

Student Success Means Student Retention

The challenge of student retention is an ongoing and complex problem touching on social, economic, and cultural issues. As colleges and universities work to reduce dropout rates, regular communication is key in helping students to remain in school and complete their degrees. With the Blackboard Connect service, educators can transmit important, personalized information to students, using the power of their own voice—and help students stay connected to the campus community and increase the likelihood that they will fulfill their educational goals.

Problem: High Student Attrition

Almost half of all students entering postsecondary institutions will not earn the degree or certification they set out to achieve. Dropout rates are especially high for disadvantaged students. Also at risk are students who are the first in their family to attend college, returning adult students, and students with limited English skills. According to two recent reports by ACT (the independent organization responsible for the American College Test) most colleges and universities are not doing enough to encourage students to stay in school and complete their studies.



Quick Facts

- 4,000 students
- Founded in 1933
- Client since 9/1/2005
- increased retention of their at-risk students to a +80% success rate
- <http://www.monroecollege.edu>

Solution: Blackboard Connect

With two campuses serving the New York City area (one in suburban New Rochelle and one in the Bronx), Monroe College serves a diverse group of students, including a large portion of students from low-income backgrounds. As the Dean of Monroe's School of General Studies, Carol Genese wanted to find a new way to manage the school's most challenging student group, both in terms of academic performance and retention. As part of a comprehensive initiative, Dean Genese utilized the Blackboard Connect service to facilitate regular communication with her students.

Messages ranged from completion of registration requirements to reminding students to make an appointment with their counselor.

Result: An Unprecedented Success Rate

By including the Blackboard Connect service as a component of their communications plan and support initiatives to reduce attrition, Monroe College has dramatically increased retention of their at-risk students—from an expected 58% to an unprecedented +80% success rate.

Dean Genese uses the Blackboard Connect service to engage her students with “a human touch,” a strategy proven to be highly effective in reducing the number of dropouts.

“We recognized a need to communicate regularly with our high-risk students to keep them staying connected, feeling connected and being connected. I found that the human touch—the human voice—was an enormous factor in communicating with our students. Our retention is off the charts: we've never seen retention rates this high. The Blackboard Connect service enables me to reach 95% of the students when I need to. It's an eye-opener. The phones really work.”

Dean Carol Genese
School of General Studies
Monroe College, NY

