The Buck Stops Here: The Library as Front Line for Student Retention

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What does the library do for students?

- Instruction / Tools / Academic Engagement
- Student Services / Institutional Engagement
- Welcoming Space / Social Engagement
- ‘The place you go when you don’t know where to go.’
What are the major factors that affect student retention?

In a recent review of professional literature on student retention, Demetriou and Schmitz-Sciborski (2011) identify five major variables:

1. **Student demographic / background characteristics** (age, social groups, parents’ educational attainment, etc.)

2. **Previous academic preparation**

3. **Financial status / availability of aid**
Major determinants of student retention, continued...

4. Academic engagement

- Satisfactory progress toward academic and career goals
- Positive and frequent faculty-staff interactions
- Taking advantage of resources that promote academic success
- Having those resources linked directly to classroom assignments / course credit
Major determinants of student retention, continued...

5. Social and institutional engagement

- Friendships with peers
- Involvement in campus organizations
- Mentor / trust relationships with college personnel
- Institutional literacy – “this is my school”
5. Social and institutional engagement, cont.

- “If students simply go to class and then go home without engaging in campus activities, they are less likely to be retained.”

- “The act of socially integrating into a campus community has been shown to be a cumulative process, so it is essential for students to connect to the campus culture early on in their academic experience.”

Demetriou and Schmitz-Sciborski (2011)
The Library and Academic Engagement

BCTC Libraries provide the tools students need to complete assignments successfully…

- Books, ebooks, and databases

...and integrate those tools into coursework to make them more likely to be used

- LibGuides
- Library Instruction and Workshops
The Library and Social / Institutional Engagement

Our student workers are trained not to say no, but to say “I’ll find out for you.” We try never to send someone to another office if we can solve their problem ourselves.

During the 2013-2014 school year, Cooper LRC Librarians and staff answered over 6 times as many non-reference as reference questions!

During the 2013-2014 school year, Newtown Learning Commons Librarian and staff answered over 10 times as many non-reference as reference questions!
Some questions we answered last semester:

- How do I make a change to my FAFSA?
- How can I withdraw from a course or take an incomplete?
- Do you have any Band-Aids?
- How do I make a chart from an Excel table?
- Do you have any children’s books to keep my child occupied while I register for classes?
- Is there anyone who can help me edit my paper?
- How do I make a smaller, color copy of this image to add to my poster session poster?
More questions:

- How does exam proctoring work?
- What’s the cheapest way to get my textbooks?
- Can you help me fold this paper and seal it in an envelope? (Disabled student, DSS closed for the afternoon.)
- Can you help me add money to my print account? (Business Office closed for renovation.)
- How do I apply for jobs at UK?
- What do you have to do to become a librarian?
- What are some ways to get to campus if I don’t want to buy a UK parking permit?
Even more questions

- Where is the bookstore?
- When and where can I get math, writing, etc. tutoring?
- Why isn’t there a (fill in the blank) at Newtown?
- I can’t afford to buy my textbook yet or my financial aid hasn’t come in. What do I do so I don’t get behind.
- My keys are locked in my car. Help!
The Library as Welcoming Space
Social and Study Space

- Quiet study space available in both locations.
- Two student study rooms (one with large-screen TV/computer) for collaboration.
- Popular collection for fun reading.
- Display boards to show campus news, study tips and other useful information in a fun way.
- Comfortable seating for casual interaction.
- Snack foods and drinks permitted.
Social and Study Space
Social and Study Space
Questions and Discussion:

- What questions do you have for us?
- What services or resources can we provide that we aren’t providing now?
- What do you see as the major issues facing us as we try to recruit and retain students?
- Others?
Bibliography


http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ887231


Thank you!

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