

Effective Practices in Student Success (EPSS): A Database for Practitioners

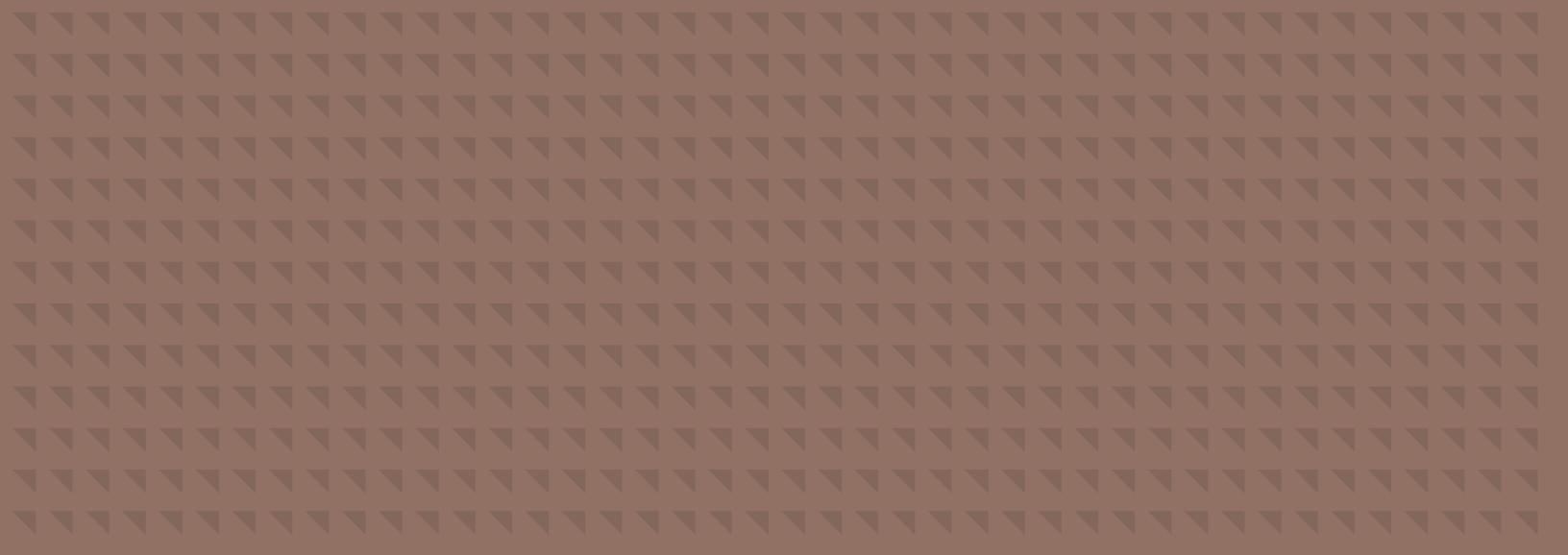


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Introduction

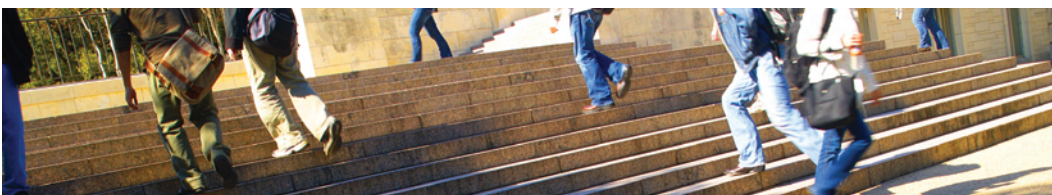
Student attrition is a complex problem that bears a multitude of costs for institutions of higher education, students, and society-at-large. In today's world, a college degree is increasingly becoming a requirement for economic and social mobility, and the need for undergraduate retention is growing. In its efforts to assist those working to prevent student attrition, the Educational Policy Institute (EPI) noticed a void in effective searchable data for best practices in postsecondary student retention. Upon closer examination, it became apparent that a new tool was needed to assist educators and practitioners in their quest to find "what works" in retention. EPI then set out to develop a database that would list retention programs that have demonstrated effective results.

Towards that objective, EPI entered into a working collaboration with TG, a non-profit guarantor that administers the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program. TG is the designated guarantor in Texas and serves colleges and universities nationwide. As a part of that collaboration, TG agreed to sponsor the development of this new database. The Effective Practices in Student Success was unveiled in the spring of 2007. This EPSS users guide was co-developed by EPI and TG in the Fall 2007.

What is the EPSS?

The Effective Practices in Student Success database is a valuable resource for higher education professionals who are interested in learning "what works" in higher education. The name itself, "Effective Practices," was coined because the EPI research team opted against calling for "best" practices, which is a subjective term. The team aimed for effective practices; those programs or strategies that have shown evidence of a positive impact on their targeted population.

The Educational Policy Institute and TG aim to identify effective practices that increase educational equity and access in higher education. Part of increasing the likelihood of academic success is decreasing any factors which lead an individual to leave school. Retention programs serve as a barrier against outside distractions which could potentially discourage the completion of a degree program. Retention programs across the nation and beyond vary tremendously in design, but share one common goal: to increase the likelihood of completing college. The effective practices retention database serves as a filter for educators who are looking for information on only the most effective programs.



The EPSS database offers users the opportunity to search programs by geographic region, program strategies/characteristics, institutional control and type, and populations served. The database is highly accessible, precise, and concise. Entries include: current contact information, physical address/ mailing address, program sponsor, program description, area of services, specifications of program participants, number of students served, and evidence of success. This detailed information offers researchers the opportunity to find a program that mimics their vision, and/or make comparisons with existing programs.

Central to the utility of the EPSS is the maintenance of accurate contact information for programs. This task will be performed on a regular basis by EPI. The main goal of the database is to link institutions of need with those which have exhibited success in a particular area. Thus, contact information is essential.

Data Collection and Quality Control

Programs demonstrating promise were selected for the EPSS under the condition that they possessed readily available, all encompassing information. Common starting points for the search included review of EPI retention award winners, the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA), the National Science Foundation, and the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). The discovery of one program often led to the discovery of others. Upon finding a new program, the search for correct information began. This effort entailed searching online first for the program's web page, then the institution's web site, in addition to researching online journals, and news resources. A bulk of the information in the EPSS came from online sources. Due to the Internet's lax quality control criteria, as well as outdated web sites, it was important to double check all information found online. Verification of information required calling each program and questioning sources. This process was crucial so that researchers and practitioners would have a direct, correct point of contact to speak with about the program. All programs included in the database have confirmed that the contact person listed for their program is correct.

Finding “Evidence of Success”

Determining effective practices required locating evidence of success. The best evidence was empirical data from longitudinal studies. The least preferred information came from non-empirical sources such as verbal citations and third-party articles. The evidence used is categorized as limited, suggestive, or promising. Evidence of success could straddle two categories. In such a situation, the higher strata is selected if the evidence is strong enough.

Limited evidence includes information which does not explicitly cite retention statistics. The information given may vaguely describe the program as being a positive asset to participants. In special cases, evidence may be classified as “limited” because it is relatively new and currently collecting retention data.

Suggestive evidence includes retention data and/or has a wealth of evidence that suggests the program has a positive impact on students. These statistics indicate high graduation rates, increased GPAs, and positive feedback from program participants. Programs that had a less than 10 percent increase in retention rates are only moderately successful. If the evidence collected showed retention rates to be 80 percent and below it is labeled “suggestive” as well.

Promising practices includes those with strong retention data which typically originated from a longitudinal study. The statistics for retention were quite strong. These programs possessed retention rates of more than 80 percent and showed increases of 10 percent or more. Other indicators of success for these “promising” programs were considered excellent.

Two programs presented the unique situation in that there was strong empirical evidence suggesting a high success rate, but the programs had ceased to exist. At this point the research team continued analyzing the available data and discovered that funding had been cut for, but they were otherwise successful in their goal of retention. These programs are listed in the database, with the correct former contact, so that interested researchers may still reach out to the contact person.

A Brief Analysis of the EPSS Database

As of September 30, 2007, 140 programs were verified in the EPSS. Because the database “lives,” so to speak, this document will continue to be updated annually to provide an assessment of what exists in the database.

The EPSS is a broad database with programs from a variety of entities that incorporate a dynamic array of strategies and practices aimed at a diverse population. This is the goal of the EPSS: to provide information on a diverse set of practices for the diverse constituency it serves.

This section of the manual provides an overview of the types and classification of programs in the EPSS. The characteristics of listed programs vary immensely, as they must, in order to adequately serve their targeted populations.

Program Sponsors

Because the EPSS is based on higher education retention, it is of little surprise that 88.6 percent of the programs listed are sponsored by institutions of higher education. The remaining 11.4 percent of the programs are sponsored through other avenues such as non-profit organizations, federal government programs, or state offices. These programs tend to focus on a broader spectrum of education, rather than specifically postsecondary. More than two dozen programs in the database begin their quest for retention with kids in middle or high school. These programs aim to inform young students about the opportunities available to them by staying in school and enrolling in college. Many of these programs exist because of government and non-profit sponsors. An overwhelming number of the programs listed are held at public four-year institutions.

Retention programs fall into several categories, the broadest of which can be referred to as “institution-wide initiatives.” These programs cater to the general population and affect the overall statistics of a school. Overall retention rates feature the mean dropout rates of all classes. A low general retention rate is viewed with more gravity than retention rates for subgroups at an institution. Graduation rates for these schools are lower as well. Retention programs designed to decrease widespread dropout rates for a school are large in scale in comparison to those aimed for smaller sects of students.



Retention programs also may be described in terms of what class level they serve. That is, the most common of these is the first-to-second year retention program, as this is a high-risk period in the average college student's career. The measure of retention of these programs focuses solely on how freshmen adjust to university culture and their willingness to persist thereafter. For those students who are seriously at-risk, wherein there is a risk of dropping out after one semester, the first-to-second semester measure may be necessary. First-to-second year and first-to-second semester measures are still revelatory to the progress of more specific populations. Attrition problems in smaller sects of student population can eventually greatly affect the overall retention rates of an institution.

Program Goals and Missions

The goals of the programs listed in the EPSS are all relatively similar in that they were all designed with the obvious main goal of retention in mind. EPI used the following goals as a starting point for classification of programs:

- Increase retention
- Facilitate transition into college
- Encourage long-term financial planning (e.g., financial aid/savings)
- Improve academic skills
- Create social support network
- Encourage graduation in four years
- Provide recreational or cultural opportunities
- Encourage rigorous course-taking

Programs approach these goals in a number of ways that include the help of mentors/ counselors and tutors. Though all of the programs listed in the EPSS have the same goal, they tend to use key tactics like mentors and counselors in various ways. Some programs have mentoring or counseling sessions built into the program, in which the appointed advisor will have a set time during the semester to meet with a student. Others use an absentee mechanism, in which a professor notifies a student's advisor if he or she misses class, and it is up to the mentor to find out where the student was. Mentors tend to be individuals that are successful in the given field of the program, graduate students or other peers, while a counselor is usually a faculty member or trained professional. Though the aim of their positions is the same (to support students) they usually have different areas of expertise. Tutors also are used by a number of programs in the EPSS in many differing ways. Some institutions with more established programs have offices where students can set up an appointment with a faculty or staff tutor. Summer remedial programs offer tutoring throughout the summer in order to promote a social support group, and better academic performance before the start of the school year.

The mission statements of programs listed vary by focusing on the targeted demographic or subject area upon which the program is based. Despite their differences in targeted demographic, most programs listed in the EPSS have very similar mission statements, aimed at retaining students and preventing attrition for students in a number of class brackets.

Targeted Demographics

Retention programs often target specific demographic groups of students. Students most marginalized on college campuses are often low-income students, first-generation college students, minorities, and students with disabilities. The obstacles that confound many of these types of students play a large part in their lower retention rates.

Retention programs for **low-income students** often require that students verify their economic status through a form such as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Low-income students may be eligible for benefits such as supplies assistance and need-based scholarships. As low-income students may be at risk for under-preparedness, it is not uncommon that low-income student programs are accompanied with free tutoring services.

Students with disabilities also merit special considerations. Disabilities may be physical or intellectual. The database features programs which seek students with documented disabilities. Many of these programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Education's TRIO programs. Staff at these programs may facilitate arrangements with professors to accommodate students with various disabilities.

First-generation college students also require a great deal of mentoring in order to avoid attrition. First-generation college student programs tend to also include higher percentages of minorities and lower-income students. It is important to nurture this group of students because of the lack of collegiate precedent in their families. Relating their college experiences to their families may be difficult. Programs referring to students of color are high in frequency within



the database. Users will find that all ethnic minorities are targeted equally. Many programs specifically seek underrepresented minorities. Currently black, Hispanic, and American Indian students fit into this category. In the realm of higher education, Asians and Asian-Americans are not considered under-represented. Depending on the program specifications, select or all minorities may be included. Programs that aim to retain minorities often include a mentoring component to build community among students. These programs sometimes bring cultural events and activities to campus. Academically disadvantaged constitutes a large share of student retention programs. Academically disadvantaged varies by definition. In some instances, the school identifies students who may have lower than usual admission criteria.

Students may be admitted into the school on a provisional basis. They are placed in programs that improve their readiness for college. Other programs may feature courses that students may need to ensure success at the college level. Certain degree programs mandate the successful completion of prerequisite courses. Programs give students an opportunity to complete needed courses. Other features of many academically disadvantaged student programs are workshops and seminars that focus on skills and resources needed for college survival.

Program Areas

In order to address the needs of various student populations, several programs have resorted to a diversified means of outreach. Many programs opt to approach retention using an array of strategies all at once: financial aid, recruitment, curriculum and instruction, academic services, and student services. Programs tend to emphasize at least two of the aforementioned strategies. It is essential for programs to determine the obstacles in population, and design a program that specifically targets them. In some cases, programs included in the database do not fit into these categories and they may be described as "other." These unique characteristics are listed individually.

Financial Aid

It is important to understand the links between financial aid, enrollment, and persistence for students, in general, and racial and ethnic minority students, in particular. A student's ability to pay for college consists of two dimensions: an objective component, reflecting students' availability of resources, and a subjective component, reflecting students' perceptions of their capacity to finance a college education. It is likely that these factors also influence students' decisions about college choice and persistence.

For many low-income and minority students, enrollment and persistence decisions are driven by the availability of financial aid. Financial aid services often provide students with scholarships based on need and/or merit, graduate fellowships, stipends, and monetary incentives for completion of a program. Students who receive grants are generally more likely to persist than those who receive loans (Swail, Redd, & Perna, 2003). However, given the rising costs of attending college, it is unlikely that low-income students will be able to receive bachelor's degrees without any loan aid. For these reasons, retention programs that offer some form of financial aid are crucial in keeping historically underrepresented minority students in college. Retention programs that offer financial aid are a single answer to a two-fold problem.

Many financial aid programs come with a GPA clause, in which students must maintain a minimum grade point average in order to continue to receive funds. Nearly all of the financial aid programs listed offer academic counseling that encompasses financial planning to some degree. Programs also offer students a mentor, who keeps close tabs on the student's academic success, in order to ensure that the student does not lose their financial aid privilege. Scholarship programs listed are geared towards gifted, underrepresented minority students, specifically, first-generation college students.

A sampling of programs in the database, which offer **financial aid components** include:

- Philadelphia Futures: Sponsor-A-Scholar College Program
- General Electric (GE) College Bound Program
- The Meyerhoff Scholars Program
- Women in Applied Science and Engineering (WISE) Summer Bridge Program
- PLUS (Provost Leadership Undergraduate Scholarship) Program
- Kids to College (K2C) Program

Student Services

Student services include activities outside of the academic realm. The scope of student services is the broadest of all area characteristics. The process of becoming socially integrated into the fabric of the university has also been found to be both a cumulative and compounding process, and the level of social integration within a given year of study is a part of a cumulative experience that continues to build

throughout one's college experience. Social integration is key to retaining students, which means that new friendships and peer interaction should be as important as academics. This development can help students bridge the often traumatic first weeks of the freshman year and offer other areas of personal and academic support.

Mentors are also important in avoiding attrition. The development of role models and mentors is important, both academically and socially. A positive role model provides students guidance, direction, and most importantly, a good example from which students can learn. Informal contact between students and faculty outside of class is especially beneficial to students. The combination of new friends and sound role models provides the foundation for student services.



Many programs listed on the database incorporate some form of student services into their agenda. These services can be counseling, services, mentoring, field trips, enrichment activities, residential support, affinity groups, conferences, career services, community service and/or networking opportunities. The purpose of these services is always to create a social support network of peers and mentors, as well as to offer educational enrichment opportunities, to keep students excited about their education.

A sampling of the programs, which focus on **student services** include:

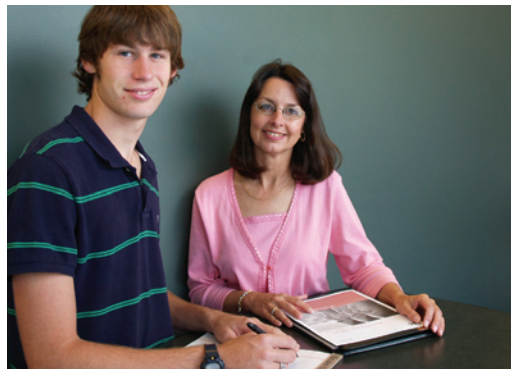
- Brother to Brother (B2B) Program
- Leadership, Development, and Academic Enrichment Program (LEAD)
- Successful Transition and Readiness Program (STAR)
- Faculty and Staff for Excellence Mentoring Program (FASE)
- REFORMA/ALA Spectrum Latino Mentoring Program
- ASAP (Accelerated Study in Associate Program)

Academic Services

Academic services is the most diversified and expansive component of the EPSS database. Academic integration and preparation are primary features of many models of retention. The focus of academic services in terms of student retention and persistence is on providing supplementary support to students in addition to practice with classroom lectures. In regards to the EPSS database, this refers specifically to

advising sessions, tutoring, progress reports, supplemental education services, and testing. Effective academic advising offers guidance that reflects students' needs and incorporates the knowledge of campus programming and bureaucratic practices.

In a collegiate setting, completing course work successfully requires a great amount of support, such as that found in supplemental education services that offer remedial activities and support. It is important that the mentors and tutors offering supplementary support be made readily available and affordable to students. Furthermore, it is imperative that all counselors, mentors, advisors, and tutors, be adequately prepared and trained to handle the many diverse situations that a college setting can present.



Academic Service programs listed below offer these services and more in a variety of ways such as scheduled check-ins with mentors, mandatory summer bridge work, and career counseling. Offering services such as tutoring, progress reports, and mentors, is one way to tackle possible attrition. The programs listed are at institutions that promote student contact with faculty members in order to create a bond and a sense of self-worth that can positively affect a student's locus of control and impact future decisions regarding college.

A sampling of programs, which target the **academic enrichment** of students include:

- MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement) Program
- Project GRAD
- Prefreshman Academic Enrichment Program (PAEP)
- IMPULSE (Integrated Math Physics Undergraduate Laboratory Science Engineering)
- Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)
- Student Athlete Retention Program (SARP)

Curriculum and Instruction

The continued development of curricula and pedagogical practice is perhaps the most important and fundamental need that colleges must address to retain students. Of primary importance to academic offices should be the continuous process of curriculum review and revision. This process should in fact become a mainstream component of curriculum development.

The communication age has radically altered traditional learning and teaching styles, forcing colleges to incorporate the latest in educational and industrial technology into their agendas. Colleges should attempt to gain access to new equipment and to provide cutting edge instructional technologies to ensure that materials are presented in a fashion that will commensurate with students' ever-changing learning preferences. Without these considerations, students may find upon graduation that their knowledge is not aligned with the needs of society.

To address this concern, many programs in the EPSS database use workshops, seminars, and mandatory online classes. These programs call for a structured setting unlike academic services, which are usually not as structured. Colleges should attempt to use various methods of delivering content to students, focusing on comprehension rather than rote memorization. The use of hands-on, exploratory, and peer learning groups are a few methods of motivating students to learn. Programs can offer a wide variety of instructional methods rather than one dominant one.

A sampling of programs, which focus on the **curriculum and instruction** offered include:

- Model Institutions for Excellence (MIE)
- Integrated Freshmen Year Curriculum in Science, Engineering and Math (IFYCSEM) Program
- Tech Prep and 2+2 Articulation
- Sure Start Learning Communities for Students' at Risk
- Stress on Analytical Reasoning (SOAR) Program
- University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) Health Careers Bridge Program

Recruitment Programs

The development of enrollment management programs in recent years has empowered the recruitment and admissions staff on many campuses. Institutions must be cognizant of the issue of institution-student fit, and at some point the business side must regress to allow for the personal side of the college connection.

Recruitment programs are designed to create environments, which foster the attainment of a high school diploma and entry into college. These programs tend to target high school-aged students. Colleges collaborate with high school counselors to learn more about prospective recruits. Programs that employ this method often aim to recruit students with interest in a particular subject area into their institution, such as math or science. These programs also target historically underrepresented minority and low-income students, in order to offer them insight as to what opportunities a postsecondary education might exist for them. The programs listed below have approached recruitment in a variety of ways including; outreach programs, on-campus orientation, pre-college programs, and by sending work study students and education majors to middle and high schools to inform students of the academic, social and financial requirements for college participation.

A sampling of the programs, which emphasize **recruitment efforts** of students include:

- The Puente Project
- Women in Technology (WIT)
- College Reach Out Program (CROP)
- The Neighborhood Academic Initiative
- NAU GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness & Readiness)
- The Native Hawaiian Project at Leeward Community College

Who Do These Programs Serve?

Programs in the EPSS focused mainly on undergraduate students—freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Within the undergraduate category there is a major emphasis on freshmen. Students who are inadequately prepared for both academic and non-academic challenges may experience culture shock when they arrive on campus, and institutions may offer “Bridge Programs.” Bridge programs focus on helping to ease the transition from high school to college for first-year students. These programs can help students “bridge” the often traumatic first weeks of the freshman year and offer other areas of personal and academic support. First-year students are a particularly vulnerable sub-culture because of the numerous changes that they face all at once.



Undergraduate programs also identify students based on risk potential, school year, and major. Many of the programs in the EPSS focus on a particular underrepresented minority and a major, such as women and science. The EPSS features many programs of this classification.

K-12 programs focus on motivating students to graduate from high school and eventually attend college. The EPSS database includes far fewer of these types of programs, although inclusion of more of these types of programs are welcome as they can play an important part in readying students for success in college.

At the end of the spectrum, graduate retention programs assist students seeking to obtain a masters degree. Retention programs at this level of education often attempt to increase under-represented populations in a particular field.

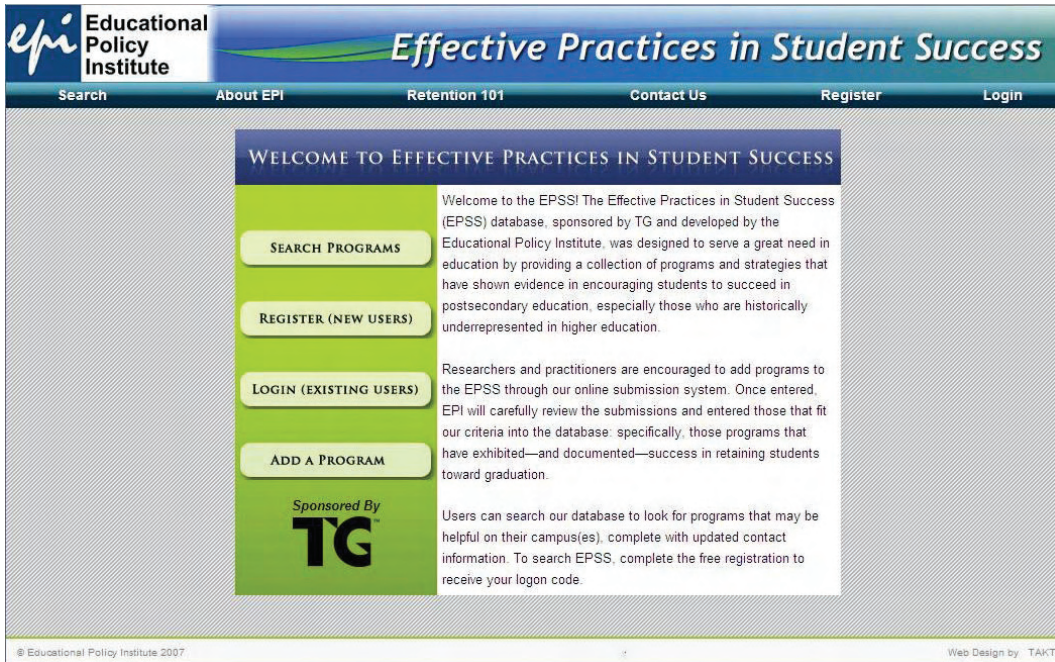
Using EPSS to Complete



Your Campus Retention Goals

Using the EPSS

The EPSS is a complete online tool and is not available in any other medium. The web site is located at www.educationalpolicy.org/epss. Use of the website is free for all users with completion of a simple registration form.



The main splash page of the EPSS provides an easy-to-navigate layout to provide information for users and also directs them to other sections of the web site. At any time, clicking on the "Effective Practices in Student Success" masthead at the top of the page takes users back to this splash page.

In the middle of the splash page is a box with easy-to-find buttons and a brief description of the EPSS. Some of the buttons are already listed on the vertical bar, such as Search and Login. However, users can also click the "Register" button to register to the EPSS, and also "Add a Program" for those who may want to help populate the EPSS (See "Adding Programs" section on Page 22.)

Registration

Registering for the EPSS is a simple process that should take less than a minute for users. The registration process requires a username, password, email address, security question and answer for retrieving passwords, and a first and last name. The password must be at least 7 characters long. All fields are required.

Using the Database

After registering, users can begin to peruse the database using its dynamic filtering device. This process does not require users to go through a separate “search” process, which can be cumbersome. Rather, it automatically filters the programs in the database based on your selection of key criteria.

At first glance, all programs in the EPSS are displayed on the main screen, which users can review individually at the bottom of the page. Users can narrow the search by clicking through the various categories in search of a particular type of program. For example, if a researcher is looking for programs that offer academic services to college sophomores, they would select the correct criteria and the EPSS will then begin filtering the listed programs for those that meet the appropriate classifications. After inputting the desired fields, the database will list only the programs that have those particular characteristics.

The filter variables include:

- State/Province (graphic only lists state) provides a dropdown list of all 50 US states and the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and Micronesia; all 10 Canadian provinces and three territories.
- Program Characteristics includes financial aid, student services, academic services, curriculum & instruction, recruitment, institution wide.
- Program Services includes classroom instruction, tutoring, mentoring, workshops, peer learning groups, assessment and testing, housing/residential, counseling.
- Population Served includes elementary, middle, and high school students, bridge programs (between high school and college), freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, masters, and doctorate/professional.
- Educational Type includes public institutions, private institutions, for-profit institutions, two-year, and four-year institutions.

Sign Up for Your New Account

User Name:

Password:

Confirm Password:

E-mail:

Security Question:

Security Answer:

Passwords must be at least 7 characters

User Profile Information

First Name:

Last Name:

EPI Educational Policy Institute *Effective Practices in Student Success*

Search About EPI Retention 101 Contact Us Change Password Logout

State	Program Areas	Program Services	Population Served	Educational Type
All	<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Aid <input type="checkbox"/> Student Services <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Services <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum & Instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment <input type="checkbox"/> Institution Wide	<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Instruction <input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring <input type="checkbox"/> Mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Workshops <input type="checkbox"/> Peer Learning Groups <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment & Testing <input type="checkbox"/> Housing/Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Middle School <input type="checkbox"/> High School <input type="checkbox"/> Bridge Program <input type="checkbox"/> Freshman <input type="checkbox"/> Sophomore <input type="checkbox"/> Junior <input type="checkbox"/> Senior <input type="checkbox"/> Masters <input type="checkbox"/> Doctorate/Professional	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Private Institution <input type="checkbox"/> For Profit Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Two-Year Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Four-Year Institution

Title	Organization	State	URL	Evidence of Success
A Better Chance Program	A Better Chance, Inc.	New York	http://www.abetterchance.org/	promising
Academic Development Program	University of Texas San Antonio	Texas	http://www.utsa.edu/trcss/adp.html	promising
Academic Summer Enhancement (ASE)	Penn State University	Pennsylvania	http://www.engr.psu.edu/mep/Prospective%20Students	suggestive
Achieving a College Education (ACE+)	Maricopa County Community Colleges	Arizona	http://www.maricopa.edu/resdev/ace/	suggestive

After the EPSS has applied a specific criteria to form a personalized list, the user can begin perusing individual programs by clicking on the green arrow next to the program title to view the full entry (It is also possible to view a full entry without having chosen specific criteria, by simply clicking the green arrow next to the program's title). At this level, the user can view all information in the database regarding this program by scrolling down. Information includes:

1. Program title
2. Organization
3. Program location
4. Program description
5. Mission statement
6. Program goals/expectations
7. Size of institution (if applicable)
8. Institutional type
9. Institutional control
10. Selectivity of institution (if applicable)
11. Institutional areas (e.g., Financial Aid)
12. Program strategies
13. Operational schedule
14. Population served (educational level)
15. Targeted demographic
16. Number of students served annually
17. Evidence of success
18. Program funding
19. Contact information

EPI Educational Policy Institute *Effective Practices in Student Success*

Search About EPI Retention 101 Contact Us Change Password Logout

Program Details [Return to Search](#)

A Better Chance Program

This program has an average Rating of ★★★★★

My Rating: ★★★★★ [Save Rating](#)

Comments:

Organization:	A Better Chance, Inc.
Program Location(s):	New York
Program Description:	Founded in 1963, a Boston-based program called A Better Chance is touted as the only national program that provides gifted minority students access to some of the most academically challenging preparatory educational offerings in public schools, boarding schools, and private schools. Potential participants are put through a rigorous screening process including a battery of tests that demonstrate exemplary ability in math, science, and English. Once identified and accepted into the program, ABC matches them with top preparatory schools, which provide placement and financial aid.
Mission Statement:	The mission of A Better Chance since it was founded in 1963 has been to increase the number of youth of color who are capable of assuming positions of responsibility and leadership in American Society. A Better Chance identifies, recruits, places and supports academically talented students at many of the most rigorous and prestigious college preparatory independent day, boarding, and public schools in the country.
Program Goals/Expectations:	assist talented students of color who have the potential to succeed in higher education
Size of Institution:	
Institutional Type:	Less-Than Two-Year Institution Two-Year Institution (Community College) Four-Year Institution (College/University)

Rating Programs

Original to the EPSS database is a user rating and comment system designed to make the EPSS more accessible and interactive. When logged on, users can rate the information provided on a five-star rating system, and provide any information that they think may help other users. This feature makes the EPSS interactive, which is another unique part of its design. From a user point of view, the stars will show the average rating of all ratings entered. A program's rating is given strictly by users of the EPSS; EPI listed only exemplary programs by their research standards, and does not necessarily support the ratings of all users. The entries are easy to decipher, with program characteristics highlighted in bold.

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Program Details [Return to Search](#)

Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID)

This program has an average Rating of ★★★★★ Not yet Rated

My Rating: ★★★★★ [Save Rating](#)

Comments:

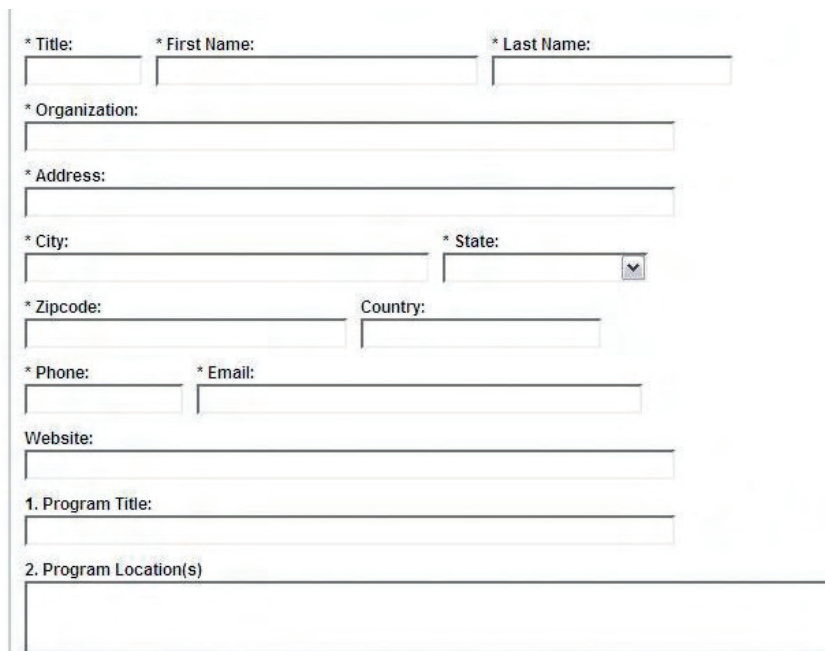
Organization:	AVID Center Headquarters
Program Location(s):	California
Program Description:	The Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) program began in 1980 in the San Diego Unified School District. The program seeks to raise student achievement and increase enrollment in postsecondary education. Students eligible for AVID classes are high school students from low-income, underrepresented ethnic and linguistic backgrounds who have average to high achievement test scores. The key component of the AVID program is participation in the "untracking experiment," or placing underachieving/underrepresented students who would otherwise be in the general or vocational track into college preparatory classes (rigorous coursework). In addition, the students are provided with extensive academic and social support structures at the high school level. Students meet daily in an AVID class with a trained AVID teacher who oversees a rigorous academic curriculum. Two days a week, students meet in small groups for academic tutoring. Two other days are devoted to writing development, field trips, and other motivational activities.
Mission Statement:	
Program Goals/Expectations:	prepare underachieving minority and low-income students (all of whom are performing below their potential) for entrance into four-year colleges and universities
Size of Institution:	
Institutional Type:	Less-Than Two-Year Institution

Adding Programs to the EPSS

The EPSS was designed for the field, to be used and developed by the field. Thus, EPI and TG are hopeful that practitioners will add programs to the site in order for it to keep growing through the EPSS online submission system. To do this, users click “Add a Program” immediately after logging into the site. This will open a new screen that prompts users to fill in the survey, which then asks 18 questions about the program and institution where it exists. The survey is user friendly, made up of drop down screens, radio buttons, and fill in the blanks.

Once you’ve submitted a program, the EPSS will automatically send the user a confirmation email with a copy of their submitted information for their personal records.

However, entering a program does not necessarily mean it will make the EPSS database. Rather, EPI carefully reviews submissions and asks programs that received a conditional rating to submit further information or to clarify their submission. EPI aims to ensure that all entries truly are “effective practices.” In order for a program to be accepted into the database, there must be sufficient documented evidence of success. Special consideration is given to programs that are designed to assist and retain historically-underrepresented students at the postsecondary level. EPI uses outside reviewers to conduct this objective process to reduce bias. All of this is related to EPI’s continuous commitment to quality control.



The image shows a web form for adding a program to the EPSS database. The form is enclosed in a light gray border and contains the following fields:

- * Title: [text input]
- * First Name: [text input]
- * Last Name: [text input]
- * Organization: [text input]
- * Address: [text input]
- * City: [text input]
- * State: [dropdown menu]
- * Zipcode: [text input]
- Country: [text input]
- * Phone: [text input]
- * Email: [text input]
- Website: [text input]
- 1. Program Title: [text input]
- 2. Program Location(s): [text input]

References

Swail, Watson S., Redd, Kenneth, and Perna, Laura W. (2003). Retaining Minority Students in Higher Education. An ASHE-ERIC Reader. San Francisco. CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.



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