Major Issues Placing Students “At Risk” for Attrition

Joe Cuseo
jcuseo@earthlink.net

1. **ACADEMIC ISSUES**

1.1 Not feeling adequately prepared to meet the academic demands of college coursework.
   1.1a Inadequate basic academic skills—e.g., reading, writing, mathematics, processing oral information-processing (e.g., international students having difficulty understanding lectures)
   1.1b Inadequate academic strategies—e.g., not knowing how to take lecture notes, read college textbooks, or study effectively

1.2 *Disinterest in/boredom with the content of courses or their method of delivery.*
   1.2a Low level of interest in academic subject matter
   1.2b Low level of engagement with the lecture method of instruction

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2. **MOTIVATIONAL ISSUES**

2.1 Low level of commitment to college in general or to specific college attended.
   2.1a Lack of will to graduate from college or thrill about being in college (at risk for dropping out of higher education)
   2.1b Lack of will or thrill about graduating from their particular college (at risk for transferring out of the college)

2.2 *Perceived irrelevance of the college experience.*
   2.2a Doesn’t see the connection between college and “real life”
   2.2b Doesn’t see the connection between college and personal (future) goals

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3. **PSYCHOSOCIAL ISSUES**

3.1 Social factors:
   3.1a Doesn’t feel connected to the college community (lack of social integration)
   3.1b Feeling pulled away from college by competing social forces or commitments outside the college community

3.2 Emotional issues
   3.2a Experiencing personal adjustment issues making the transition to college
3.2b Experiencing mental health issues (e.g., depression or anxiety)

4. **FINANCIAL ISSUES**

4.1 Inability (or perceived inability) to afford the cost of college
   4.1a Worried about loan payback and mounting debt
   4.1b Concerned that time spent working (for money) is subtracting from time needed to do academic work and maintain good grades

4.2 Perception that the cost of college outweights its benefits.
   4.2a Doesn’t think the long-term benefits of college outweigh its short-term costs
   4.2b Having trouble postponing immediate material needs (or gratification)

5. **ORGANIZATIONAL (ADMINISTRATIVE) ISSUES**

5.1 Doesn’t believe that s/he is provided with accurate information by the college or that there are clear lines of communication about institutional purposes, policies, and procedures

5.2 Perceives the college as having many layers of institutional bureaucracy that retard rather than promote student progress

5.3 Feels that there is a lack of structures or processes that allow students to become actively involved or participate fairly (democratically) in college decision-making, particularly with respect to issues involving student life.

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