

## Editorial

Retention and persistence are at the forefront of attention by students, parents, and state and federal lawmakers. We continue several decades of increasing education costs and the perception of steadily decreasing returns on investment of time and money required to achieve a higher education credential. Thus, a special issue devoted to retention is timely. Included in this special issue of the Higher Research Learning Communication journal are a number of thought pieces and literature reviews that represent diverse perspectives on retention.

Dr. Watson Scott Swail provides a provocative essay, *A Different Viewpoint on Retention*, in which he challenges readers to reflect on the key issues regarding retention of students. While he provides compelling statistics on the growing costs of getting a college degree, he reminds us that the core issue is one of student preparation. Dr. Swail also encourages institutions to determine what success means in its own context, through statistical analysis of predictors of retention and persistence whose results can be socialized at all who support students at the institution.

Dr. Gary Burkholder and Nicole Holland provide an international perspective on retention and persistence. Through introductory analysis of the state of retention and persistence research in areas outside the United States, they encourage readers to think about retention more globally. The authors ask the readers to consider how what we have learned about higher education, as well as retention and persistence, in the United States, can help researchers and practitioners to address higher education concerns in more meaningful and helpful ways. Dr. Rebecca Jobe and Jim Lenio then provide insight on retention and persistence research across student and institutional types as well as across educational sectors. The authors convincingly suggest that retention is a concern that should provide a common ground for all institutions, regardless of type or sector, for research and application that ultimately can lead to student success.

Two literature reviews look at different aspects of retention. Dr. Judie Brill and her coauthors examine the critical need of improving doctoral student retention. They advocate for a mentoring model that incorporates aspects of peer and faculty mentoring. The authors also propose incorporation of developmental projects, such as scholarly publication, that can help improve retention by providing a roadmap of how to be successful after obtaining the doctoral degree. Dr. Iris Yob takes a novel approach to retention by connecting it to service learning. Her theoretical and empirical approach to integrating two lines of research—one on service learning and the other on the longer-term impacts of service learning on student persistence—set a foundation for pilot studies that explore the impact of service learning.

Retention and persistence are complex issues; while a single special issue won't address the multifaceted challenges associated with getting students to graduation, such publications can foster ideas that form the next generations of research in this area. It is our hope that this issue helps generate some of these important questions.

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