PINELLAS TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Clearwater Campus

Student Retention Plan 2026-2027

PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS

Pinellas Technical College, Clearwater Campus

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Table of Contents

Introduction 3
Purpose 3
Risk Factors for Students.. 3
Services, Supports, and Activities 4
Belonging and Citizenship 5
Budgetary Resources 6
Evaluation and Data Sharing with Stakeholders 6
Conclusion 8

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Introduction

The Pinellas Technical College Student Retention Plan is crafted to bolster students in reaching their educational aspirations and enrich their overall college experience. This comprehensive plan integrates a variety of services and strategies tailored to meet student needs and foster retention.

Purpose

The primary objectives of our student retention plan are to improve student success and persistence by implementing strategies and support services that address the factors that contribute to student attrition. This includes providing academic support, advising, counseling, and other resources to help students overcome challenges and stay enrolled in their programs. The ultimate goal is to increase student retention rates, graduation rates, and overall student satisfaction.

Risk Factors for Students

Pinellas Technical College conducts monthly program meetings to assess the performance of each student, identify any potential risk factors, and plan appropriate support measures. These meetings involve the program's instructor, administrator, and school counselor. Together, they analyze student data and personal insights to pinpoint individuals who may be at risk of dropping out. Risk factors are categorized into five main areas:

- **Academic Performance**: Monitor students' academic performance, including grades and progress in courses. Students with consistently low grades or who are falling behind in their coursework may be at risk.
- **Attendance**: Keep track of students' attendance in classes. High rates of absenteeism could be a sign that a student is struggling or disengaged.
- **Engagement**: Pay attention to students' level of engagement in classes and on campus. Lack of participation in class discussions, extracurricular activities, or campus events may indicate a lack of connection to the college community. For example, students who do not participate in class discussions, do not attend office hours, or do not participate in campus events may be at risk.
- **Financial Concerns**: Students experiencing financial difficulties may be at risk of dropping out. Keep an eye out for students who are struggling to pay tuition or other expenses.
- **Personal Issues**: Be aware of any personal issues or challenges that students may be facing, such as health problems, family issues, or mental health concerns. These issues can impact a student's ability to succeed in college.

Furthermore, Pinellas Technical College faculty and staff encourage students to self-report any struggles or challenges they may be facing. Creating a safe and supportive environment for students to seek help is crucial in identifying those at risk of dropping out. Instructors, school counselors, and administrators are easily accessible and willing to help all students.

Services, Supports, and Activities

Pinellas Technical College provides a range of services and supports tailored to the unique needs of students who are struggling or at risk of dropping out. The goal is to identify and address underlying causes effectively. The following outlines the primary services and supports:

- Students are coached to report absences to instructors promptly. In cases where a student is absent for more than three days without notice, instructors attempt to contact the student to understand the situation better and offer support. For instance, if a student's car is not working, the student may be reminded of the option to use the city bus for free with their school ID. Similarly, if a student is ill, instructors may provide guidance on how to continue their academic work from home to ensure continuity of learning.

- Poor attendance, academics, and/or behaviors may be addressed through informal conferences and Student Academic Support and Coaching (SASC) meetings.

- Students struggling with basic skills like reading and math are encouraged to take advantage of on-campus ABE/ASB/GED and/or ESOL tutoring.

- Students may be referred or self-referred to a school counselor for social-emotional support, academic advising, mental health referrals, assistance with homelessness, job readiness, and problem-solving.

- Students experiencing financial challenges can meet with the financial aid staff to explore options for securing funding for school expenses. Additionally, school counselors and/or administrators may refer students to external organizations such as the Pinellas Opportunity Council, CareerSource Pinellas, or 211 Tampa Bay for support with bills, medical insurance, job placement, and other related services based on their individual needs.

- Students with health issues, disabilities, or mental health concerns may benefit from a 504 Accommodation Plan, Vocational Rehabilitation services, and/or other community-based resources such as 211 Tampa Bay.

Student Academic Support and Coaching, the Rookie Retention program, 504 Accommodation Plans, and Career Activities are structured processes that take place at Pinellas Technical College.

Student Academic Support and Coaching (SASC) is part of the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) focused on academic support and coaching to meet all students' needs. SASC aims to improve academics and behaviors crucial for student success in their chosen field.

The Rookie Retention program helps students maintain enrollment through program completion and attain industry-related employment. A limited number of students are accepted into this program, where they are paired with a mentor and meet bi-monthly. Students also enroll in the Florida Ready to Work Essential Soft Skills program and receive additional support from staff and mentors in reaching personal and workplace goals.

The 504 Accommodation Plan is designed for students with diagnosed disabilities (temporary or permanent) who need reasonable accommodations to succeed in their chosen program. Students work closely with the school counselor to review school-related concerns, establish eligibility, complete required documentation, and meetings, and develop a 504 Accommodation Plan.

Career Activities are available to all students. Resume Writing sessions, Mock Interview sessions, and Career Fairs are held on campus several times a year. These activities enhance student employability.

Belonging and Citizenship

Pinellas Technical College actively engages both students and the community through a variety of initiatives, fostering a sense of belonging and citizenship among our student body. These efforts include:

- **Food Pantry and Professional Clothes Closet**: Our food pantry, open once a week, provides essential supplies to our needy students and the public, including homeless and economically disadvantaged individuals. The pantry is stocked with donations from the community and our culinary programs. We also have a room ("closet") with donated professional attire for students who may need them for interviews or to start their job or for competitions like SkillsUSA. Our staff and community members have donated items like ties, dress shirts, dresses, shoes, and belts. Many of our students volunteer at the pantry and the closet, furthering our commitment to community service.
- **Open House Nights**: Once a year, our students volunteer to welcome the community and potential students to our campus. They assist guests in navigating the campus and share their personal experiences about the college, offering a firsthand perspective to visitors.
- **Family Days**: Once a year, in winter and spring, the administration and staff organize Family Days to celebrate our students and their families. These events feature food and planned activities for children and families, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment.
- **Peer Nexus (Peer Mentorship):** Through the Peer Nexus program, new students are connected with more experienced peers who provide guidance, encouragement, and support as they transition into the PTC community and learning environment. While developed to support military-connected students as part of the Collegiate Purple Star Campus initiative, Peer Nexus also benefits other new students by providing additional peer support and connection. The program promotes belonging, engagement, and student success through positive peer relationships.
- **Exploration Day for Military:** Connected Individuals and Families: The college hosts Exploration Day for Military-Connected Individuals and Families. This event welcomes veterans, active-duty service members, military spouses, dependents, and their loved ones to explore career training opportunities, connect with faculty and students, learn about support services, and strengthen their connection to the college community.

- **Student Organizations**: Students actively participate in the Student Council, where they collaborate to improve the school and contribute to community service projects, demonstrating their leadership and commitment to the college community. Some other organizations at the school include SkillsUSA, National Technical Honor Society, and National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA).

- **Community Outreach**: Students and staff are encouraged to support the community through a variety of outreach and service opportunities. Programs participate in projects that benefit local organizations, community members, and nonprofit agencies. For example, students in the barbering program regularly provide free haircuts to individuals in need. Students and staff are also connected with volunteer opportunities throughout the community through coordinated outreach efforts that promote civic engagement and service. In addition, several programs support campus and community initiatives, such as donating items to the college Food Pantry and assisting with special events and service projects. Through these efforts, students develop leadership skills, strengthen community connections, and gain a deeper sense of belonging, citizenship, and responsibility beyond the classroom.

Budgetary Resources

Every faculty and staff member is expected to contribute to our students' success and retention efforts. Community-based resources secure their own funding independently. The Financial Aid department utilizes grants and scholarships as outlined by government regulations and donors. The Food Pantry relies on community donations for support. Open House Nights are sponsored by the Office of Workforce Innovation (OWI), while the college's discretionary funds are allocated to support Family Days.

The director maintains budgets for all activities and operation of the college. The student retention plan’s budget is imbedded into the discretionary spending for school operations. In addition, the college uses grant funding, when available, and a student vending account to support on campus activities. The student vending account is replenished annually through an agreement with our vending machine partner. These dollars are generated on-site through the purchase of items in the vending machines. As a result, the retention plan does not require a separate budget, as existing resources and partnerships are leveraged to fulfill its objectives.

Evaluationand Data Sharing with Stakeholders

The evaluation and sharing of data within the student retention plan are integral to its success. Key data points are shared in monthly program meetings, where the administrator reviews student data from the Focus Student Management System with instructors and school counselors. This data includes academic performance, attendance, progress toward milestones (such as industry certifications), graduation rates, placement rates, and any barriers to education. This information helps identify at-risk students and enables the implementation of services and supports to ensure their program completion.

Twice a year, the Director, Program Assistant Director, and Curriculum Specialist conduct program review meetings to evaluate graduation, withdrawal, and placement rates. Additionally, this data is shared with the program's advisory committee to gather insights and feedback.

Schoolwide data, including attendance, enrollment, graduates, and industry certifications, is reviewed in monthly faculty meetings to assess overall performance and identify areas for improvement.

Student satisfaction and feedback are prioritized through the Student Satisfaction Survey and the Graduate/Completer Follow-up Survey. The results of these surveys are shared in various meetings to facilitate reflection and drive improvements at Pinellas Technical College.

The Student Retention Plan undergoes an annual evaluation, inviting faculty input to enhance and approve the plan for the upcoming year. Student organizations also give their input on the plan by completing a survey.

Conclusion

The Pinellas Technical College Student Retention Plan is a comprehensive framework designed to support student success and enhance the college experience. By addressing the unique needs of each student and providing a range of services and supports, we aim to improve student retention rates, graduation rates, and overall student satisfaction.

Through proactive measures such as identifying at-risk students, providing academic support, and fostering a sense of community and belonging, we strive to create an environment where every student can thrive. By evaluating our efforts regularly and sharing data with stakeholders, we can continually refine and improve our retention strategies to better serve our students.

Ultimately, our goal is to empower students to overcome challenges, achieve their educational goals, and succeed in their chosen careers. The Pinellas Technical College Student Retention Plan reflects our commitment to student success and our dedication to providing a supportive and inclusive learning environment for all students.