

“Students Guiding Students”

Developing a retention model for first year students through peer to peer initiatives.

Presenters

- Robert Dellibovi, Admissions Counselor
- Jennifer Davis, Sophomore
- Jessica Gooch, Sophomore
- Gagandeep Singh, Junior

Other members

- Brett Conley 09'
- Kelly Irvolino 09'
- Darren Martinez 10'
- Andrew Morton 09'
- Jessica Wright 10'

Mount Ida College

At a Glance

History: Founded in 1899

Character: Private co-educational institution

Location: 8 miles from downtown Boston

Students: 1,500 students from 25 U.S. states and over 30 countries

Campus: 72 acre, gated campus with 6 Residence Halls

Student/Faculty Ratio: 12:1

Retention Issues

While Mount Ida had been experiencing a steady growth in enrollment for the past 6 years, the College was facing a retention problem, specifically with first year students:

Entering Fall	Freshman Cohort Size	Semester Retention	Percent	One Year Retention	Percent
Fall 2005	393	327	83.2	254	64.6
Fall 2006	442	358	81.0	270	61.1
Fall 2007	417	341	81.0	239	57.3

From Fall 2005 to Fall 2008, the retention rate of first year students fell over 7 percentage points from 64% to 57%

Formation of the Campus Life Team

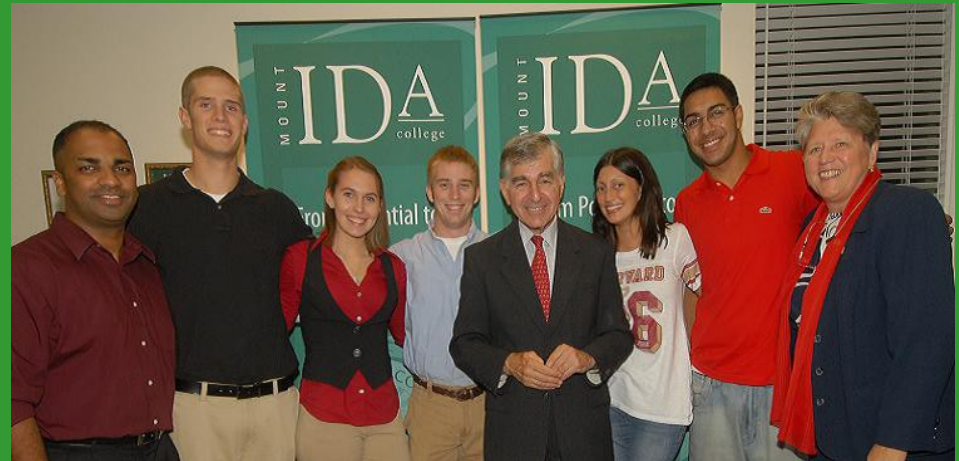
- In the Fall of 2008, the Dean of Admissions commissioned a group of 8 students to work on enrollment and retention issues from “within” the student body. Their charge was to generate school spirit and excitement among the first year class.

Campus Life Team

- The development of a Peer to Peer outreach system to contact enrolled students for Here I Am Check In, semester to semester registration, annual room selection, and reapplying for financial aid.
- Marketing social events which have been developed by the Student Activities Office/and or athletics programs such as intramural sports.
- Working with the Enrollment Management and Marketing Division to increase student participation in campus wide events such as the Wadsworth Lecture Series, the Presidents Forum, Academic presentations, and Admissions functions.
- Assisting with the development and implementation of new initiatives (programming or outreach) which will help the college meet its retention and enrollment goals.
- Developing strong alumni participation for events put forth by the Development Office and coordinating fundraising events for athletics, student activities and the Mount Ida College Book fund.

2008-2009 Initiatives

- Organized the College's first ever Pep Rallies before home football games, marketing the event to first year students in the hope of developing "traditions" at Mount Ida College.
- Organized Fan Bus for away games. (150 first year students attended first away football game this year.)
- Formed "Global Circle" club to integrate International students into the campus community.
- Promoted academic events throughout campus, including lecture by former MA Governor, Michael Dukakis.



2008-2009 Initiatives

- Promoted civic engagement opportunities on campus, including “Movember,” a fundraiser to raise money for prostate cancer awareness.
- Created video testimonials for Mount Ida College Admissions website to help with new student recruitment.
- Organized Student vs. Staff Basketball game to provide opportunities for first year students to meet with faculty and staff outside the classroom.



Initial Results

Entering Fall	Freshman Cohort Size	Semester Retention	Percent	One Year Retention	Percent
Fall 2005	393	327	83.2	254	64.6
Fall 2006	442	358	81.0	270	61.1
Fall 2007	417	341	81.0	239	57.3
Fall 2008	412	364	88.3	258	62.6

7 point increase in fall to spring retention, and 5 point increase in fall to fall retention of first year students.

Obstacles

- The Campus Life team is not a “club.” Students were hand picked by the Dean of Admissions to be involved. This caused some dissension with other campus departments that thought it was too exclusive.
- Even though all events were led by students, a staff member needed to be involved to maintain momentum. As successful as the group was, they are still students and need guidance.
- Because the team operated “under the radar,” funding and budget issues often arose. The group had to be creative.

Conclusions

- There is no “magic cure” for retention. Even student-led initiatives must be coupled with other programs.
- It is difficult to maintain student interest and if events are always run by staff. Students know students.
- It is sometimes easier to ask for forgiveness than permission. Working “under the radar” is not a bad thing. But you must believe in servant-leadership.
- Students selected for the group must be representative of the entire student body (diversity, athletic interest, gender, etc.)

Questions?

Thank You!

Rdellibovi@mountida.edu

JTitus@mountida.edu