In the following report, Hanover Research reviews steps U.S. universities are taking to increase undergraduate retention and persistence. The report focuses in particular on initiatives at institutions with large commuter populations and on the use of on-campus student employment to support student success.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND KEY FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

Student retention remains a persistent topic of debate within higher education. In the United States, first- to second-year retention rates continue to hover around 70 percent nationwide. Various practices seem to be effective in improving student retention, and academic support in particular can be vital. However, other aspects of the student experience, such as social integration, can have also have significant effects on retention.

This report examines some of the ways U.S. institutions are seeking to improve student retention rates, focusing in particular on the experience of nonresidential, or “commuter,” institutions and on programs that use on-campus employment to support student success. The report comprises three sections:

- **Section I: The Problem of Student Retention** provides a brief overview of the current status of student retention in the United States and some of the most important factors affecting it.
- **Section II: Initiatives at Nonresidential Institutions** examines some of the approaches nonresidential institutions have taken to improving student retention, including a profile of programs at San Diego State University.
- **Section III: On-Campus Employment and Retention** explores how some institutions have used on-campus work opportunities to keep students engaged and improve their academic success, including profiles of programs at the University of Texas at El Paso and Northwest Missouri State University.

The key findings of the report are presented below.

**KEY FINDINGS**

- The challenges faced by commuter students can reduce their likelihood of persisting in higher education. Commuter students, or those who live off campus, often lack opportunities to engage with their institution’s academic community, which is known to have a negative effect on persistence.

- Universities seek to improve commuter student retention rates both by housing more students on campus and by designing programs for off-campus students. One recent trend among urban, nonresidential institutions in the United States has been to increase on-campus housing capacity and to encourage students to live on campus. This essentially turns commuter students into residential students and provides them with the benefits, such as social integration, that residential students enjoy.
- Programs that provide off-campus students with a sense of community can improve their persistence in higher education. San Diego State University, for instance, has designed learning communities for commuter students, in which they take classes with the same, small group, creating an atmosphere more akin to high school than to a large university. Combined with academic support (e.g., tutoring) for weaker students, this structure has produced positive outcomes for participants and is being expanded in scale within the University.

- Student employment that is on campus can improve retention rates, as long as it is not too time-consuming. The literature on the effects of student employment during higher education is mixed, but substantial evidence supports the value of limited employment – typically, for fewer than 20 hours per week – that takes place on campus and, ideally, ties in with students’ academic work and career goals. Employment that is off campus or that takes more than 20 hours per week, however, can have detrimental effects on student persistence. Most of the universities discussed in this report cap student employment by the institution at 20 hours per week or less.

- Student employment can be even more effective for commuter students than for residential students. Campus employment provides commuter students with a connection to the campus beyond the classroom that they might otherwise lack, and students value this aspect of on-campus jobs. A number of institutions with high commuter populations have higher retention rates for student employees than for non-employees, and at least one, Marymount University, has even documented a higher retention rate for commuter students employed on campus than for residential students employed on campus.
SECTION I: THE PROBLEM OF STUDENT RETENTION

THE CURRENT STATUS OF STUDENT RETENTION IN THE UNITED STATES

In the United States, approximately three out of 10 first-year undergraduates do not return for their second year, as shown below. This rate improves somewhat among four-year institutions, including public four-year institutions, but even here only around 80 percent of students are retained through the second year.

![Figure 1.1: U.S. Undergraduate Retention Rates, by Institutional Type*](image)

Source: U.S. Department of Education
* Rates are for full-time students, based on the number of first-time students who return the following fall.

Attrition of this sort has costs both for individuals and institutions. Student dropouts who borrow money to fund their education are left with the debt but not the degree, and may suffer “psychological and emotional consequences” as well. Institutions lose revenue and must invest additional resources in recruitment to replace lost students; one recent study estimated the annual cost of attrition to U.S. institutions at $16.5 billion, with individual institutions losing as much as $100 million.

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Accordingly, colleges and universities devote significant effort to improving student retention. A 2009 College Board survey of U.S. institutions found that most track their retention rates, use basic retention measures such as “early warning systems,” and employ retention committees and retention coordinators to organize these efforts.\(^3\) Many retention efforts focus, appropriately, on supporting students’ academic success. This can include: identifying courses that are difficult to complete and have high failure rates; having honors programs for advanced students; mandatory, one-on-one advising by professional staff; establishing learning communities; and programs designed specifically for students who are at risk academically.\(^4\)

Academic preparation and academic engagement are recognized as critical variables in determining a student’s persistence, and the earliest retention research established that academic success may be the “dominant factor” in preventing student attrition.\(^5\) However, since at least the 1970s, scholars have also recognized that “social integration” also plays an important role in student retention, including “the interactions a student has with all university members (peers, faculty, staff, and administrators).”\(^6\)

Social integration can be particularly important for students in primarily nonresidential (or, “commuter”) institutions. As noted by the student retention scholar Vincent Tinto, more recent research has recognized important distinctions between residential and nonresidential settings, particularly as students at nonresidential institutions may have limited opportunities for engagement outside of their classes.\(^7\) To explore this particular aspect of student retention in more detail, the remainder of this report examines practices that U.S. colleges and universities have implemented to improve the retention of commuter students or to engage students outside of the classroom, focusing in the latter case on the use of on-campus employment.
SECTION II: INITIATIVES AT NONRESIDENTIAL INSTITUTIONS

COMMUTER STUDENTS AND RETENTION

As noted in Section I, in seeking to improve student retention and persistence, nonresidential or commuter colleges face a different set of challenges from more traditional, residential institutions. Internally, commuter institutions often lack “well-defined and structured social communities for students to establish membership”; simultaneously, students at these institutions face external challenges as they “typically experience conflicts among their obligations to family, work, and college.” These factors can lead to lower levels of student engagement, which in turn can reduce retention rates.

An analysis of students at Sam Houston State University, for instance, found that “commuter students are less likely to be involved in school-sponsored activities, less likely to believe the university is distinct; less likely to believe the university has a good reputation, and less likely to identify with the university.” This has consequences for long-term loyalty to the institution (e.g., involvement with the Alumni Association), but also has consequences for students’ success while enrolled.

Some commuter institutions have approached the problem of student retention by essentially turning commuter students into residential students. These institutions encourage first-year students, and particularly at-risk students, to live on campus, “using residence halls as a means of retaining students who may be underprepared and overwhelmed by college, getting them more engaged with the university and boosting academic performance.”

Urban institutions such as Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, Arizona State University, and the University of Missouri-Kansas City have all expanded their residential

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11 Ibid., pp. 143-144.
capacity in recent years in order to bring more students on campus.\textsuperscript{13} The University of Central Florida, largely a commuter institution, where nearly 30 percent of first-year students live off-campus,\textsuperscript{14} boasts a higher retention rate for first-year students who live on campus,\textsuperscript{15} and has an institutional goal of providing on-campus housing for 80 percent of first-year students in order to “[enhance] the first-year experience of [the University’s] students and the overall collegiate environment.”\textsuperscript{16}

San Diego State University, which is profiled below, has also sought to increase the number of first-year students living on campus in order to improve retention rates. However, the University has also pursued a number of complementary retention initiatives for first-year students who continue to live off campus. Given the likelihood that some proportion of students will always need to live off campus, even during their first year, San Diego State’s approach suggests a way for institutions to tackle student retention in a comprehensive manner, regardless of where students live.

**Commuter Learning Communities: San Diego State University**

San Diego State University is a “primarily nonresidential” institution.\textsuperscript{17} It has a relatively large commuter population: 84 percent of all undergraduates live off-campus or commute, including 28 percent of first-time freshmen.\textsuperscript{18} Since at least 2010, the University has been working to improve the academic success of its commuter students. Around that time, an internal analysis of outcomes for high-risk Latino students at San Diego State showed that the “strongest factor” separating successful from unsuccessful students was on-campus residence: students living on campus were performing as well or better than non-Latino students, while those living off-campus were doing worse. The study even found that low-risk, “college ready” students who lived off-campus were performing less well than high-risk students living on-campus.\textsuperscript{19}

The University’s response was two-fold. First, it began an outreach program to inform incoming students about on-campus residence opportunities. Second, it initiated a series of learning communities for commuter students, designed to “[provide] commuters with many of the services provided to students living in residence halls” and to offer them a “smaller community within the larger university setting.”\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{15} Moses, V. “Students Living On Campus Experience Higher Retention, Graduation Rates.” University of Central Florida. March 6, 2013. http://today.ucf.edu/students-living-on-campus-experience-higher-retention-graduation-rates/


\textsuperscript{17} “San Diego State University.” Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/lookup_listings/view_institution.php?unit_id=122409


\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
The commuter learning communities were based on San Diego State’s existing learning communities model, which entails “enrolling [students] in specific classes together” so that they can form relationships with other students, in a manner similar to high school classes. The class sections for 2014’s commuter learning communities, for instance, will include 15 to 16 students; by contrast, more typical classes at San Diego State can include as many as 500 students. At present, the learning community course sequences cover nine units, including:

- **Summer orientation seminar** (1 unit): This seminar, called “In College Shape” takes place in the week preceding the fall semester.
- **Fall freshman transition course** (1 unit): The University Seminar, taken on a pass/fail basis, uses web-based and face-to-face instruction to engage students with the “academic community” and “connect [them] to faculty, peers, and their discipline early in their college career.”
- **General education course** (3 units): Currently, the sociology, psychology, and political science departments offer these sections, but the University is planning to expand the number of participating departments.
- **General education discussion and analysis section** (1 unit): This section provides “additional academic support” for the three-unit general education course.
- **Rhetoric and writing studies course** (3 units): The learning communities enroll students in a rhetoric and writing studies (RWS) section that is equally small as their general education section.

Students also receive intensive tutoring support, and participate in activities such as community service. Enrollment in a learning community is mandatory for certain commuter students as a condition of their admission to the University; although this does not yet encompass all remedial commuter students, the University is pursuing “required participation” for this group.

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The first commuter learning community was Casa Azteca, which serves at-risk students from specific neighborhoods in south San Diego. Piloted in the fall of 2010 with 13 students, the program had expanded to 80 students by the fall of 2012. For the fall of 2014, San Diego State has created 250 spaces for Casa Azteca and another commuter learning community, Aztec Freshman Connection, which serves at-risk students from other areas of San Diego. A third commuter learning community, Compact Scholars, serves low-risk, or “college ready,” commuter students. The University has created 200 spaces for the Compact Scholars program for the fall of 2014.

In addition to the learning communities, San Diego State has also made plans for the creation of an Office of Commuter Life and Engagement, which would “[provide] services and space to meet the basic needs of commuter and off-campus students,” among other aims intended to help increase retention and graduation rates among this populations. To date, the University has opened a Commuter Resource Center and hired a Commuter Coordinator to provide programming for it. The Center, which opened inside the Student Union in the spring of 2014, is designed “to promote unity and provide incoming students with a welcoming college experience.” Associated programming may include workshops and sessions on academics, career development, or study abroad, among other topics.

The outcomes of San Diego State’s academic success initiatives for commuters appear to have been positive so far. In its second year of operation, Casa Azteca saw all of its participants continue to the second semester, almost all of whom did so in good academic standing. The most recent data show that participants in the commuter learning

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communities have “higher grade point averages, more units completed and far lower rates of academic probation” than non-participants.\footnote{“Commuter Student Success – Strategic Planning Year End Report.” San Diego State University. Op. cit., p. 3.} Institution-wide, San Diego State has seen an uptick in retention rates in recent years, which is partly attributed to "an increase in the percentage of freshman students living on campus."\footnote{Jacobs, G. “SDSU Continuation Rates at All-Time High.” San Diego State University. November 2, 2011. http://newscenter.sdsu.edu/sdsu_newscenter/news.aspx?s=73250} In 2013-2014, the University saw a retention rate of 87.1 percent for first-time freshmen, down slightly from an all-time high of 88.5 percent the year before,\footnote{“2013/14 Enrollment Management Update.” San Diego State University. http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/hobsons/emails/enrollment-management/update134.html} but this remains above the rates in the high 70s and low 80s seen as recently as 2009-2010.\footnote{Jacobs, G. “SDSU Continuation Rates at All-Time High.” San Diego State University. Op. cit.}
SECTION III: ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT AND RETENTION

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT AND ACADEMIC SUCCESS

THE IMPORTANCE OF ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT

The effect of student employment upon academic success remains “a matter of debate in the research literature,”47 which presents a “mixed picture.”48 One analysis of Australian student outcomes, for instance, showed that the likelihood of a student completing his or her course goes down for students working more than eight hours per week. At the extreme end, full-time students working more than 24 hours per week are “14 percentage points less likely to complete” than students who do not work while studying.49 On the other hand, multiple other studies have found that negative effects do not emerge below a threshold of 15 to 20 hours of work per week. Below this threshold, work “has either no effect or beneficial effects”.50

Researchers explain these “seemingly contradictory” results in part through the methodological inconsistencies between studies. One important variable that is not always accounted for is the location of the student’s employment, whether on campus or off campus.51 Studies that account for location, however, suggest that on-campus employment can have particularly beneficial effects on student success. A broad-scale analysis of data from U.S. institutions participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), for instance, found that, for undergraduates in both their first and last years of study, “the results of on-campus work are quite consistent” in having a positive effect on the “benchmarks of effective education” that the NSSE examines. Thus, students who work on campus are more likely to participate in “student-faculty interaction,” “active and collaborative learning,” and “enriching educational experiences.”52


51 Ibid., p. 181.

52 Ibid., p. 196.
**ON-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT OF COMMUTER STUDENTS**

Evidence suggests that on-campus employment may offer particularly meaningful benefits for commuter students. These students are “likely to limit their time on campus” because of competing commitments such as work and family; in turn, “this lack of on-campus interaction hampers student involvement and engagement,” which decreases their chances of success.\(^5\) Some scholars respond to this situation by emphasizing the importance of the classroom; as student retention scholar Vincent Tinto puts it,\(^6\)

> [T]he classroom [is] the critical ground upon which student success is played out. This is especially true for non-residential campuses and for commuter students because in those settings and for those students, the classroom may be the only place where students engage faculty, staff, and other students in learning [emphasis added].

While the classroom remains an important site for the engagement of commuter students, however, multiple institutions have found that on-campus student employment can be of particular benefit for these students, precisely because it expands the opportunities for commuters to stay on campus and connect with faculty and peers.

Marymount University, for instance, where approximately two thirds of undergraduates live off campus, including one quarter of first-year students,\(^5\) has found that integrating these students into campus life “has remained a challenge for the school,” often leading to lower retention rates. Analysis of student outcomes showed that on-campus employment has a significant effect on the retention rates of all undergraduates at Marymount. However, the analysis showed that it has an even greater effect on the retention rates of commuter students than of resident students (Figure). Such work “serve[s] as an opportunity to engage students who are often more difficult to reach by providing another reason to be on campus and additional opportunities to interact with other students, faculty, and staff.”\(^6\)

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At Purdue University Calumet, research found that “students employed on campus were retained at a rate on average 13 [percent] higher than the general student body’s retention rate.”\(^58\) Purdue Calumet’s student body is composed almost entirely of commuter students (86 percent of first-year students, and 94 percent of all undergraduates, live off campus or commute),\(^59\) and focus group research at the University found that, for students, much of the value of on-campus employment lies in a sense of engagement with the campus community. Although students may have initially chosen on-campus employment for its convenience and compatibility with their academic schedules,\(^60\) they often found the support of supervisors and peers to be one of the most valuable aspects of their work.

Thus, “most stated that working in an academic environment consistently emphasized a focus on education” and encouraged them to persist with their studies. Specifically, students appreciated “the easier connection to resources through supervisors and co-workers,” the presence of a peer group of other student-workers, and a “closer connection to the faculty,” which inspires “a desire to graduate so they can work in the field.”\(^61\) Some students even “likened their work environment to a family, providing them with a sense of

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61 Ibid., p. 8.
belonging.” These are the characteristics that most distinguish on-campus from off-campus employment; as noted by several students who were working both types of jobs,

The primary difference between off- and on-campus employment is that students working on campus get significantly more academic support in terms of flexible work schedules, supervisory interest and oversight, peer support, and *feeling a part of an academic community*, getting the opportunity to use education, all of which contributes to student commitment to degree completion [emphasis added].

A similar analysis of student outcomes at DePaul University, where 31 percent of first-year students live off campus or commute, found that “students employed on campus have a substantially higher rate of persistence into their second year” than the general population of students.

**UTEP: On-Campus Employment for Student Success**

The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) is a largely nonresidential institution that struggles with student retention; based on the most recent data available, UTEP’s institution-wide retention rate sits at around 72 percent.

One approach UTEP has taken to improving this rate has been a student employment program. Although the institution-wide reach of this program has been limited by the availability of funds and its correspondingly small size, it has proven effective with participating students, and the University has taken steps to request funding for its expansion.

Known as the On-Campus Student Employment and Success (OCSES) program, the goals of UTEP’s student employment initiative include:

- Provid[ing] students meaningful work that contributes directly to their career objectives
- Support[ing] the retention and student success efforts of the university

UTEP initiated its program in 2004. Around that time, internal analyses showed that students intending to work off campus for more than 20 hours per week were at a

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62 Ibid., p. 7.
63 Ibid., p. 10.
“significantly” higher risk of attrition or delayed graduation, while those who work on campus for less than 19 hours per week tended to have higher success rates.\(^{70}\)

The OCSES program offers students a chance to work between 10 and 19 hours per week at wages of around $7.25 to $8.00 per hour, and is open to undergraduates enrolled full-time at UTEP (at least 12 credit hours per term).\(^{71}\) Students participating in OCSES “are not required to meet the income criteria of traditional programs,”\(^{72}\) such as federal work-study awards, which fund employment for students with financial need.\(^{73}\)

On the whole, **OCSES has produced the intended results**, as the evaluation of participating students shows “high levels of satisfaction with the employment opportunity, stronger student GPAs and higher levels of retention.”\(^{74}\)

The program operates as a sort of competitive grant for individual departments. The University allocates $500,000 each year to fund positions, and solicits applications from departments, which are approved based on how well the meet the above-stated program goals. Departments are expected to contribute 25 percent of the student employee’s wages, which “stretches the dollars available to fund the positions.”\(^{75}\)

In 2012-2013, the program was heavily over-subscribed, with a “record number” of 223 applications for positions, of which only 105 could be funded.\(^{76}\) This represents a relatively small proportion of the University’s student body, at less than 1 percent of the 12,700 full-time undergraduates enrolled at UTEP in the fall of 2012.\(^{77}\) For 2014 and 2015, the University has requested $1 million from the state of Texas to fund an additional 150 positions.\(^{78}\)

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**SYSTEMATIC STUDENT EMPLOYMENT: NORTHWEST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY**

Northwest Missouri State University is a “primarily residential” institution, where only about 8 percent of first-year students live off campus or commute. Hanover has included it in this report as the institution employs an intentional model of student employment that is designed to improve students’ academic and career success as well as providing them with financial support. The program has been recognized both by the U.S. Department of Education and by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for its innovative approach.

Student employment at Northwest Missouri State is “deliberate, systematic, and institution-wide,” and the University has been using on-campus employment since the 1980s to achieve a variety of goals, including the improvement of students’ learning experience. As at UTEP, student employment at Northwest Missouri State is not conditioned on a student’s financial need, and any student enrolled in at least six credit hours per term can apply for positions.

Historically, student participation in the program has been as high as 15 to 20 percent; based on current enrollment of around 6,500 students, the approximately 900 available positions translate to a participation rate of around 14 percent. Students work in “nearly every department on campus,” and though “approximately one-third” of all positions are

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81 “Student Employment.” Northwest Missouri State University. [http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/)


84 “Frequently Asked Questions.” Northwestern Missouri State University. [http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/faq.htm](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/faq.htm)


87 “Job Search Tips.” Northwest Missouri State University. [http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/jobsearchtips.htm](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/jobsearchtips.htm)
for office assistants, a variety of more differentiated positions are also available. A recent sampling of job opportunities for student employees at Northwest Missouri State includes:

- Advertising Designer, Student Publications
- Proctor, Proctoring Center for Students with Disabilities
- Desk Assistant, Residential Life
- Groundscape Assistant, Landscape Services
- Software Developer, Computer Science Information Systems
- Office Assistant, Alumni Relations

As this sample suggests, the opportunities span a variety of work areas and skill levels. In some cases, a job may be loosely tied to related coursework. Thus, for the advertising designer position noted above, “successful completion of or current enrollment in Introduction to Media Advertising and/or Media Design [is] preferred.” On the other hand, the software developer position requires a number of technical skills that students may or may not be able to acquire from coursework, such as a “proficiency with Java, Android Development Tools, Microsoft Visual Studio and C#.” Still other positions require minimal skills.

Regardless of the position, students apply for the on-campus jobs in the same way they would for any position. The University posts available jobs, and students submit an application to the hiring department. Interviews are conducted, and students may or may not be asked to submit a resume. Students are not guaranteed a position, but opportunities are typically adequate for a “determined student . . . to find employment.” Students may take multiple positions, but are limited to working no more than 20 hours per week during the term, and 40 hours per week during breaks. Pay varies by position; although “most positions” pay the Missouri minimum wage (currently $7.50 per hour), some current postings offer up to $10.00 per hour.

Northwest Missouri State’s student employment program has served as an exemplar internationally. The program was cited in a HEFCE review, for the benefit of English

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89 “Student Employment Opportunities.” Northwest Missouri State University. [http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/jobs/index.htm](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/jobs/index.htm)
90 “Advertising Designer.” Northwest Missouri State University. [http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/jobs/StudentPublications_PubAsst.htm](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/jobs/StudentPublications_PubAsst.htm)
91 “Software Developer.” Northwest Missouri State University. [http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/jobs/CIS_SoftwareDeveloper.htm](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/jobs/CIS_SoftwareDeveloper.htm)
92 E.g., “Groundskeeping Assistant.” Northwest Missouri State University. [http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/jobs/landscape_weekendgroundsasst.htm](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/jobs/landscape_weekendgroundsasst.htm)
97 E.g., “Piano Accompanist.” Northwestern Missouri State University. [http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/jobs/Music_PianoAccompanist.htm](http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/jobs/Music_PianoAccompanist.htm)
universities, of the University’s broader approach to institutional effectiveness, and overwhelming interest from HEFCE constituents specifically in the student employment program led to a more in-depth follow-up study.

The HEFCE reviewers found that student employees “become better students:” they reach higher grade point averages than students who work off-campus, are more likely to participate in university clubs and societies, have a higher incidence of volunteer work in the community, and feel safer. Thus, for instance, many students reported that “working as well as studying helps make them better students” by forcing them to manage their time more efficiently. Northwest Missouri State had also begun “to draw strong correlations between students employed on campus and alumni donations,” suggesting that the experience contributes to a sense of institutional loyalty even after graduation.

The student employment program also helps to prepare students for the professional workforce. In 2003, a survey of student employees found dissatisfaction with the program. Subsequent research into “student employment practices” at 38 peer institutions found that, in general, student employees wanted more responsibility, with the opportunity for advancement and pay raises, as well as opportunities to “build experiences and relationships that would enhance future career opportunities.” However, none of the peer institutions offered examples of how to address these problems. Thus, Northwest Missouri State designed its own initiative, the Career Pathing Program.

The Career Pathing Program combines training opportunities with a chance for advancement along the promotion ladder shown below. Promotion on the ladder is conditioned on three criteria: students must work in the same department for a full year; they must attend at least three training sessions each term; and they must receive a satisfactory evaluation from their supervisor. The University offers eight different training sessions each term, which consist of a presentation by a guest speaker on personal or professional development topic, lasting from 45 to 90 minutes. Sessions are open to the public as well, which “allows students the opportunity to attend sessions alongside experienced business leaders.” Recent training sessions have focused on topics such as time management, teamwork in the workplace, and career planning.

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100 Ibid., p. 5.
101 Ibid., p. 9.
102 Ibid., p. 1.
103 Ibid., p. 7.
104 “About the Career Pathing Program.” Northwest Missouri State University. http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/aboutcareerpathing.htm
106 “Personal and Professional Development Opportunities (Spring 2014),” Northwest Missouri State University. http://www.nwmissouri.edu/hr/student/trainingopps.htm
The University’s own analysis suggests that the Career Pathing Program has had positive effects, both on student satisfaction with the employment program and on outcomes such as student retention. Student satisfaction survey results have generally improved since the program was implemented, but the program has also “increased engagement which promotes retention and degree completion,” and a three-year analysis of the program found that students “actively involved in the Career Pathing Program had not withdrawn from the university during their time of participation.”

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