Raising Attention to Retention: Student Success through an Agricultural Living-Learning Community

By Andrea Simpson

Master of Science, Agriculture and Extension Education – Leadership

Agenda

- Brief overview
- Literature Review
- Theoretical Foundations
- Implications for Future Practice

Brief Overview

- Twenty-eight percent of first-year students in four-year colleges do not return for their sophomore year (Feldman & Zimbler, 2011)

- Forty-four percent of those enrolled in two-year colleges do not return for their second year (Feldman & Zimbler, 2011)

Literature Review

- Academic Retention
- Living-Learning Communities
  - First-Year Experience Courses

Academic Retention

- Studies verify that retention will increase if students are :
  - exposed to academic and social engagement
  - participate in first-year experience courses (FYE),
  - partake in service-learning projects (Freeman, Anderman, & Jensen, 2007; Newman, 2016)

- Development of the sense of belonging is crucial to first-year students, particularly for the retention of students who are considered to be at risk of non-completion (O'Keeffe, 2013)

Living-Learning Communities

- Studies reports that students who participated in a living-learning community had a richer support system with peers when compared to students who did not participate in a LLC (Arsendorf & Naylor-Tincknell, 2016)
- Students who participated in the LLC reported supportive, nurturing relationships with faculty (Arsendorf & Naylor-Tincknell, 2016)

First-Year Experience Courses (FYE)

- Many living-learning communities have an orientation or seminar attached included in the program to further assist in adjusting to college life (Cambridge-Williams, Winsler, Kitsantas, & Bernard, 2013)

Theoretical Foundations

- Theory of Student Departure (Tinto, 1988)

- Theory of Student Involvement (Astin, 1984)
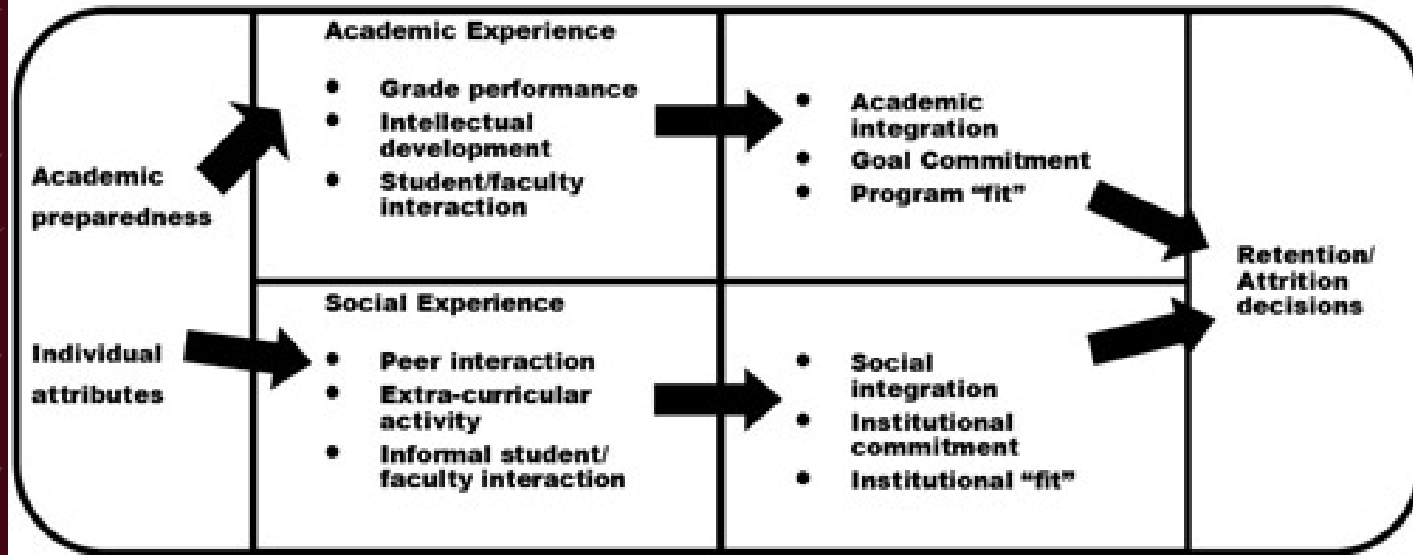
Tinto's Theory of Student Departure

Figure 1: Theory of Student Departure

Theory of Student Involvement

- Alexander Astin, 1984

Figure 2: Theory of Student Involvement

Implications for Future Practice

- Implement a CALS LLC
  - Include "block" housing
  - Include First-Year Experience Course

- 411 indicated interest
    - 239 FTF female
    - 157 FTF male

Best Practices

- LLC assessment methods
- Collaboration with multiple departments
- Intention Resident Advisor placements
- FYE course content

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Thank you!