LITERATURE REVIEW SAMPLE

Retention at Colleges and Universities

Introduction:

Many students join institutions of higher education very enthusiastic of what the end of their training will bring. Many begin to imagine of the good jobs they are bound to get upon coming out of the institutions. Institutions of higher learning have the challenge to keep this fresh group of students go through the courses they have enrolled for successfully till completion.

Many learning institutions face a lot of challenges with new students. These students come on board to learn or undertake different courses with different expectation of the college, the learning experience, the activities in the college or universities and even the kind of lifestyle while in college. When these expectations are not met, these students react differently.

Some students adjust to the real life in the institutions while others drop off. As a learning institution, it becomes so difficult to plan well when students come and drop off due to many reasons. The student expectation is challenge which institutions of higher learning must face and handle well. Many students come to the colleges and universities having done some research and have interacted with other students in other places. They come knowing what they expect and when to expect them. These expectation partly also emerge from the marketing words which the institution had used and which are not attainable under the current institutional economic condition.

Student drop outs from colleges and universities is a major issue which institutions of higher learning must embrace themselves to solve. A lot of scholars have carried out research to establish how institutions of higher learning can better their retention ration amidst this challenge which exists in all major institution.

Faculty Improvement

According to Barefoot (2005) in their research entitled, Achieving and Sustaining Institutional Excellence for the First Year of College, institutions of higher learning should aim at creating an environment of excellence especially for first year students and work on sustaining that excellence. To achieve this, institutions should have certain characteristics. Characteristics of Institutional Excellence for the First- Year Experience

The first characteristic is that the institution should bear the responsibility of first-year student performance. This should be treated with high priority so that the student drop out experienced in the first year is managed.

The second thing the institutions of higher learning should is to offer leadership; where leading is operating on different levels offering essential support to this community of students. This can be achieved through student leadership, class representative leadership, and head of school and so on. All these leaders when they work together, they will offer the support to all the students.

The third thing is the culture nurtured. The culture that promotes creativity and innovation, experimentation and project piloting will encourage and motivate students to participate and integrate quicker with the life in the institution.

The institution should design some activities geared towards achieving excellence in first year students. This is another activity which institutions of higher learning should do. These activities should include assessment to ensure the institution is progressing positively and also improving in excellence.

Institutions should also have direct involvement of institutions faculties, paying attention to pedagogy in the first year courses and use of financial resources in a creative acquisition.

Advising Of Students

The University of Texas System in their2004 research study titled recommendations from the task force on student mental health and safety concluded that that institutions should institute behavioural intervention teams (BIT) which responds to student needs. The work of BIT should include: collecting information about students of concern like issues such threats to students which may become violent, evaluating the information received about each case in a more methodical manner to establish the best effective response, developing a plan of response to cases and implementing the plan and seeing the feedback. Through this BIT, students will get advice and support system adequate to enable them identify with the institution.

Swecker, H.K., Fifolt, M., Searby, L. (2013) identified 12 validated risk factors in their study "Academic Advising and First- Generation College Students: A Quantitative Study on Student Retention" that increase student drop out of colleges and universities which all the institutions must deal with to curb drop outs. Factors such uneven formal academic knowledge and skills, lack of informal knowledge on being a student in a college, deficiency in development of self-regulation skills, handling financial concerns, psychological issues and others. These factors are responsible for student drop outs and therefore institutions of higher learning should deal with these factors for drop outs to reduce.

Lori and Krista (2012, March 1) in their study Critical building Blocks: Mandatory prerequisite registration systems and Student success concluded that the success of the students and even their retention ratio in the college or university is influenced by among other factors the prerequisite system used to enrol the student. This system will bring in good or bad student who either cannot handle the course or cannot fit in the institutional culture that prevails in the institution. in their study, it was realized that a mandatory and good prerequisite enforcement system will help in getting students with good grades who will fit into the institution culture and also perform well in the courses on offer.

Collaborating In Programs of Counselling

Wolfe, Brent D, Kay, Gregor, July 2011 found in their study entitled "Perceived Impact of an Outdoor Orientation Program for First-Year University Students" that first years' students reception of the programmes were positive and those who completed such outdoor programme developed a higher commitment to the university than before. This study therefore shows that universities should work on some outdoor programmes for first year students in line with the institution policy that will help grow the student affiliation to the university thus improving on the retention ratio. Outdoor activities include social corporate responsibility activities like street cleaning, free services to the society and many more.

Offering Financial Aid to Students In Order To Keep Them in School

Tinto, V. (2012) in his publication titled "Completing College: Rethinking Institutional Action, pointed out that institutions of higher learning should work on achieving five conditions for student success. These conditions are expectations, student support, assessment and feedback as well as involvement. When an institution delivers on these four conditions, students will succeed and their retention ration will be good. The student support includes offering financial support to students who are hard working but have financial challenge in meeting their needs including event paying fees.

Talbert, Patricia Y(2012) in their academic journal titled "Strategies to Increase Enrolment, Retention, and Graduation Rates" concluded that its absolutely crucial to keep students in school and to achieve this, the institution should formulate academic leaders across the board and use these leaders to develop programmes meant to improve enrolment, retention as well a graduation. This finding was found to be

more relevant especially where you are dealing minority group like African Americans or Americans of Spanish origin as well as first time students.

David S. Crockett, (2005) The Ten Most Effective Retention Strategies for Community/ Technical Colleges identify mission and philosophy, student focus on learning, environment adapted for educational enhancement, a clear guard for student success, an improvement-oriented ethos and shared responsibility for educational quality and student excellence.

Joe Cuseo, Ph.D. & Teresa Farnum in their study of seven myths about student retention identified seven myths which is addressed well will help in student retention. Some of the myths include attraction is a "student problem" not a campus or institutional problem, retention would not be a problem if we just admitted better students, And while we're at it, richer students would help, too, Most students drop out because they "flunk out. Profiling "leavers" is the best method of understanding attrition, It's not the faculty's job to "retain" students but to promote student learning and Campuses are already doing all that they can do to improve student retention. If these myths are properly addressed, there would be less retention problem.

Offering Remedial Courses

Liz Thomas, (2002) identified certain factors in their study titled Student retention in higher education: the role of institutional habitus which affect student retention and these factors should be addressed by the institution so boost the student retention. They include academic preparedness, academic experience, Institutional expectation and commitment, academic and social match and other factors. Academic experience may include some form of remedial courses that may improve student retention.

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