

# Considerations About the Impact of Attrition

RSCCD Educational Services

*Recent concerns statewide about enrollment issues have prompted RSCCD's staff to also reconsider the importance of student persistence and the impacts of attrition. The following facts demonstrate how important it is that we continue to focus on persistence.*

- ⇒ More than 20% of all course enrollments result in a “drop” before the third week of the semester.
- ⇒ For each seat that is permanently vacated (each drop that is not replaced with another student) in a typical three-unit class prior to third-week “census”, the district loses approximately \$400 in potential FTES income.
- ⇒ For the past three semesters at RSCCD, of the average 140,000 course enrollments each semester, analyses have concluded that approximately 9,300 result in a “non-replaced drop” prior to “census”.
- ⇒ Consequently, this type of course attrition alone can result in a **loss of about \$3.7 million** for the district per semester.
- ⇒ Another 20% (after the initial 20% drop prior to third-week “census”) result in a non-successful completion, that is, a drop or failing grade.
- ⇒ Attrition from courses during the semester results in poor classroom space, as well as staff, utilization and potentially denying other students access to those courses. During an era of limited classroom space and course availability, this is a concern.
- ⇒ About 40% of new freshman do not return for a second semester. For degree-seeking students, about 30% do not return, necessitating increased workload for recruitment and initial advisement and orientation services for “replacement” students.
- ⇒ The impacts of attrition on students and the community are also of concern. The majority of jobs available in California require education beyond high school. Higher education results in a richer quality of life and positive socio-economic impacts for the community.

We know that student persistence is a complex topic and that students drop for many reasons—from “class shopping” to job and family conflicts, to lack of motivation and perseverance. And we also know of multiple persistence strategies in our “tool kit”. During this era of enhanced student-centeredness and budget crises, there is a critical need to maintain a focus on this topic.