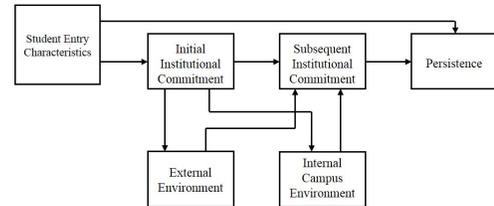


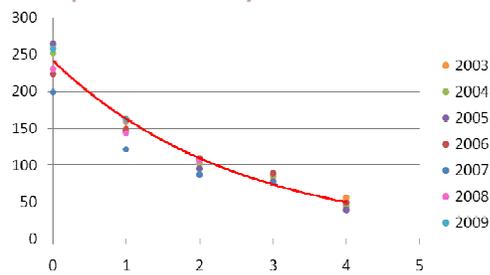
What Can Alumni Tell Us About Retention?

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Revised Theory of Student Departure in Commuter College and Universities (Braxton et al., 2004)



Exponential Decay Retention Model



1 out of 3 students will leave each year.

Cohort Data: Students who Graduated

	2003	2004	2005	2006
0	263	252	265	224
4 th year	26	33	33	39
5 th year	32	29	26	
6 th year	10	9		
<i>n</i>	68	71	59	39
%	25.86%	28.17%	22.26%	17.41%

1 out of 4 students will graduate.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the difference between the pre-college characteristics of the alumni who graduated with their undergraduate degrees from the College and incoming freshmen who declared a major within the College.

Participants

- **Alumni participants** included 3 (5.6%) males and 51 (94.4%) females.
- Racial classifications were 40 (74.1%) Whites, 11 (20.4%) Blacks, 2 (3.7%) Hispanics, and 1 (1.9%) multiracial.
- **Incoming freshman participants** included 11 (19.0%) males and 47 (81.0%) females.
- Racial classifications were 18 (31.0%) Whites, 36 (62.1%) Blacks, 1 (1.7%) Hispanics, and 3 (5.2%) multiracial.

Data Collection

- Freshman Orientation Survey (10 scales)
- Alumni participants were invited to participate via email.
- Incoming freshman participants completed the survey at 1 of 5 summer orientation sessions.

Results

- The incoming freshmen had statistically significant scores for Environmental Commitment, College Basis Decision, Goal Commitment, and Peer Relations.
- The alumni had statistically significant scores for Individual Aptitude ($F(1, 111) = 55.41; p < .001; \eta^2 = .34$). The alumni tended to have higher high school grade point averages and overall standard test scores.

Results

- Institutional Commitment and Family Attributes, such as highest level of education and primary occupation, were similar across both groups; however, more incoming freshmen intended to pay for their college education using employment and student loans compared to the alumni.

Future Research

- Future research includes building a predictive model for first-year grade point average using the alumni data and subsequent data gathered from future administrations of the *Freshman Orientation Survey*.
- This study was part of a longitudinal retention study, which gathers archival and survey data on an annual basis from each freshman fall cohort within the College.

Any Question?
