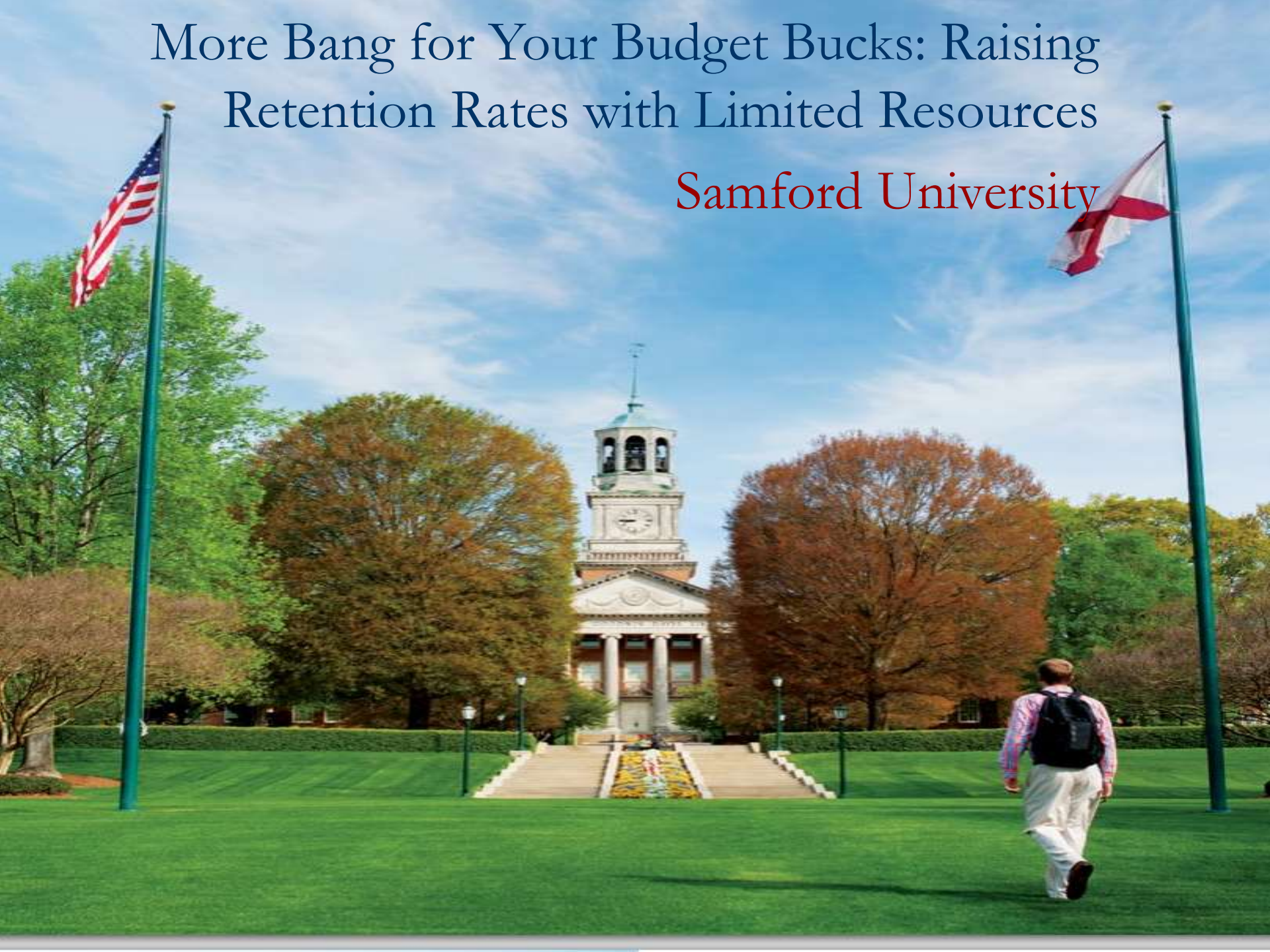


More Bang for Your Budget Bucks: Raising Retention Rates with Limited Resources

Samford University



Presenters

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4,833
students

44
states

22
countries

THE TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE

Samford University prepares you
to lead the life you've always envisioned.

Alabama's top-ranked private university

U.S. News & World Report ranks Samford
#3 in the South for Regional Universities
#4 in the South for Best Undergraduate Teaching

Nationally ranked by *Kiplinger's Personal Finance*, *Forbes*
and *The Princeton Review*

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COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS

School of the Arts
Howard College of Arts and Sciences
Brock School of Business
Beeson Divinity School
Orlean Bullard Beeson School of Education

School of Health Professions
Cumberland School of Law
Iida V. Moffett School of Nursing
McWhorter School of Pharmacy
School of Public Health



85% | 12:1 | 100%

85% of faculty members have earned the highest degree in their field

12:1 student-to-faculty ratio

100% of our classes are taught by faculty members, not graduate assistants

2014-15

Tuition \$26,524
Room and Board \$9,012
Fees \$800

Kiplinger's Personal Finance, *Forbes* and *The Princeton Review* nationally recognize Samford for academic programs and affordability.

Fall 2014 EFR Profile

- Applications: 4,577
- Admits: 2,722
- Freshmen: 730; 65% female, 35% male
- 12% diversity; 74% out of state
- ACT (middle 50%): 23-29
- SAT (middle 50%): 1080-1320
- HS GPA (middle 50%): 3.4-4.0



Background

- Academic Success Center established in 2009 as part of reorganization/expansion of Office of Freshman Life
- Samford's president announced goal in 2014 to raise freshman to sophomore retention rate to 95%
- Freshman to sophomore retention rate:
 - 2009 82.2%
 - 2014 87.9%
- Graduation rate:
 - 4 year: 53% (8 year average)
 - 6 year: 70.5% (6 year average)



Retention Initiatives

- Developed Predictive Analytics Model
- Instituted Student Tracking
- Piloted an interim- and pre-term program:
 - Academic Recovery Program for At Risk Freshmen
 - Academic Edge Program for Entering Freshmen



Initiative #1: Predictive Analytics

- Partnership with Director of Strategic and Applied Analysis in Business Affairs
- Identified variables most highly correlated with 1st semester GPA prediction by analyzing 2011-2013 data
 - HS GPA, Male, ACT/SAT, AL resident, FL resident, AP/IB credits, months prior to 8/13 admit, course in major, reading ACT/SAT
 - Applied model to 754 Fall 2013 EFRs
 - Resulted in tracking 31 additional students
 - 683 of 754 or 90.6% accurately predicted
- Students combined with other tracking groups (conditional admit, athletes, care team, students on academic warning) in GF system
- Model adjusted slightly for 2014 EFRs with expanded data set
 - HS GPA, ACT/SAT, Male, FL resident, AL resident, AP/IB credits, course in major, months prior to 8/14 admit, GAP year, 1st generation, private secular HS, non-white
 - Began tracking 76 additional students

Initiative #2: Student Tracking

- Excel log (implemented Fall 2012)
 - Searchable by name, date, student ID, topic, status
 - Tracks situation, response, result, personnel involved
 - 1,170 individual entries for about 660 students
- GradesFirst software (implemented Fall 2012)
 - Nightly updates from SIS (Banner)
 - Enhances communication between faculty, advisors and students
 - Enables Progress Report Campaigns
 - Tracking about 500 students, including conditional admits, predicted <2.7 GPA, academic warning, Care Team, ROTC cadets, athletes

Initiative #3: Interim- and Pre-Term Programming

- Academic Recovery Program for students who struggled academically during their first semester to help them regain good academic standing in a one-week interim session prior to spring semester; included academic workshops, schedule review and adjustment with priority seating in Core classes, service project, and StrengthsQuest assessment.
- Academic Edge: a 3-day college transition program for entering freshmen that includes early move-in, academic workshops, schedule review, and StrengthsQuest assessment.



Academic Recovery Program

- Piloted in January 2014
- Collaborators: Retention Task Force, Residence Life, Student Records, Core Curriculum Faculty, Student Life and Campus Recreation
- Cost: \$4977.28 less \$550 (11 program fees at \$50 each) = \$4427.28
- 17 students enrolled; 16 participated. Of those, 14 were retained (87.5%); all but one improved overall GPA and/or achieved good academic standing. Student evaluation revealed high level of satisfaction.

Academic Edge Program

- Piloted in August 2014
- Collaborators: Residence Life, Admissions and New Student Orientation, Career Development Center, University Library, and Core Curriculum Faculty
- Cost: \$3495.72 less \$2700 (27 students @ \$100 program fee) = \$795.72 total expenses
- 27 students enrolled and participated; all rated the program highly with the early move-in receiving the highest ranking.

Transferable ideas

- Utilize institution-specific data to predict future student behavior more accurately
- Operationalize anecdotal observations
- Partner with campus faculty and staff for research and resources (Institutional Research, Core Curriculum, Athletics, etc.)
- Combine tracking populations to increase responses and avoid confidentiality problems
- Incentivize student participation and require buy-in



A group of graduates in black gowns and caps walking away from the camera on a campus path. The graduates are seen from behind, moving along a paved walkway. In the background, there are green trees and a red brick building with an arched window. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

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