

Strategies in Recruitment and Retention Roundtable Discussions

1. Are you already including these recruitment/retention strategies at your college/university?
 - The saturation approach was helpful to hear about.
 - Free classes is a novel idea.
 - Good to hear about two year students going to 4 year.
 - How can we implement strategies if we don't have a marketing director?
 - Marketing is usually the professor's job, not the dean's.
 - If money is donated (or grant) and a recruiter can be hired and justify their job, then the administration will buy in.
 - Discussion about using the word "engineering": disagreement about telling kids about engineering. Kids want to be challenged, and they find engineering exciting. However, some people truly doubt their abilities in math and science. Once they catch the vision of engineering technology, then they decide if they will work for it. Maybe some students are afraid to even try.
 - Working with high schools and getting involved is vital to student recruitment. Advertising your program in school newspapers is a good idea. There has to be someone in your program that goes out and does this work.
 - Colleges themselves can produce newspapers to distribute information to students and their parents.
 - Youth groups through church organizations are another way to reach potential students and their parents.
 - College credit in high school courses is attractive to potential students and is a good means of recruitment. We currently have a 25% recruitment rate with students that are in our pipeline.

2. How can the presentations on recruitment and retention impact your college/university?
3. What can be easily implemented or adapted?
4. What difference will this make?
 - What NOT to do: put ads in major newspapers. However, put ads in papers of other (local) languages. The parents read those papers.
 - NOT to do: college recruitment office sent out an invitation to an open house to each student (25, 000 letters) for a 9:30 am meeting on a Saturday. Only 37 students came!
 - High school counselors come to meetings like this, but you have to contact the right people.
 - One school had the money to get busses to bring in high school kids.
 - Guidance counselors don't help much. Friendly teachers help the most – more likely to let kids come to campus during school hours. After school doesn't work well.
 - Conferences for guidance counselors seem to be effective. The Project Lead The Way conference focuses a portion on counselors, and (this school's) guidance counselor caught the vision.
 - Guidance counselors think about 4 year schools more than 2 year schools.
 - Guidance counselor doesn't want to lose funding by sending students to (the local) specialized academy.

- People moving into town want to hear the percent of students going to college from the local high school. 4 year college is pushed.
- Students can't really go from ET to Engineering degree. Students either leave school or take supplemental courses. Tech degree may not have the science and math classes necessary for engineering classes as a prerequisite.
- Some colleges have a pre-engineering program. Depending on what school (ET or Eng.) is chosen depends on what schooling the students take.
- Key: students need counseling to know what they want to do, what direction to go.
- Barrier to articulation – Industrial Tech program at Michigan Tech is the vehicle to make first 2 years articulate to 4 year.
- 4 year schools need to understand that if they want customers, they need to work with the community colleges!
- Offering parents incentives at colleges and making them familiar with the colleges can help with recruiting potential students. If parents are familiar with a school, they may encourage their kids to attend the college. Also, minority students' parents are very unfamiliar with local colleges. This would be a very good way to recruit minority students.

5. Do you know of other strategies being implemented at colleges/universities?

- High school population is well defined – parents ask “Can you get a 4 year degree here?” What parents like about the community college is that it's inexpensive, and may not get into the 4 year college right away. (This professor) can speak to this to sell his program; he discusses articulation.
- Parents have the biggest influence – design events for them.
- Adult students are more difficult to find. How do we reach them?
- Next Generation Regional Manufacturing Center did radio ads and seemed to get good results. They are an ATE center in Connecticut.
- Students seem to be interested in salary. Describe responsibilities of life, and how they need money for those.
- Looked at under-employed populations through DOL workforce development grant. College gave summer workshops – all day training like on the job. Retention was difficult, but it got people into the college program.
- Do a SWAT on your program – determine what's different or unique about your program. Pain and gain motivate people to change.
- Be ready to advise people about the ways to make the change/achieve goal of ET degree.
- Robotics competitions are popular to use, but I'm not sure how they affect recruitment or retention.
- Battlebots was used in our local schools. 39 high schools participated, and the event was very well-received. Event was co-sponsored by Sinclair Community College and the Dayton Tooling and Manufacturing Association (DTMA).

6. What additional resources would you need to implement these strategies?

- The media portrays jobs layoffs in a very negative light. And while layoffs aren't good, they are a natural part of business. Re-employment is never covered by the news, and trends seem to shy away students from these technical areas experiencing many layoffs.

- College programs need full-time employees who focus strictly on recruitment and retention of students. This is expensive, but if available, it is invaluable.
- Success of programs depends on demographics. Biomedical is big in some areas while programs at other colleges are closing due to low enrollment.
- How do we keep students who do not succeed in Engineering Sciences interested in switching to Engineering Technology?

7. How can the ATE Resource Centers assist you?

- Discuss (next time) grant writing help to do recruiting.
- Have a web seminar for recruiting: how to do it, who to target.

8. Do you know of additional resources?