEFITS OF PARTNERING WITH ORACLE

- A complete, enterprise solution that enables institutions to start with the area of greatest need and grow across campus in a way that aligns with institutional priorities and initiatives
- A flexible, adaptable solution that supports the needs of student success programs today and in the future
- A modern, best practices approach to improving outcomes by identifying, engaging, empowering, and intervening

*"Americans with four-year college degrees made 98 percent more an hour on average in 2013 than people without a degree. That's up from 89 percent five years earlier, 85 percent a decade earlier, and 64 percent in the early 1980s."*

### IS COLLEGE WORTH IT? CLEARLY, NEW DATA SAY

DAVID LEONHARDT  
NEW YORK TIMES, MAY 2014

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