

Student Persistence and Retention Table

According to Dr. Watson Swail in *The Art of Student Retention* (an educational policy document developed for the Educational Policy Institute available at www.educationalpolicy.org) three forces affect student persistence and achievement.

- **Cognitive factors** relate to the knowledge and academic ability a student brings with him or her to the training program.
- **Social factors** are defined as parental and peer support, the development or existence of career goals, past experiences with education (educational legacy), and the ability to cope in social situations. Dr. Swail’s research demonstrates that students have a difficult time persisting when they are not socially integrated into campus life.
- **Institutional factors** refer to how a school reacts to student needs and the impact of school responsiveness on persistence and student retention. An institution can help students overcome deficiencies in the first two areas by offering programs and services that meet the diverse needs of a school’s student population.

The Student Experience and Factors Impacting Persistence and Retention		
Cognitive Factors	Social Factors	Institutional Factors
Academic rigor	Financial issues	Financial aid
Quality of learning	Educational legacy	Student services
Aptitude	Attitude toward learning	Recruitment and admissions
Content knowledge	Religious background	Academic services/programs
Critical-thinking ability	Maturity	Curriculum quality
Technology ability	Social coping skills	Instructional quality
Study skills	Communication skills	
Learning skills	Attitude toward others	
Time management	Cultural values	
Academic-related extracurricular activities	Expectations	
	Goal commitment	
	Family influence	
	Peer influence	
	Social lifestyle	