If you don’t know where you are going, you might end up somewhere else….

Lewis Carroll
Public universities abandoning their mission

Driven by commercial ranking systems that reward them more for who they exclude than for who they educate... public institutions are becoming increasingly impossible to distinguish from elite private colleges.

*Opportunity Adrift*, 2010

The Education Trust
Colleges are in the dream and future business...

Students come to college to create the futures they dream of for themselves.
The Humboldt Spirit

A unique institution where students, faculty, and staff are engaged in learning that makes a difference...that moves society in positive directions.

Welcome to Humboldt
Rollin C. Richmond, President
The American formula for success consists of five pillars:

The first pillar is providing public education for more Americans.

*That Used to Be Us*
Tom Friedman & Michael Mandelbaum, 2011
The United States, long ranked first worldwide, now ranks 10th in the percentage of young adults who hold a college degree.

Source: http://www.higheredinfo.org

If current trends hold, the current generation of college-age Americans will be less educated than their parents for the first time in US history.

Source: http://www.oecd.org
A Matter of National Security

Education is an economic issue when we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow.

President Barack Obama
U of Texas, August 2010
Increasing student persistence is a continuing concern in higher education...
Today, one in three Americans drops out of college

In the 1960s one in five discontinued his or her studies.

US Census Bureau
77% of high income students
54% of low income students graduate in six years.

The Education Trust
A widening gap

No matter how bright, low-income students are increasingly unlikely to make it through college.

“What we’re talking about is a threat to the American Dream.”

Sean Reardon, Stanford University
# National Graduation Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Rate</th>
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<tr>
<td>MA Public Selective (SAT 1030-1220; top 25% of HS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA Public Traditional (SAT 950-1070; top 50%)</td>
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* Graduation in 5 years. ACT Data File 2013
# National Graduation Rates

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**Humboldt State**

** Graduation in 6 years. 2012-13 Humboldt State Fact Book**
Retention Matters

College student retention has been the most intensely studied issue in academia over the past several decades.

Ward, Siegel, & Davenport, 2012
1970s to today
Access

1980s and 1990s
Retention

Into the Future
Persistence and Success
Defining Student Success

- Academic achievement
- Engagement in educationally purposeful activities
- Student satisfaction
- Acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies
- Persistence
- Attainment of educational objectives
- Post-college performance.

George Kuh & Associates, 2007
Indiana University
Defining Student Success

- Academic achievement—Equitable Outcomes
- Engagement in educationally purposeful activities
- Student satisfaction
- Acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies
- Persistence
- Attainment of educational objectives
- Post-college performance.

George Kuh & Associates, 2007
Indiana University
Equitable Outcomes

We can and must do more with regard to inclusive student success at HSU.

Robert A. Snyder, Provost & VPAA
*Cultivating Diversity at HSU—The Promise of Change*, Fall 2013
Three types of attrition

- Expected and justified
- Stopping out
- Unnecessary and preventable by institutional interventions
Three types of attrition

- Expected and justified
- Stopping out
- Unnecessary and preventable by institutional interventions
Three terms used interchangeably

- RETENTION
- ATTRITION
- PERSISTENCE
The process of holding or keeping in one’s possession.
ATTRITION

The process or state of being gradually worn down.

*Migrant Mother*, Dorothea Lange
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division
[reproduction number LC-USF34-9058-C]
PERSISTENCE

To continue to exist or prevail, especially where others have not
Usual Theories of Student Departure

Psychological: It’s something about them.
Usual Theories of Student Departure

Psychological: It’s something about them.

Environmental/Societal: It’s about social, economic, and other forces, (e.g., race, SES, opportunity structures).
Usual Theories of Student Departure

Psychological: It’s something about them.

Environmental: It’s about social, economic, and other forces, (e.g., race, SES, opportunity structures).

Organizational: What about us?! What about me?
Colleges are more likely to blame student attrition on students.

*What Works in Student Retention, 2004, 2010*
✓ We build beautiful campuses,
✓ We hire excellent faculty and staff,
✓ We develop a challenging curriculum…

then the “wrong” students show up!
Talking about leaving…

40% leave engineering
50% leave biological sciences
60% leave mathematics

*Why undergraduates leave the sciences*
Elaine Seymour & Nancy Hewitt, 1997
Talking about leaving…

Students with 650+ Math SATs
40% leave engineering
50% leave biological sciences
60% leave mathematics

Why undergraduates leave the sciences
Elaine Seymour & Nancy Hewitt, 1997
What happens to students after they enroll frequently has a more powerful impact on whether they stay and achieve their goals or leave.

Tinto 1987, 1993
While students must accept responsibility for their own success or failure, institutional actors, particularly faculty members, also bear individual and collective responsibility for student outcomes.

*Achieving Equitable Outcome for All Students*

AAC&U, 2005
Redefining Excellence

The New American University measures its academic quality by the education its graduates received rather than by the academic credentials of the incoming freshman class....

A New American University
Dr. Michael Crow, President, Arizona State University
Redefining Excellence

We focus on outcomes-determined excellence

We want to be known more for the students we include than for those we exclude....

Dr. Michael Crow
Why do students leave college?

Incongruence

“What I experienced is not what I expected....”
Often there is a Grand Canyon of difference between reality and what higher education institutions promise in their view books and on their websites…. 

Nemko, 2008
What do HSU students expect?

Faculty and staff are known for welcoming students into the campus community, and with all the support, you won’t be left on your own when it comes to figuring out college life.

*Live, Learn, Explore*

HSU Admission brochure
What do HSU students expect?

Professors who know you by name

- You’ll know your professors
- You’ll know your classmates
- You'll be involved.

“Welcome to Humboldt”

2013-2014 HSU Catalog (pg 7)
Why do students leave college?

**Isolation**

Inability to connect with significant members of the campus community....
Isolation

A large number of minority students who fail in college “felt themselves to be very little, or not at all, part of campus life....”

Race, Ethnicity & the Scientific Enterprise
Campbell, Morrison, & Denes. 1990
It takes a campus community to support student achievement and success....
TRIAD FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

High Quality Teaching
(87% Excellent/Good)

Comprehensive Support Programs
(80-89% Very Important)

Developmental Academic Advising
(72% Excellent/Good)
## FINANCIAL COSTS OF ATTRITION at HSU

### Assumptions

- **FTE First-year students**: 1400
- **Annual Tuition and Fees**: $7555
- **CA State Contribution per FTE**: $7145
- **First to second year attrition rate**: 25%
- **Second to third year attrition rate**: 20%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attrition Rate</th>
<th>Lost Students</th>
<th>Years Remaining</th>
<th>Lost Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First to Second Year</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second to Third Year</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Lost Revenue**: $21.6 million
A conservative estimate of loss--
Does not include lost revenue from:

✓ Fees, books, other expenditures
✓ Recruitment and re-recruitment costs
  ($2,143 per new student median cost)
✓ Negative effects of students’ leaving on future enrollments of family, friends, and others
College retention rates impact not only colleges, but our country and its future competitiveness in the global economy....

Martindale, 2011
THREE PERCENT (3%) INCREASE IN RETENTION

Assumptions

- **FTE First-year students**: 1400
- **Annual Tuition and Fees**: $7555
- **CA State Contribution per FTE**: $7145
- **First to second year attrition rate**: 22%
- **Second to third year attrition rate**: 17%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lost Students</th>
<th>Years Remaining</th>
<th>Lost Revenue</th>
<th>Additional Revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First to Second Year</td>
<td>308 (+42)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>$13.6 million</td>
<td>$1.85 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second to Third Year</td>
<td>186 (+24)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>$5.4 million</td>
<td>$705,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional Revenue**: $2.55 million
Pathways to Persistence:
Becoming a Student at HSU
Assessments

You take your assessments in English and Math and you discover...
You begin to think about selecting your first term courses and...
When you go to register for classes, you find…
Midway through the first term, your thinking about your chosen program or major is...
ACADEMIC PROGRESS

During the middle of your first term...
Following a class, you approach the professor to ask a question about an assignment. The professor...
QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION

At the end of the first term, before you get your grades, you feel that the quality of instruction...
DIFFICULTY OF COURSES

At the end of the first term, your feelings about the difficulty of your courses is...
The following statement describes the state of your personal finances...
ROOMMATE RELATIONSHIPS

This statement describes your relationship with your roommate....
As you think about co-curricular activities at Humboldt, you feel...
REGISTRATION
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Your experiences with HSU registration policies and procedures is...
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

You need to find a job to meet financial obligations and...
SUPPORT STAFF ATTITUDES

When you need help from support staff...
SUPPORT STAFF RESPONSIVENESS

The last time you went into an office to ask a simple question...
Contacts With Home

You called home last night and...
You were excited about joining a campus club and...
SOCIAL LIFE

Looking back on your social life during the first term...
Sum the Scores

\[ +5 + (-5) = 0 \]

\[ +5 + (-3) = +2 \]

\[ -5 + (+2) = -3 \]
## ORIGINAL COMMITMENT SCORES

Entering Student Profiles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student ID #</th>
<th>Original Commitment Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>001</td>
<td>+14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>002</td>
<td>+21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>003</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>004</td>
<td>-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>005</td>
<td>+35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>006</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
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<td>007</td>
<td>-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>008</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>009</td>
<td>+9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>010</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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Group Discussion

- On the basis of your entering profile and incident outcomes, would you be likely to return to Humboldt State?
  - If so, why? If not, why not?
- What incident had the strongest negative impact? Why was it so negative for you?
- What could a faculty or staff member have done to reduce this negative impact?
SIMULATION OBJECTIVES

Illustrates that the decision to withdraw is usually a complex process involving a series of events which occur over time, rather than a decision resulting from a single event at one point in time.
The more actively engaged students are—with college faculty and staff, with other students, and with the subject matter they study—the more likely they are to learn and persist.

Dr. Kay McClenneney
University of Texas
SIMULATION OBJECTIVES

Illustrates that student characteristics (profiles) combine with institutional experiences (incidents) to shape a student’s decision to persist or withdraw.
SIMULATION OBJECTIVES

Illustrates that similar experiences and events affect students differently and that we can respond to students and their needs if we come to know them from our interactions with them—in class, in advising meetings—by paying attention to small encounters.
We demonstrate concern for students through our actions.

Act “as if” small encounters matter because they often do.
Illustrates that ALL aspects of campus life can have an impact on persistence or attrition decisions and behaviors.
Members of the campus community must always remember that they are members of a proverbial village; they need to know what resources are available and how to connect students to those resources.

*Increasing Persistence*
Habley, Bloom, Robbins, 2012
SIMULATION OBJECTIVES

Illustrates that careful interventions by individuals and/or specifically designed programs can have a positive influence on students’ social and academic integration and, subsequently, on their persistence behaviors.
To encourage and promote an institutional dialogue about programs, services, attitudes and behaviors that can enhance student satisfaction, achievement, and persistence.
"Gentlemen and Ladies, we have run out of money. It's time to start thinking...."

Sir Ernest Rutherford, Nobel Laureate
Bulletin of the Institute of Physics (1962)13
Students don’t have interactions with institutions, they have encounters and interactions with individuals.
We need to be the change we want to see happen.

M. Gandhi
Pathways to Persistence
Humboldt State University
Institute for Student Success
January 16, 2014

Thomas Brown

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