

The College Persistence Questionnaire: Esperanza University Institutional Commitment Report

Fall 2009 Freshman Sample

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February 2010

Executive Summary

The most powerful form of intervention takes place in one-on-one sessions with students who have been identified to be at-risk. The *College Persistence Questionnaire (CPQ)* Advisors' Portal provides school personnel with a tool for making these encounters helpful, effective, and fruitful in raising retention rates. It identifies individual students who are most at-risk and supplies an in-depth analysis of the problems each one is experiencing. Testimonials of advisors and counselors who have used it are uniformly and overwhelmingly positive in describing its value in their sessions with individual students.

This Institutional Commitment Report provides a perspective that supplements the one-on-one approach just mentioned. By analyzing the aggregate responses of many students at Esperanza University, patterns and trends emerge that clarify which factors are most important among large groups of students. This perspective presents the opportunity to develop or improve upon large-scale intervention programs which will have maximum effect on retention because they focus on persistence-linked qualities.

Previous research has established that the Institutional Commitment (IC) scale of the *CPQ* is a strong predictor of whether students will persist. In the absence of re-enrollment data, the IC scores are the focus of this report and are used to estimate the reasons why students may decide to stay or leave. The specific goals of this investigation were to: a) determine if the *CPQ* predicts IC, b) identify those factors most strongly associated with IC, and c) offer guidelines for improving retention at Esperanza University.

To accomplish these ends, a series of multiple regressions were performed upon the IC scores of 238 Esperanza students who took the *CPQ* during the fall of 2009. The primary findings were:

1. Regressions of IC scores upon the 67 *CPQ* items were statistically significant, explaining 55% of the variance. Thus, *CPQ* items are a valid and potentially useful predictor of IC.
2. Some modest though statistically significant correlations were found between students' backgrounds and their institutional commitment. Institutional commitment tends to be higher among those (a) whose educational goal is a baccalaureate or graduate degree, or who selected the institution because (b) it provides the academic programs the student desired, or (c) it has an appealing location, or (d) it has a good reputation. Although the relationships between these variables and IC were not strong, they provide some useful information in planning student recruitment strategies. Additionally, the relationships identify groups of students who, needy of higher IC, might benefit from additional services.
3. Items composing the Student Experiences Form of the *CPQ* were much better predictors IC than variables associated with the students' backgrounds. This finding indicates that students' post-matriculation interactions with the academic and social environments at Esperanza have a profound impact on their commitment to the institution.

4. The best predictors of IC were students' scores on Academic and Social Integration, Degree Commitment, Advising Effectiveness, and Collegiate Stress.
5. A number of scales have indirect as well as direct effects on IC. Results suggest that advising is of particular importance. The data are consistent with the premise that effective advising promotes academic and social integration, degree commitment, and lessened stress, which in turn increase IC. Favorable advising also appears to have benefits beyond its role in IC in that it was associated with increased levels of academic efficacy and reduced amounts of financial strain.

Based on these results, we offer the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. Esperanza will be successful in improving IC and subsequent retention to the extent that it augments students' Academic and Social Integration and Degree Commitment, and provides buffers against Collegiate Stress. These four variables should be central to Esperanza's retention efforts.
2. Quality advising will play a critical role in reducing attrition. This finding is not unique to Esperanza. It is one of the most well-established outcomes in the literature.
3. If programmatic changes are implemented, then an evaluation system should be devised to assess the effectiveness of these interventions and to make necessary refinements.
4. A limitation of these conclusions and recommendations is that they are based on IC scores rather than actual enrollment. An investigation analogous to this one should be conducted once it can be determined which of the sampled students return in the fall of 2010.
5. There are many empirically validated programs for improving retention in the scientific literature. Which of these programs should be incorporated into the attrition-reducing efforts at Esperanza depends upon the resources of the institution. Development of retention programs should be guided by the scientific literature and knowledge of the resources that Esperanza can commit to improving retention.

The *College Persistence Questionnaire*: Esperanza University Institutional Commitment Report

Fall 2009 Freshman Sample

Introduction

Approximately half of students who matriculate at American colleges and universities do not graduate within six years. Although retention has long been an issue within higher education, several factors have greatly augmented efforts to reduce attrition rates over the past three decades. An increasing number of jobs require post-high school training. When students drop out, potentially skilled workers must be incorporated into the already overcrowded semi-skilled and unskilled labor force. If the US is to maintain a high standard of living in the twenty-first century, then American colleges and universities must produce an abundance of skilled workers that can successfully compete in a global economy.

The detrimental effect of attrition on the financial health of colleges and universities has stimulated many retention efforts. Funding at many public schools is based on the number of graduates. When financial support is tied to graduation rates, students who discontinue their education represent a loss of income and an unreimbursed expenditure. Small private colleges with neither state support nor large endowments may suffer catastrophic effects if attrition rates are high. Monies spent on recruitment must be increased to offset students who dropout. In some cases, low retention rates can result in the closure of the college itself.

Retention efforts have also increased, because colleges now show a greater sensitivity to students' needs than in the past. Thirty years ago many administrators and faculty saw the college as a crucible, a test ground for separating the weak from the strong. Thankfully, that attitude, though not eliminated, is currently the minority viewpoint. Institutions now see their role as helping students achieve their potentials. Meeting that potential often requires providing students with the support and guidance they need to stay in school.

In our view (Beck and Davidson), the most significant reason for improving retention is that a student's departure often constitutes the death of a dream. Higher education remains the most well travelled path to a good and better life. College graduates will have a greater earning capacity and a broader choice of careers than persons with only a high school diploma. Attrition often precipitates not only reduction in income but an overall lower quality of life.

The decision by Esperanza University to administer the *College Persistence Questionnaire (CPQ)* as part of the school's retention effort demonstrates a commitment to its students. This Institutional Commitment Report provides a perspective that supplements the one-on-one approach offered by the Advisors' Portal. By analyzing the aggregate responses of many students at Esperanza University, patterns and trends emerge that clarify which factors are most important among large groups of students. The specific goals of this

investigation were to: a) determine if the *CPQ* predicts institutional commitment, b) identify those factors most strongly associated with institutional commitment, and c) offer guidelines for improving retention at Esperanza University.

Previous research has established that one of the *CPQ* scales, Institutional Commitment (IC), is a strong predictor of whether students will persist. In the absence of re-enrollment data, the IC scores are the focus of this report and are used to estimate the reasons why students may decide to stay or leave Esperanza University.

Method

Participants

The respondents were 238 freshmen enrolled in Esperanza Seminar (ESPSEM 101) and completed the *CPQ* as part of a course requirement. Student responded online at their convenience. Seventy per cent of the sample was female; 80% of the students reported that they were Caucasian; 80% indicated that they did not work; 95% lived in a dormitory or residence hall; 42% were on scholarship, 56% had taken out a loan, and 26% received no financial aid; and 22% were first generation college students (neither parent had attempted college).

The Instrument

The *CPQ* is composed of three components or forms. The Student Background Form (see Table 1) is subdivided into three types of questions: Demographic and Family items (e.g., sex, ethnicity, marital status, parent's education), Work and Financial Resources items (e.g., hours working, sources of income), and Reasons for Attending items (e.g., friends attend, location, academic programs).

The Student Experiences Form is the most important part of the *CPQ*. A series of investigations involving more than 6000 students yielded 10 distinct, homogeneous clusters or scales. The scales (and their key components) are: *Institutional Commitment* (loyalty, intention to reenroll, confidence in school choice), *Degree Commitment* (the personal importance and value that students and their supportive network place on degree completion; sense of certainty in degree attainment), *Academic Integration* (positive views of instruction, instructors, and own intellectual growth; awareness of connections between academics and careers), *Social Integration* (sense of belonging, shared values, and similarity to others; positive involvement behaviors), *Collegiate Stress* (feelings of distress, pressure, and sacrifice), *Academic Motivation* (interest and enjoyment in academic tasks; willingness to spend extra time), *Scholastic Conscientiousness* (timely performance of academic responsibilities), *Academic Efficacy* (confidence in academic skills and outcomes), *Financial Strain* (financial worries and difficulties; sense of disadvantage relative to others), and *Advising Effectiveness* (positive views of advising and school communication processes). The meaning of these scales is clarified by examining the items that constitute them, presented in Table 2.

The Student Experiences Form has 50 close-ended items, answered on a five-point Likert scale. Although the response choices for the questions differ depending on the item wording, all are converted to a favorability continuum that ranges from -2 (least favorable answer) to +2 (most favorable answer).

The Institution Specific Form consists of items suggested by staff, faculty, and administrators of a given school. It was developed to examine issues that are pertinent to a particular school but are not addressed by the Student Background or Student Experiences Forms.

Procedure

Students took Student Background and Student Experiences Forms of the *CPQ* online during the 2009 fall semester. Most persons completed the *CPQ* in less than 40 minutes.

Results and Discussion

Validity of the Institutional Commitment (IC) Scores at Esperanza

While the psychometric credibility of the *CPQ* has been established across many schools, it is important to verify its validity at Esperanza so that the meaning of a low IC score there, which places students “at-risk”, is clear. An important indicator of the validity of the IC is its statistical association with other qualities assessed on the instrument: the students’ background information and/or the favorableness of their views of the school. This type of validity, commonly known as concurrent, was examined by regressing IC scores on the relevant individual items in the Student Background Form and the Student Experiences Form (except those used to form the IC scale). The results were highly statistically significant: $F(69, 168) = 2.93, p < .001, R = .74, R^2 = .55$. This finding indicates that further analyses will reveal the variables that have the greatest impact on determining the institutional commitment of Esperanza students.

Delineation of the Correlates of IC at Esperanza: The Student Background Form

A second regression was performed upon the IC scores to determine the contribution of the background variables to institutional commitment. The results were statistically significant, but the total amount of variance explained was substantially reduced once the items from the Student Experiences Form were removed from the analysis: $F(19, 218) = 3.09, p < .001, R = .46, R^2 = .21$.

Bivariates were obtained by correlating each of the variables on the Student Background Form with students’ mean IC scores (see Table 1 for codes of the categorical variables). Several items under Reasons for Attending Esperanza were statistically significant.

High institutional commitment was associated with having the goal of earning a baccalaureate or graduate degree ($r(238) = .41, p < .001$), or choosing the school because its “reputation” ($r(238) = .23, p < .001$), its “academic programs” ($r(238) = .33, p < .001$), or its “location” ($r(238) = .28, p < .001$). None of the Demographic and Family variables or the Work and Financial variables attained conventional levels of statistical significance.

Although the statistically significant correlations from the Background Form were of modest magnitude, they do allow us to begin to develop a profile of students with a strong commitment to Esperanza. Students with high IC scores tend to be degree seeking and selected the institution because it had a favorable overall reputation, provided academic programs the student desired, and was situated in an appealing location. The profile of these pre-college background factors can be useful in two ways. First, it may aid in recruiting by identifying the types of prospective students who are likely to stick. Second, the profile may indicate that those with certain background characteristics are being underserved once they matriculate.

Delineation of the Correlates of IC at Esperanza: The Student Experiences Form

IC mean scores were regressed upon the 50 items composing the Student Experiences Form: $F(50, 187) = 3.33, p < .001, R = .69, R^2 = .47$. It is noteworthy that a much higher proportion of the variance was explained with the variables from the Student Experiences than the Student Background Form. This finding suggests that during the first semester students’ interactions with the academic and social environments have a powerful effect on their commitment to Esperanza University.

Individual items tend to be far less reliable than are scale scores. Therefore, an additional analysis was conducted in which IC was regressed upon the other nine scales composing the Student Experiences Form. As expected, the result was highly significant but the explained variance was somewhat lower than the analysis using individual items: $F(9, 228) = 12.29, p < .001, R = .57, R^2 = .33$.

A subsequent examination of the bivariate correlations was very helpful in understanding the contributors to institutional commitment at Esperanza. As Table 3 shows, the correlations of five of the nine scales with IC were statistically significant at the .01 level, two-tailed: Academic Integration, Social Integration, Degree Commitment, Collegiate Stress, and Advising Effectiveness. The correlations of Academic and Social Integration with IC were more robust than the others.

A closer look at Table 3 suggests that a variety of strategies could be used to raise the students’ institutional commitment. The most obvious is to make improvements in a quality that has a strong association with IC, such as Social Integration. A complementary

approach is to develop an intervention for a variable that is not only associated with IC but also is “networked” (or correlated) with other variables associated with IC. Positive changes in a networked variable might radiate to others, yielding multiple benefits and uplifting forces on IC. For example, consider Academic Integration, which correlates not only with IC but also with several other key variables (each of which are correlated with IC): Social Integration, Degree Commitment, Collegiate Stress, and Advising Effectiveness. Students who become more academically integrated might also tend to experience positive increments in their views of advising, their social relationships with other students, their commitments to earning a degree, and so on. Because each of these variables also plays a role in institutional commitment, the potential benefits are substantial. Of course, it should not be forgotten that these relationships are correlational and that causality cannot be assumed.

These data also show statistical evidence of the importance of good advising. This variable was associated with six other scales, including (a) IC, (b) other scales in the IC network (Social and Academic Integration, Degree Commitment, and Collegiate Stress), and (c) Financial Strain, which was not directly correlated with IC but has indirect associations. A tentative model garnered from these data is that good advising facilitates the students’ academic and social integration and degree commitment, and it reduces their stress, thereby contributing to the positive effect of these variables on institutional commitment. Also, it also has the potential to provide students with information that alleviates their financial strain. By “advising” we are not restricting ourselves to the activities of counselors. Advising is an institution-wide responsibility and the quality of advising reflects the actions of counselors, faculty, and administrators.

Limitations and Recommendations

Prior research has shown that in the absence of re-enrollment data, IC scores tend to be the best indicator of whether a student will persist at a given school. IC scores are a good but not a perfect predictor of retention. This study needs to be followed by an analogous investigation once it can be determined whether an individual returns during the fall of 2010.

A second limitation is that the sample size was small for those regressions employing individual items as predictors. Nevertheless, given the strength of the findings, we can be reasonably confident regarding the reliability of these outcomes.

It is noted that the sample included some but not all of the freshmen at Esperanza. The degree to which this limits generalization depends upon why students did not take the *CPQ*. If taking the *CPQ* was dependent upon factors unrelated to the student, then extrapolation is more warranted than if the respondents and non-respondents differed from each other in important ways.

The regression of IC scores on *CPQ* items is encouraging in that it indicates that the Advisor Portal will, with a high degree of accuracy, identify those students most likely to not continue their education at Esperanza. This information can be very helpful in that it distinguishes those students who might most benefit from one-on-one interactions with college personnel.

It is also encouraging that items from the Student Experiences Form tended to be better predictors of IC than items from the Student Background Form. Background variables (e.g., sex, parents' educations) are not subject to change while Experience variables (e.g., social integration) are more malleable and responsive to programmatic interventions. This result also emphasizes the importance of measuring student interactions with the academic and social environments and justifies the decision to wait some weeks into the semester before identifying at-risk students.

The data also provide direction in allocating resources and designing programs that will be most effective in reducing attrition at Esperanza. As we previously mentioned, increasing the students' academic and social integration and their commitment to the goal of earning a degree will be critical to your retention efforts, along with maintaining effective advising and providing interventions to assist students with their stress levels. The prognosis is favorable if programs are instituted that make a positive impact on these qualities in students. Otherwise, retention at Esperanza might fluctuate as a function of external variables (e.g., the economy) over which the institution has very little control.

Once programs are established, we can be reasonably certain that the persons charged with instituting these programs will believe that they are successful. Such testimonials, though useful, are obviously subject to bias. Therefore, an objective evaluation system needs to be developed to determine if programs are achieving their goals and to better understand why retention rates vary from year to year. For example, let's assume that a new program to decrease attrition was begun at Esperanza. If effective, then we might expect that students exposed to the program would show more favorable scores on the *CPQ* scales than previous students not exposed to the program.

Now that we have identified the variables that tend to be the most critical determinants of retention at Esperanza, the next logical question is: What programs should be employed to address these issues and reduce attrition?

Developing an effective retention program requires knowledge of the empirical literature on interventions, the characteristics of the students who will be affected by the program, and the infrastructure, staff and financial resources of the institution. Although we are reasonably well versed in the retention literature and have learned a great deal about your students from this study, we do not know enough about the resources Esperanza might dedicate to reducing attrition. Therefore, it will require Esperanza personnel to design the programs that best fit your institution.

Fortunately, there is a rapidly growing list of empirically validated interventions that can guide your program development. The six sources listed below provide an excellent introduction to the field. You will find that some of the interventions would not be practical to implement at Esperanza. Others will be within the realm of your staff and financial resources. The key is to find a set of interventions that builds upon the strengths of your institution.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How College Affects Students, Volume 2: A Third Decade of Research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass (ISBN 0-7879-1044-9).

Seidman, A. (2005). *College Student Retention: Formula for Success*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers (ISBN 0-275-98193-2)

Upcraft, M.L., Gardner, J. N., & Barefoot, B. O. (2005). *Challenging and Supporting the First-Year Student*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass (ISBN 0-7879-5968-5)

Gordon, V.N., Habley, W. R., Grites, T. J. & Associates (2008). *Academic advising: A comprehensive handbook (2nd ed.)*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass (ISBN 978-0-470-37170-1).

National Resource Center for The First Year Experience and Students in Transition. Retrieved January 15, 2010, from <http://www.sc.edu/fye/center/index.html>

Nutt, Charlie L. (2003). *Academic advising and student retention and persistence. NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources*. Retrieved January 15, 2010, from <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Clearinghouse/AdvisingIssues/retention.htm>.

Table 1

Student Background Variables By Type

<i>Demographic and Family</i>	<i>Work and Financial</i>	<i>Reasons For Attending</i>
Sex	Total Hours Working	Close By
Ethnicity	Work On-Campus	Friends Attend
Native Language	Scholarship	School's Reputation
Marital Status	Loan	Academic Program
Residence	Lottery	Family Attended
Mother's Education		Sports Program
Father's Education		Appealing Location
		Degree Seeking

Note. Codes for categorical variables were: Sex (0 = Female, 1 = Male); Ethnicity (0 = Non-Caucasian, 1 = Caucasian); Native Language (0= Not English, 1 = English); Marital Status (0 = Not Married, 1 = Married); Work On-Campus (0 = No, 1 = Yes); Scholarship (0 = No, 1 = Yes); Loan (0 = No, 1 = Yes); Lottery (0 = No, 1 = Yes); Close By (0 = No, 1 = Yes); Friends Attend (0 = No, 1 = Yes); School's Reputation (0 = No, 1 = Yes); Academic Program (0 = No, 1 = Yes); Family Attended (0 = No, 1 = Yes); Sports Program (0 = No, 1 = Yes); Appealing Location (0 = No, 1 = Yes); Degree Seeking (0=No, 1=Yes).

Table 2

College Persistence Questionnaire Version 3: Items By Factor

Factor 1: Academic Integration

1. On average across all your courses, how interested are you in the things that are being said during class discussions?
very interested / somewhat interested / neutral / somewhat disinterested / very disinterested / not applicable
13. In general, how satisfied are you with the quality of instruction you are receiving here?
very satisfied / somewhat satisfied / neutral / somewhat dissatisfied / very dissatisfied / not applicable
20. How well do you understand the thinking of your instructors when they lecture or ask students to answer questions in class?
very well / well / neutral / not well / not at all well / not applicable
28. How satisfied are you with the extent of your intellectual growth and interest in ideas since coming here?
very satisfied / somewhat satisfied / neutral / somewhat dissatisfied / very dissatisfied / not applicable
36. How much of a connection do you see between what you are learning here and your future career possibilities?
very much / much / some / little / very little / not applicable
43. How concerned about your intellectual growth are the faculty here?
very concerned / somewhat concerned / neutral / somewhat unconcerned / very unconcerned / not applicable
57. How would you rate the quality of the instruction you are receiving here?
excellent/good/fair/poor/very poor/not applicable

Factor 2: Financial Strain

9. How often do you worry about having enough money to meet your needs?
very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

15. How difficult is it for you or your family to be able to handle college costs?

very difficult / somewhat difficult / neutral / somewhat easy / very easy / not applicable

29. When considering the financial costs of being in college, how often do you feel unable to do things that other students here can afford to do?

very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

46. How much of a financial strain is it for you to purchase the essential resources you need for courses such as books and supplies?

very large strain / somewhat of a strain / neutral / a little strain / hardly any strain at all / not applicable

Factor 3: Social Integration

2. What is your overall impression of the other students here?

very favorable / somewhat favorable / neutral / somewhat unfavorable / very unfavorable / not applicable

14. How much have your interactions with other students had an impact on your personal growth, attitudes, and values?

very much / much / some / little / very little / not applicable

24. How strong is your sense of connectedness with others (faculty, students, staff) on this campus?

very strong / somewhat strong / neutral / somewhat weak / very weak / not applicable

30. When you think about your overall social life here (friends, college organizations, extracurricular activities, and so on), how satisfied are you with yours?

very satisfied / somewhat satisfied / neutral / somewhat dissatisfied / very dissatisfied / not applicable

38. How much have your interactions with other students had an impact on your intellectual growth and interest in ideas?

very much / much / some / little / very little / not applicable

44. How much do you think you have in common with other students here?

very much / much / some / little / very little / not applicable

51. How often do you wear clothing with this college's emblems?

very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

Factor 4: Degree Commitment

3. How supportive is your family of your pursuit of a college degree, in terms of their encouragement and expectations?

very supportive / somewhat supportive / neutral / somewhat unsupportive / very unsupportive / not applicable

17. At this moment in time, how strong would you say your commitment is to earning a college degree, here or elsewhere?

very strong / somewhat strong / neutral / somewhat weak / very weak / not applicable

27. When you think of the people who mean the most to you (friends and family), how disappointed do you think they would be if you quit school?

very disappointed / somewhat disappointed / neutral / not very disappointed / not at all disappointed / not applicable

32. There are so many things that can interfere with students making progress toward a degree, feelings of uncertainty about finishing you are likely to occur along the way. At this moment in time, how certain are that you will earn a college degree?

very certain / somewhat certain / neutral / somewhat uncertain / very uncertain / not applicable

41. After beginning college, students sometimes discover that a college degree is not quite as important to them as it once was.

How strong is your intention to persist in your pursuit of degree, here or elsewhere?

very strong / somewhat strong / neutral / somewhat weak / very weak / not applicable

58. When you consider the benefits of having a college degree and the costs of earning it, how much would you say that the benefits outweigh the costs, if at all?

benefits far outweigh the costs / benefits somewhat outweigh the costs / benefits and costs are equal / costs somewhat outweigh the benefits / costs far outweigh the benefits / not applicable

Factor 5: Collegiate Stress

4. Students differ quite a lot in how distressed they get over various aspect of college life. Overall, how much stress would you say that you experience while attending this institution?

very much stress / much stress / some stress / a little stress / very little stress / not applicable

18. How much pressure do you feel when trying to meet deadlines for course assignments?

extreme pressure / much pressure / some pressure / a little pressure / hardly any pressure at all / not applicable

33. How often do you feel overwhelmed by the academic workload here?

very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

50. How much do other aspects of your life suffer because you are a college student?

very much / much / some / little / very little / not applicable

Factor 6: Advising

5. How easy is it to get answers to your questions about things related to your education here?

very easy / somewhat easy / neutral / somewhat hard / very hard / not applicable

19. How satisfied are you with the academic advising you receive here?

very satisfied / somewhat satisfied / neutral / somewhat dissatisfied / very dissatisfied / not applicable

34. How well does this institution communicate important information to students such as academic rules, degree requirements, individual course requirements, campus news and events, extracurricular activities, tuition costs, financial aid and scholarship opportunities?

very well / well / neutral / not well / not at all well / not applicable

48. How much input do you think you can have on the decision-making process here (on matters such as course offerings, rules and regulations, and registration procedures)?

very much / much / some / little / very little / not applicable

56. How would you rate the academic advisement you receive here?
excellent / good / fair / poor / very poor / not applicable

Factor 7: Scholastic Conscientiousness

7. College students have many academic responsibilities. How often do you forget those that you regard as important?
very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

21. How often do you turn in assignments past the due date?
very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

37. How often do you miss class for reasons other than illness or participation in school-related activities?
very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

52. How often do you arrive late for classes, meetings, and other college events?
very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

Factor 8: Institutional Commitment

8. How confident are you that this is the right college or university for you?
very confident / somewhat confident / neutral / somewhat unconfident / very unconfident / not applicable

22. How much thought have you given to stopping your education here (perhaps transferring to another college, going to work, or leaving for other reasons)?
a lot of thought / some thought / neutral / little thought / very little thought / not applicable

59. How likely is it that you will reenroll here next semester?
very likely / somewhat likely / neutral / somewhat unlikely / very unlikely / not applicable

60. How likely is it you will earn a degree from here?
very likely / somewhat likely / neutral / somewhat unlikely / very unlikely / not applicable

Factor 9: Academic Motivation

6. In general, how enthused are you about doing academic tasks?

very enthusiastic / somewhat enthusiastic / neutral / somewhat unenthusiastic / very unenthusiastic / not applicable

11. Some courses seem to take a lot more time than others. How much extra time are you willing to devote to your studies in those courses?

very much extra time / much extra time / some extra time / a little extra time / very little extra time / not applicable

16. How inclined are you to do most of your studying within 24 hours of a test rather than earlier?

very inclined / somewhat inclined / a little inclined / not very inclined / not at all inclined / not applicable

23. How often do you read educationally-related material not assigned in courses?

very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

31. Students vary widely in their view of what constitutes a good course, including the notion that the best course is one that asks students to do very little. In your own view, how much work would be asked of students in a really good course?

very much / much / some / little / very little / not applicable

39. How often do you encounter course assignments that are actually enjoyable to do?

very often / somewhat often / sometimes / rarely / very rarely / not applicable

45. This semester, how much time do you spend studying each week relative to the number of credit hours you are taking?

Assume each credit hour equals one hour of studying per week.

many more hours studying than the credit hours / a few more hours studying than the credit hours /

the same number of hours studying as the credit hours / a few less hours studying than the credit hours /

a lot less hours studying than the credit hours / not applicable

53. How much time do you spend proofreading writing assignments before submitting them?

a lot / some / little / very little / none / not applicable

Factor 10: Academic Efficacy

10. How confident are you that you can get the grades you want?

very confident / somewhat confident / neutral / somewhat unconfident / very unconfident / not applicable

25. How good are you at correctly anticipating what will be on tests beforehand?

very good / somewhat good / neutral / somewhat bad / very bad / not applicable

40. When you consider the techniques you use to study, how effective do you think your study skills are?

very effective / somewhat effective / neutral / somewhat ineffective / very ineffective / not applicable

47. When you are waiting for a submitted assignment to be graded, how assured do you feel that the work you have done is acceptable?

very assured / somewhat assured / neutral / somewhat unassured / very unassured / not applicable

54. How much doubt do you have about being able to make the grades you want?

very much doubt / much doubt / some doubt / little doubt / very little doubt / not applicable

Table 3

Factors of the Student Experiences Form of the College Persistence Questionnaire: Intercorrelation Matrix

	IC	AI	FS	SI	DC	CS	A	SC	AM	AE
IC	1.00	.32 *	.09	.49 *	.27 *	.22 *	.22 *	.07	.05	.05
AI		1.00	.12	.37 *	.45 *	.35 *	.60 *	.13	.32 *	.59 *
FS			1.00	.11	.17 *	.37 *	.20 *	.13	-.02	.15
SI				1.00	.23 *	.15	.35 *	.00	.15	.12
DC					1.00	.19 *	.30 *	.32 *	.25 *	.46 *
CS						1.00	.20 *	.15	.06	.37 *
A							1.00	.09	.10	.34 *
SC								1.00	.21 *	.27 *
AM									1.00	.40 *
AE										1.00

Note. IC = Institutional Commitment; AI = Academic Integration; FS = Financial Strain; DC = Degree Commitment; CS = Collegiate Stress; A = Advising; SC = Scholastic Conscientiousness; AM = Academic Motivation; AE = Academic Efficacy.

* $p < .01$, two-tailed.