

*The following report was prepared by North Carolina community college students participating in the November 2006 Student Leadership Institute. Students were asked to brainstorm ways of improving retention at North Carolina community colleges.*

## **Retention**

We decided to conduct a short skit so that the audience could visually picture the “problems” as we exposed them one by one. We then decided to display the “solutions” in the same order that the “problems” were introduced. The three that were chosen proved to be the most common issues that were experienced in the academic settings of each member of the group. Below is a compiled list of solutions (if you will), that we agreed would be the most effective:

- **Faculty Involvement and Influence**
  - Learn student’s names as quickly as possible
  - At the end of each class, speak to “problem” student individually
  - Email student should the student miss class
  - Provide positive reinforcement whenever possible
  - Listen to students’ comments and opinions
  - Take initiative to meet with struggling students
  - Create opportunities for student leaders in class
  - Conference with students pertaining to their progress
  - Interact with the students during lectures
  - Make lectures available to students who have missed class
  
- **Resource Awareness**
  - Take students on a tour of the different study areas, resource centers and counseling areas
  - Create proactive programs and services based on a survey of students’ needs
  - Ensure institutional systems are student oriented
  - Offer a comprehensive list of services offered by the school and county to students during registration
  - Offer tutoring at off campus locations for those online students who can not make it to campus
  - Initiate peer counseling (student to student)
  - Ensure students are aware of student led group organizations
  
- **Personalized Experience**
  - Have counselors visit classes with “at risk” students
  - Have work studies call students that have withdrawn or missed a semester of classes before registration to see if they are returning, if they need assistance, and to inform them of registration times
  - Have students survey students via phone or internet on experiences and necessities
  
- **Academic Flexibility**
  - Offer classes both seated and online which follow the same schedule to allow students to switch mid-semester if needed
  - Ensure all classes are offered day, night and online

*(Developed by: NCCC – Student Leadership Institute participants, 11/10/2006)*