

DCCCD Retention Best Practice Submission Form

Across the district there are many successful practices that contribute to the retention of students. As the district begins to develop a greater emphasis on its retention strategy, all locations are asked to identify and submit information about successful retention programs and activities. Please complete the following information on selected practices.

College/Location: **Richland College School of Humanities, Fine and Performing Arts**

The Retention Best Practice is primarily supported by what college/location area:

Instruction Student Services _____ Administrative _____

Combination of areas: (Please list)

Theatre

Contact Person: (Include contact information)

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Retention Best Practice Title:

**Increasing Theatre Student Success Through Dedicated Student Advising,
Program Orientation, Peer Review**

Retention Best Practice Area of Focus:

Math _____ STEM _____ Honors College _____ Other **Performing Arts/Theatre** _____

Retention Best Practice Executive Summary: approximately 50 words (Please use additional pages for a detailed description)

The Richland College Theatre faculty employ a number of activities/strategies to facilitate student success and retention in the Richland College Theatre department. These include:

- Faculty personally advise theatre, drama and dance students and register them for classes. Students are advised on degree requirements, class schedules, transfer options, the upcoming theatre season and audition protocols.
- Beginning this past summer, the Richland College Theatre Department created an electronic magazine entitled, "The GreenRoom Gazette" to distribute key program information to students enrolled in theatre/drama/dance courses at the beginning of the semester. This information covers advising offered by faculty; course offerings; scholarship information; instructor profiles; and "Personal Profiles" of current students and alumnae who have achieved successful careers upon completing the Richland theatre program.
- In addition, students are convened together during the first week of classes for teambuilding exercises with faculty and peers. Returning students are paired with new students and encouraged to work collaboratively throughout the semester.
- One critical aspect of the Richland College Theatre Department is the focus on student skill development through production. What this means in practical terms is that auditions are limited to students enrolled in theatre classes, not to the larger community, as is the case with many community college theatre programs. Rather, the focus is on building student skills in the areas of acting, stage design, lighting design, and production

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management. Students are expected to build stages, design lighting programs, operate sound boards and light boards, and stage manage productions. The practical "A to Z" experience that students gain results in measurable skill acquisition.

- Last, faculty developed a Quality Enhancement Plan entitled "Student Peer Review" as a means of engaging students in the critical evaluative process of student performances. This develops students' critical thinking/evaluative capacities and enables them to engage in thoughtful, meaningful collaboration and teamwork with their peers and faculty.

Please describe the evaluation measures utilized to support this initiative as a best practice.

The RLC Theatre Department measures student success in three critical areas. The first is in the number and quality of in-house productions performed each year. This academic year alone, seven major productions are scheduled. A second success evaluation measure is in the employability of our students in the industry. Currently, RLC theatre graduates are working both nationally and abroad (New Zealand, Hollywood, Las Vegas, North Carolina, New York to name a few venues) as well as in the North Texas regional theatre community. A third measure of success is student acceptance into four-year theatre programs. Since AY 06/07, approximately a dozen students have successfully matriculated into four-year programs, including Texas State University in San Marcos and the University of Texas at Arlington.

Provide a summary of the results, including data (such as trend lines over time) to show how it impacted retention and is a best practice.

- The "GreenRoom Gazette" magazine is a new program innovation. To date, faculty have received significant positive feedback from students confirming the efficacy of this electronic communication medium.
- Large group meetings are an effective means of communicating program activities to students and promoting the community/teambuilding required for theatre production work. Individual advising and frequent faculty-student interaction promotes awareness of student learning expectations and requirements for success.
- Theatre students are often unsure of the transfer requirements for a four-year theatre program. The entire Richland theatre experience is designed to build student skill, confidence, and personal growth in the context of a performance portfolio ensuring successful transition to a four-year college or university.

What would be needed to replicate the practice at other DCCCD colleges?

- Dedicated time for full staff, faculty and student meetings.
- A commitment to the Richland Theatre Department motto: *Be friendly, Be persuasive, Be consistent.*

Cost to implement this practice (financial and human):

The costs of implementation are minimal.

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