

A Follow-Up Study of Involvement Intervention Efforts
at Ohio University

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Background and Design of Study

The First-Year Student Involvement Study, first done spring quarter 1979, is conducted annually by the offices of Institutional Research, Residence Life, the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Dean of Students and the Allen Student Help Center. Results from the original study revealed that students could be identified as potential leavers while they were still enrolled at Ohio University. Starting in 1983, the Provost's Office, the Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Office, University College, and the Office of Institutional Research devised and carried out a plan to identify and intervene with students who had over a 2.00 GPA who were identified in the Involvement Study as potential leavers.

Every year since 1983, all first-year students living in residence halls were given the First-Year Involvement Questionnaire to complete. In winter quarter 2011, questionnaires were distributed in residence halls and to commuting students, and 87 percent of the students responded. From the students who responded, individuals who were predicted to be potential leavers were identified. They were identified from their responses to questions related to their commitment to continue their education at Ohio University and their reported levels of academic and social involvement. The list of potential leavers was refined to eliminate students ineligible to return because of low academic performance (less than a 2.00 GPA). Various intervention methods were implemented, usually through contacts by Residence Life staff or faculty. In 2011, Residence Life staff, Allen Student Help Center staff and Learning Community Program faculty and staff carried out the interventions. This report presents a summary of results of the intervention process.

Results of Intervention

In spring quarter 2011, 308 total potential leavers were identified, compared to 321 in 2010, 346 in 2009, 371 in 2008, 511 in 2007, 318 in 2006, and 496 in 2005. Residence Life staff contacted all but 39 of them and recorded the outcomes of their conversations. The following table presents a summary of what potential leavers said their plans were at the time.

Plan of Potential Leavers	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Return to Ohio University	33%	42%	45%	50%	90%	52%	68%
Transfer to Another Institution	26%	28%	34%	39%	7%	34%	25%
Leave Ohio University	17%	14%	7%	4%	1%	4%	1%
Undecided at Time of Contact	23%	16%	14%	7%	2%	9%	6%

In 2011, 33 percent of the potential leavers said they would return to Ohio University the next fall quarter. Twenty-six percent said they would transfer to another institution, seventeen percent said they would leave Ohio University, and twenty-three percent were undecided.

At the time of the intervention contact, most of the males (37 percent in 2011) said they would return to Ohio University. Twenty six percent of the males said they would transfer, and fifteen percent said they would leave. Thirty-one percent of the females said they would return to Ohio University, 27 percent said they would transfer, and nineteen percent said they would leave.

Thirty-three percent of the African American potential leavers said they would return, while sixty-seven percent of the respondents said they would leave, transfer or were undecided. Thirty-eight percent of the non-African-American potential leavers said they would return, and 62 percent said they would leave, transfer or were undecided.

In 2011, more potential leavers from the colleges of Arts & Sciences (36 percent), Health & Human Services (33 percent), Engineering (17 percent), and University College (33 percent) said they would transfer to another institution than potential leavers in other colleges. More potential leavers from the colleges of Education (31 percent), University College (36 percent), and Engineering (44 percent) said they would return to Ohio University than students in other colleges.

The potential leavers' stated plans varied from year to year depending on their residence green. In 2011, 33 percent of the potential leavers living on the West Green, 37 percent of the potential leavers

living on the East Green, and 32 percent of the potential leavers living on the South Green said they would return to Ohio University the next fall.

Tracking the Potential Leavers

The potential leavers were tracked to the following fall quarter. In 2011, the percentage of potential leavers returning was 43 percent. In 2010, 45 percent of the potential leavers returned the next fall quarter. In 2009, 43 percent of potential leavers returned the next fall quarter. In 2008, 54 percent of potential leavers returned the next fall quarter. In 2007, 88 percent of the potential leavers returned the next fall quarter. In 2006, the percentage of potential leavers returning was 52 percent. In 2005, the percentage of potential leavers returning was 67 percent.

Most of the potential leavers were females (61 percent in 2011). In 2011, 65 percent of the potential leavers who did not return were females. In 2011, the return rate did differ between males and females. Fifty percent of the male potential leavers returned and thirty-nine percent of the female potential leavers returned. The following table shows the return rates for male and female potential leavers.

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Female	39%	41%	36%	49%	88%	51%	65%
Male	50%	51%	51%	58%	88%	53%	68%

In most years of the study, except for 2006, the return rate for African American potential leavers was higher than for non-African Americans. In 2011, 67 percent of the African American potential leavers returned compared to 57 percent of non-African American potential leavers. In 2010, 55 percent of the African American potential leavers returned compared to 45 percent of non-African American potential leavers. In 2009, 71 percent of the African American potential leavers returned compared to 41 percent of non-African American potential leavers. In 2008, 55 percent of the African American potential leavers returned compared to 50 percent of non-African American potential leavers. In 2007, 95 percent of the African American potential leavers returned, compared to 88 percent of non-African American

potential leavers. In 2006, 67 percent of the African American potential leavers returned, compared to 72 percent of the non-African American potential leavers. In 2005, 90 percent of the African American potential leavers returned, compared to 61 percent of the non-African American potential leavers.

The potential leavers' return rates differed among their residence greens. In 2011, 49 percent of the East Green residents identified as potential leavers returned the next fall, 41 percent of the West Green residents returned, and 41 percent of the South Green residents returned.

The potential leavers' return rates differed among the colleges, including those participating in the early intervention. The return rates for potential leavers by college are as follows: Education, 48 percent; Business, 54 percent; Engineering and Technology, 56 percent; Communication, 45 percent; University College, 39 percent ; Arts and Sciences, 41 percent; Health and Human Services, 30 percent; and Fine Arts, 42 percent;.

Intervention and Attrition

Figure 1 shows what the potential leavers said they would do and whether or not they returned. Among potential leavers who said they would return to Ohio University during the intervention contacts in 2011, 78 percent actually returned, and 22 percent did not return. Among potential leavers who said they were undecided about returning, 47 percent actually returned, and 53 percent did not return. Among potential leavers who said they would transfer to another institution, 18 percent returned, and 82 percent did not return. Among potential leavers who said they would leave Ohio University, 91 percent did not return. The results were similar in the previous interventions. A significant relationship was found between potential leavers' intention to transfer from, leave, or return to Ohio University and whether or not they actually enrolled the next quarter. There was a strong relationship between potential leavers saying they would return and their returning next fall; more returned than were expected, and fewer dropped than expected.

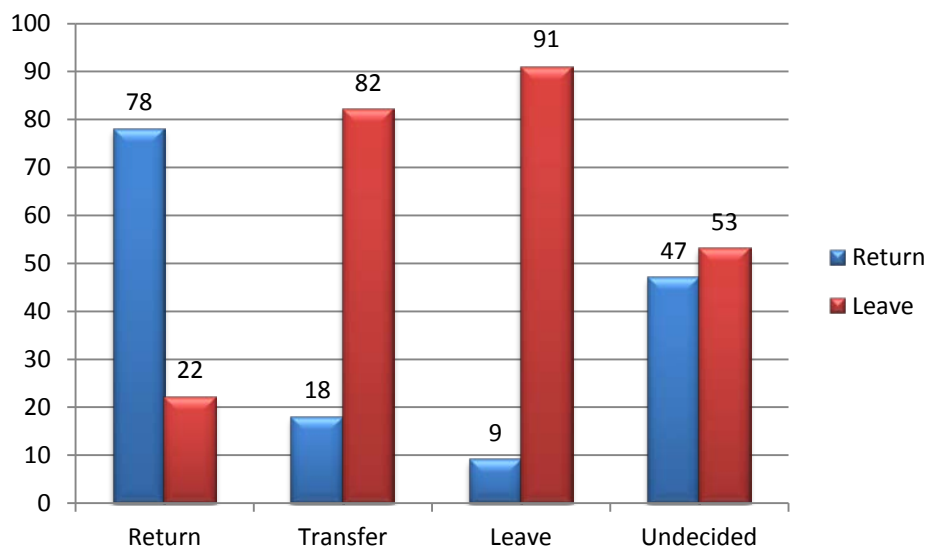


Figure 1. Involvement Study Intervention Follow-Up: 2010-2011

Survey of Non-returning Students

A survey of non-returning students was conducted in the fall of 2010. Freshmen in the fall of 2009 who did not return in the fall of 2010 were surveyed to provide information on their reasons for not returning to Ohio University and to provide information on their current status (i.e. enrolled at another institution, working full-time, etc.). Twenty-two percent of the potential leavers responded to the non-returning survey in the fall of 2010. Sixty-nine percent of the potential leavers that responded to the non-returning survey reported that they had transferred to another institution and were currently enrolled in that institution. Non-returned cited personal reasons for leaving Ohio University, for example having trouble adjusting personally to OU and did not feel like they fit in at OU. Others said that the cost of attending OU was a reason for leaving. Non-returned also gave geographical reasons for not returning such as OU was too far from home and they were disappointed in the rural/small town location. Quality of residence hall experience, excessive social life at OU and drug and alcohol abuse on campus were also frequently cited as reasons for not returning to Ohio University.

Summary and Conclusions

These findings support increasingly positive effects of the enhanced involvement intervention process. Significantly high numbers of students identified as potential leavers (who are academically eligible to return to Ohio University) actually returned the next fall. Among potential leavers who said they would leave Ohio University, fewer students than expected dropped out. However, the retention rate of the potential leavers has decreased in recent years.

Findings from the Institutional Research Tracking/Retention Study also support the success of the intervention program at Ohio University. Before the intervention program began, in 1982, 19 percent of all first-year students with a GPA of 2.00 or higher dropped out by their sophomore year. This percentage was reduced to 14 percent in the 2010-11 class. These results suggest that intervention programs targeted at students with over a 2.00 GPA have been successful over the last few years.