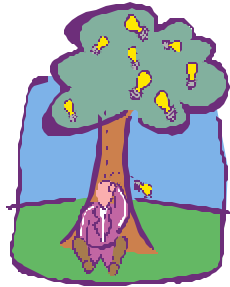


Two Common Recruitment & Retention Questions



How do I track students' achievement of their own educational goals, especially when it is not their goal to complete a program or degree?

Consider requiring student advising prior to enrolling in courses, and track student goals at that time. Have students fill out short surveys during the final exam period of every course, updating their student information and progress toward their goals. Conduct exit interviews.

How do I increase parent support for two-year programs?

Have college recruiters or business/industry representatives target parents directly. Emphasize the careers (including salaries and job outlooks) open to the program's students. Show how the program can transfer to a four-year institution.

Plan for Reporting on Recruitment and Retention

ATE *projects* need data about recruitment and retention in order to improve their programs, report to NSF, and attract new students.

Key Questions & Methods to Answer Them

Do program recruitment and retention strategies match student needs and expectations? Use student focus groups and student and faculty surveys to keep ATE *projects* in line with student expectations and vice versa.



How can recruitment and retention activities be improved? Use staff, student, and employer surveys, interviews, and focus groups to document activities, satisfaction with them, and suggestions for improving them. Use a checklist of commonly understood recruitment and retention activities on future surveys to better assess *project* status.



How effective are the recruitment and retention activities for different groups of students, including underrepresented groups? Use student applications, student surveys, student exit surveys, certification and licensing tests and employer surveys to collect data about student demographics, student goals, student educational backgrounds and numbers of students completing programs, earning degrees/licenses/certificates, placed in jobs, continuing their higher education, and enrolling due to recruitment activities. Collect this data yearly for students in the *project* for the *project's* duration. Include the length of time students are retained or take to complete the degree/certificate program.



ATE Evaluation Project: A National Science Foundation (NSF) Project. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this brochure are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSF.

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Advanced Technological Education (ATE) Program

Best Practices in Recruitment and Retention



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Additional information about recruitment and retention and the evaluation of the ATE program is available on-line at <http://ate.wmich.edu>.

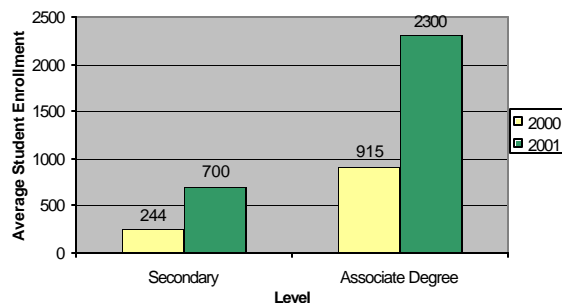
Overview of Recruitment and Retention in the ATE Program

Results Source—Survey 2001: ATE Evaluation Project

ATE-funded *projects* (i.e., project or center) employ many student recruitment and retention activities with good results.

- In 2001 at the associate degree level, the average enrollment for a within-*project* specified program was 160 students (compared to 94 in 2000) with 58 program completers (n=36).
- 46% of associate degree level program completers took technology jobs in 2001 (n=47).
- 28% of associate degree level program completers continued their higher education in 2001 (n=47).
- Representation of women and minorities has remained steady. Around 30% of enrolled students were women; more than 35% were minority at the associate degree level.
- 88% of *projects* reported recruitment activities and 96% reported retention activities in 2001 (n=51).

Average Student Enrollments for ATE Projects as a Whole in 2000 & 2001



Recruitment efforts have helped increase enrollments. The average enrollments on the chart include *projects* that were outliers (i.e., 70,000 for one center in 2001).

Best Practices

Here are a few of the best ATE-program recruitment and retention practices.

Community Organizations as Links to Traditionally Underrepresented Students An ATE project relies on community organizations to help recruit students and provide case management and support services. The organizations work with the college to help program graduates find jobs with local companies and enroll in associate degree programs. They also provide follow-up support to ensure that students advance in their education and careers.

Summer Camps Sponsored by Business/Industry and Community Colleges A community college recruits students with an industry-sponsored summer camp. Nortel provided \$34,000 and 60 mentors to support a wireless technology summer camp. Other corporate sponsors included Southwestern Bell, Kimley-Horn, and Sunbelt Plastics, Inc. About two-thirds of the camp students received their amateur radio licenses during or after the camp.

Employee Retraining Collaborative Efforts A community college offers off-campus technician retraining programs, which prepare participants to move to higher skilled positions in the telecommunications industry, in conjunction with Alcatel, MCI World Com, ST MicroElectronics, and Southwestern Bell. The college also retrains degree-holding engineers at a local company.

Experiential Learning in Industry Settings through the Program One introductory ATE project course introduces career options, team building, communication skills, and problem solving in an industrial engineering laboratory environment. Students then focus on a technical specialty, participate in a semester-long paid internship, and spend their final semester solving a real industrial problem in work teams.

Tips for Improvement

ATE *projects* employ common recruitment practices including presentations at career fairs and other venues, advertisements and mailings, and articulation programs. Some *projects* recruited underrepresented groups through procedures already in place within college recruitment offices, while others reported no recruitment efforts.



The most common ATE retention strategies were tutoring, financial support, and academic advising/counseling.

The innovative recruitment and retention tips addressing the areas below are less common.

Underrepresented Students

- Partner with local, regional, or government organizations (e.g., public housing authority, native organizations)
- Hold and attend conferences on minorities in technology
- Recruit at community events
- Provide services to the community through work-based class projects

Student/Faculty Preparation for Tech Programs

- Sponsor high school technology competitions
- Encourage students to take more STEM
- Support industry-based faculty internships
- Upgrade faculty technical skills through professional development
- Offer introductory career classes

Comprehensive Recruitment and Retention

- Craft efforts so that they are mutually supportive across many educational levels