



The Keys to On-Line Retention: Expectation & Communication

Professor Manuel Correa



Overview

Address specific best practices currently used for maintaining and retaining students in the online environment at Berkeley College®.

Discuss a project launched to identify ways to improve student learning, persistence and graduation in the online environment.

Examine how online techniques can be used to advance the educational opportunities of the Hispanic, non-traditional student.





Trends in Online Education

- Online education or distance learning has experienced a far greater growth, both nationally and globally, than many anticipated.
- The December 2008, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report indicated that during the 2006–07 academic year :
 - **66 %** of the Title IV degree granting postsecondary institutions reported offering online, hybrid/blended online, or other distance education courses .



Trends in Online Education

- According to the NCES report:
 - The most significant factors cited as affecting distance education decisions were:
 - meeting student demand for flexible schedules (68 percent),
 - providing access to college for students who would otherwise not have access (67 percent),
 - making more courses available (46 percent),
 - seeking to increase student enrollment (45 percent).
 - Asynchronous (not simultaneous or real-time) Internet-based technologies were cited as the most widely used technology for the instructional delivery of distance education courses.





The online student

The online environment is attractive to all types of students.

However, the online environment is of particular interest to the non-traditional student because of their specific needs.



Profile of non-traditional student

Working full-time or part-time

Older, more mature student

Reentering the educational arena

Married with dependents

- Balancing work and family time commitments

Motivated to complete their education in a timely manner





Hispanics tend to be “non-traditional” learners

- Hispanic/Latinos are one of the fastest growing groups enrolling in higher education.
- In 2006, close to 50% of Hispanic students were enrolled full-time
 - 80% of those enrolled part-time were employed.
- By 2017, enrollment of Hispanic students is projected to increase 39% (NCES, 2008)



This increase in online learning is providing a positive enrollment outlook for higher education institutions!

However, in truth:

- The retention issues affecting on-site education are also affecting the on-line environment.
- What can be done to remedy this situation!





The Retention Issue

- Colleges and Universities have always been concerned with the retention and graduation rates of their students
 - Studies have shown that both academic and non-academic factors affect student retention...(ACT 2004)
 - The current worldwide economic issues have impacted not only enrollment but also retention.
 - The 2011 ACT report indicated Retention trends from 1983 – 2010 have dropped for most college categories as shown in the following chart:



The Retention Issue

Retention Trends Freshman to Sophomore Year

1983 - 2010

College	Highest	Lowest	Current
Two-year public	55.7%	51.3%	55.7%
BA/BS public	70.0%	66.4%	67.6%
Two-year private	72.6%	55.5%	58.6%
BA/BS private	74.0%	68.7%	68.7%
All			66.7%

© 2010 by ACT, Inc. All rights reserved.





How do we address this issue?

- Colleges and Universities have embarked on projects and initiatives to investigate the growing trend.
- Berkeley College routinely monitors retention statistics for all its campuses along with the system.
- In 2011 the college embarked on a study to address the retention issue on it's On-line Campus.
- The On-line campus is currently the 3rd largest of the 9 Berkeley College campuses.



Berkeley College Online Program

- Our online program is currently in its 13th year.
- The program offers over 150 different online courses.
 - 28 Bachelor's and Associate's degree programs.
- Currently, we have over 2,500 students enrolled.
- 28% of Berkeley College's total enrollment are Hispanic.
- Over 20% of our online students are Hispanic.





Berkeley Online Program Structure

- Program designed to accommodate the needs of non-traditional students.
 - 12 week and accelerated 6 week programs
 - Online and blended courses
 - Online texts available for all courses.
 - Road to Online Learning course designed to prepare students for the online learning format.



The On-Line Retention Project

In May 2011 a Task Force was formed with the purpose to:

identify ways in which the online experience for students could be changed in order to improve student learning, persistence, and graduation.





The On-Line Retention Project

The task force was comprised of senior individuals from the following areas:

- Academic Advisement
- Students Accounts
- Faculty
- Student Development
- Library
- Assessment and Institutional Research
- Online campus Chief Operating Officer



The On-Line Retention Project

The methodology:

- Investigate the processes that all on-line students experience from admissions to the online teaching and learning.
- Duplicate the experience that a student would have with each process
- Assume the role of the student to attain first hand knowledge of how well the process accomplished it's intended function



HETS Second BEST PRACTICES SHOWCASE

Areas investigated

1. Online Admissions Interview
2. New Student registration Appointment
3. Online Student Orientation
4. Online Teaching and Learning
5. Online Academic Support Center

Berkeley College

HETS Second BEST PRACTICES SHOWCASE

1. Online Admission Interview

- The task force invited an admissions representative to conduct a simulated admissions interview while a task force member played the part of the student.
- When the interview concluded, the task force met with the Senior Director of Admissions, for continued discussion and information gathering.

Berkeley College



2. New Student Registration Appointment

- With a task force member again acting as a student, representatives from advising, financial aid, and student accounts participated in a simulation of the new student registration appointment.
- The simulation made use of an anonymous student's file, providing realistic information for the three offices to use during the simulation.
- Task force members from advising and student accounts provided additional general information to broaden the task force's understanding of new student registration appointments.



3. Online Student Orientation

- All task force members reviewed the online orientation program prior to the task force meeting.
- During the meeting:
 - we viewed specific parts of the orientation,
 - discussed the purposes of orientation, and
 - We struggled with how to keep information that students need (often covered in orientation but quickly forgotten) very easily available to them so that they can (and will) get it when they need it.





4. Online Teaching and Learning

- The two task force members who are faculty guided the task force through many of the elements of an online class.
- The differences among faculty in running an online class were discussed and contrasted with a need for a more or less consistent format that students navigate easily.
- We also discussed some issues related to the Winter 2012 change to using course resources in all online courses.




Instructor Welcome and Bio



NEED HELP?
[CLICK HERE](#)

Home Courses Content Collection Library E-Mail Online Card Office Community Faculty Self Service

Refresh

Welcome to Management Simulation!
 Welcome to Management Simulation!
 Dr. Albert Widman, Winter 2010 Online.

Posted by: Albert Widman

You're in for something very special!

My name is Dr. Albert Widman and I am your professor for this course. Greetings from sunny southern California! One of the wonders of distance learning is that you and I can be anywhere, as long as we're able to access the internet. My contact information is listed under the Staff Information section of Blackboard and in the syllabus. You should feel free to contact me at any time. I'm here to guide you and to help you.

You should probably begin by reviewing the syllabus (in both the course information and course documents sections of Blackboard). There you'll learn about our expectations for your performance and you'll pick up important information about the course.

I'm looking forward to working with you this term. Welcome!! Take a look at the link below. It will lead you to a quick introductory video. They've shrunk it down to the size of a postage stamp, so put on your glasses! Theoretically, it's to save bandwidth and to let it load faster but I'll always believe that it was to try to hide my amazing resemblance to Brad Pitt. Not.

Course Link: [Course Information / A Quick Video Overview of the Course](#)

Simulation: Week 4 Tests

start Presentation1 HETS_Presentat... Blackboard.Aca... grade center - P... Internet 100% 11:47 PM

HETS Second BEST PRACTICES SHOWCASE

Announcement Page

Berkeley College

Home Help Logout

Home Courses Content Collection Library E-Mail Online Card Office Community Faculty Self Service

BUSNADMN BUS451 (1101) BERKC_BUSNADMN_BUS451_SEC0L3 > ANNOUNCEMENTS

Announcements

VIEW TODAY VIEW LAST 7 DAYS VIEW LAST 30 DAYS VIEW ALL

All Announcements

Sat, Jan 09, 2010 -- Week 2 -- the external environment Posted by: Manuel Correa

Thank you for introducing yourselves last week in the discussion board. I can see that many of you are close to graduating and you should be very proud of your accomplishments. We have a nice varied group with different backgrounds and experiences. I hope that you can learn much in this course and from each other. (By the way thank you for the nice comments, you are too kind.)

I am also happy to see that the class is doing very well in the GHA. These are short quizzes to make sure that you understand the material.

Some of you have had problems with the GHA. It seems that the timer is covering the submit button. I am trying to see if this problem can be fixed. It appears that if you are using Internet Explorer 8 this will occur. If this happens to you just make a list of your responses to the GHA and e-mail them to me. I will then grade your responses.

Chapter 1 was an overview of our course and this week, in chapter 2, we will look in detail into analyzing the external environment for opportunities, and threats to our business. We will also examine the competition within our industry and learn about competitor analysis.

For this week:

- Please read Chapter 2 on our textbook and the lecture notes that are posted in the Course Documents section.
- **There is no discussion board this week.**
- Do the Graded Homework Assignment. (GHA) for Chapter 2.
- The GHA MUST be completed by Saturday January 16, by 7 PM.

Prof. Correa

HETS Second BEST PRACTICES SHOWCASE

Course Material

Berkeley College

Manuel Correa My Places Home Help Logout

Home Courses Content Collection Library Faculty Self Service E-Mail Online Card Office Community

1121_BERKC_MGT_220_SEC0L3 MGT MGT220 Course Material > Week 5 Edit Mode is: ON

Week 5

Build Content Create Assessment Add Interactive Tool

Weekly Introduction

Lectures

Required Resources

The resources for this class can be found in the **ONLINE COURSE RESOURCE** section. This section can be accessed via the link on the left side banner of the home page for this course.

Discussion

Assignments

COURSE MANAGEMENT

- Control Panel
- Content Collection
- Course Tools

start Microsoft PowerPoint Inbox - Mozilla Document1 - Blackboard Le... Windows Scr... EN 100% 9:59 PM



5. Online Academic Support Center

- Discussions were held with the Director of Online Academic Support Center regarding processes in this functional area.
- Engaging a larger number of students emerged as the primary challenge.



6. Other Areas

- Discussions were held with:
 - Interim Dean of Student Development about processes for online students. Again, engaging a larger number of students emerged as the primary challenge.
 - Director of Career Services about processes in Career Services for online students. The revised Career Management Seminar, internships, and engaging students early in their time at the College emerged as high priorities for action.



HETS Second BEST PRACTICES SHOWCASE

Findings of the Task Force

Two Main Themes developed from the information evaluated as pertinent to the retention of Online students.

```

graph TD
    A[Expectations] --> B[Communications]
  
```

Berkeley College

HETS Second BEST PRACTICES SHOWCASE

Findings of the Task Force

Expectations

- Because students may come to the College with vague or unrealistic expectations, the Online Campus needs to work diligently to provide students with sufficient information and sound advice to establish realistic expectations about what it is like to be an online student – the time required, weekly and quarterly responsibilities, access to online supports services, etc.
- When expectations are thwarted – whether those expectations are reasonable or not – students may begin to lose their commitment to the College and end up leaving.
- The task force agreed that a proactive approach to setting realistic expectations in critical areas of the online experience is needed.

Berkeley College



Findings of the Task Force

Communications

- Our messages must be effective in guiding students. Letters, emails, and materials that students receive or use must be clear, easy to understand, and jargon-free. (The same recommendations apply to video, PowerPoint or other presentations.)
- All offices should pay careful attention to proper formatting and tone.
- These communications are vital to fostering a successful college experience and clearly play a part in the setting of expectations mentioned above.



Recommendations of the Task Force

The task force developed a number of recommendations for each of the areas that were investigated. A few samples of these recommendations follow:





Recommendations of the Task Force

Admissions

- Admissions begins the process of setting the mutual expectations between the College and the student.
- Especially in the context of federal regulations and concern about “misrepresentation,” the interview has to deliver consistent, accurate information and address students’ questions and needs.
- Whether a student “fits” the College should be an open question until “fit” has genuinely been explored. All offices should pay careful attention to proper formatting and tone.



Recommendations of the Task Force

New Student Registration

- Once the student has applied and been admitted, this appointment will convey the College’s concern for the individual student and build an impression of how well we do our work. Expectations and communication interact throughout.
- Split the registration appointment so that advisement is separate from Financial Aid/Student Accounts portion. There is too much for the student to take in at one sitting. If the student cannot make two appointments, it may be a sign that she/he does not have enough time for College.
- Financial Aid packaging needs to be done by Financial Aid – not Admissions. Repackaging (in which a student’s request for more financial aid goes back to admissions to obtain more money) should stop – it may raise questions about the integrity of the school and/or the financial aid process.





Recommendations of the Task Force

Orientation

- The task force came to the conclusion that orientation really must be more than just a few hours at the beginning of the student's time in online study. We have to create an orientation process that is ongoing – perhaps extending for as long as three or four quarters of the student experience. As such, the “providing information function” of orientation must become both highly effective and extremely convenient to revisit over an extended time.
- The current orientation information, folders, and links cover much information but are neither engaging nor memorable. We recommend making the information and the experience more compelling and recommend including video clips to introduce specific staff from a variety of functional areas such as admissions, advisement, library, financial aid, and SDCL to give a “face” to the Online Campus.
- We should provide step-by-step instructions for major processes such as online registration through online PowerPoint or Camtasia presentations. (N.B.: Some demonstrations may already exist.)




Recommendations of the Task Force

Online Courses, Teaching and Learning

- In the task force discussions of online teaching and learning, two questions were prominent. What have students been told about online learning? What do they actually experience?
- Identify typical “expectation gaps” between what students have been told about online study and what they experience to avoid any problems with the potential to affect retention. Those expectations gaps may be related to topic such as:
 - The time needed for online study
 - A weekly schedule that is less flexible than anticipated
 - The required frequency and quality of discussion participation
 - Courses with more rigor and difficulty than non-Berkeley sources suggested
- Prepare students more thoroughly for the technical aspects of online learning.





Recommendations of the Task Force

The Academic Support Center

- Leading challenges for many online student services are
 - 1) to inform student what services are available and
 - 2) to motivate students to take advantage of the services.
- There is no central point of information that tells students that online ASC exists
- We recommend creating a “hub” for ASC information in an easy-to-remember location to help ASC reach more students.
- Placing a hyperlink to ASC in all online syllabi might help with easy access, especially at the start of each quarter.



Conclusion

1. Present Clear Expectations

2. Make sure there is a “Fit”

3. Communicate a Clear Message

4. Communicate a Unified Message

5. Help manage their Expectations





Recent Developments

- Since the report of the Task Force Findings, the college has implemented most of the recommendations.
- Although still early in the process the following positive have been achieved:
 - Winter 2012 quarter the Online campus retention rate improved 6% over last year same quarter retention!
 - After changes to the New Student Orientation process, 76% of the students felt that the orientation process was 'Very Valuable' and 83% felt that the orientation was very easy to navigate online.



Recent Developments

Campus	Fall-Winter Retention
MDL	89.4%
WPK	86.7%
ONL	84.9%
PAR	83.6%
WST	83.0%
NYC	82.0%
BBK	80.9%
NWK	80.5%
System	83.5%



 **Bios**

Manuel Correa

Position: Faculty, Management Department, School of Business, New York; and Coordinator of Noncredit International Programs

Topics: Strategic and financial planning; business planning; project management; corporate restructuring; cultural diversity; change management; creating, implementing and developing new and expanding business strategies; business reorganization; problem solving; expansion and team building.

Background: Mr. Correa joined Berkeley College in 2002 as an adjunct faculty member in the Management Department. He became a full-time faculty member in 2007, and teaches a curriculum in management and business courses both online and onsite. He is bilingual, speaking English and Spanish.

As Coordinator of Noncredit International Programs, Mr. Correa has expanded a program in which students of the European Business Schools come to Berkeley College to attend classes.

Before coming to Berkeley College, Mr. Correa spent 30 years in the business sector, where he served as Vice President of Marketing for Razzino Associates, Inc. in New Jersey, as well as Director of Corporate Planning and Director of Marketing for SBLI USA, New York. He also held several administrative positions with the New York Power Authority in White Plains, NY.

Awards and Recognitions: Mr. Correa was awarded the Berkeley College Online Faculty Award for Outstanding Teaching in November 2007. He was featured in the October 2008 issue of the Queens Tribune Newspaper for a presentation titled "Hispanics Making a Difference in the Business World." Mr. Correa presented at the Hispanic Educational Technology Services - Best Practices Showcase Conference (2010) on the topic, *Transitioning from on-site to on-line teaching -- The jump is not as big as you imagine.*

Professional Affiliations: Mr. Correa is Co-Chair of the Berkeley College Globalization Task Force and a Member of the Finance sub-committee of the Berkeley College 2010-2015 Strategic Planning Process. He also is a member of the Financial Executives Networking Group (FENG) and the American Management Association.

Degrees: Mr. Correa is pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy degree in Business Administration at Northcentral University with an expected completion date of 2010. He holds an MBA in Financial Management from Iona College, NY, and a BE in Electrical Engineering from Manhattan College, NY.





Contact Information

Professor Manuel Correa
mcm@berkeleycollege.edu

Berkeley College
 3 East 43rd Street
 New York, NY 10017

