



Completing College: Rethinking Institutional Action

By Vincent Tinto

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Completing College: Rethinking Institutional Action By Vincent Tinto

Even as the number of students attending college has more than doubled in the past forty years, it is still the case that nearly half of all college students in the United States will not complete their degree within six years. It is clear that much remains to be done toward improving student success. For more than twenty years, Vincent Tinto's pathbreaking book *Leaving College* has been recognized as the definitive resource on student retention in higher education. Now, with *Completing College*, Tinto offers administrators a coherent framework with which to develop and implement programs to promote completion.

Deftly distilling an enormous amount of research, Tinto identifies the essential conditions enabling students to succeed and continue on within institutions. Especially during the early years, he shows that students thrive in settings that pair high expectations for success with structured academic, social, and financial support, provide frequent feedback and assessments of their performance, and promote their active involvement with other students and faculty. And while these conditions may be worked on and met at different institutional levels, Tinto points to the classroom as the center of student education and life, and therefore the primary target for institutional action.

Improving retention rates continues to be among the most widely studied fields in higher education, and *Completing College* carefully synthesizes the latest research and, most importantly, translates it into practical steps that administrators can take to enhance student success.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The best compendium of information on organizational development related to colleges and universities and their students around. It is thoughtful, thorough, and focused on a limited number of areas where a huge number of factors are involved."

(John Bean, Indiana University)

"A valuable, useful guide for institutional dialogue and planning around student retention. *Completing College* will be welcomed by countless retention committees struggling with the magnitude of their charge and wondering where to start."

(David Kalsbeek, DePaul University)

"In *Completing College*, Vincent Tinto lays out in clear and compelling terms the actions that colleges and universities can and must take to ensure that larger numbers of their students succeed. The improvement agenda must be about fixing institutions, not fixing students; and Tinto describes the conditions necessary—conditions that institutions can intentionally create. Perhaps most importantly, Tinto notes that colleges typically have arrayed their retention initiatives around the margins of the institution, thus forfeiting the enormous potential that lies in the purposeful redesign of students' classroom experiences. Here, in a timely and concrete fashion, he offers evidence-based strategies that focus institutional and faculty energy where it matters most."

(Kay McClenney, University of Texas at Austin)

"Overall, Tinto accomplishes exactly what he set out to do, moving beyond theory to a call and plan for effective institutional action. And while there are no hard and fast solutions, ultimately Tinto knows that the field of higher education needs an action-oriented approach toward improving student retention. *Completing College: Rethinking Institutional Action* delivers one that should not be ignored."

(Sosanya Jones *The Review of Higher Education*)

"In *Completing College*, Vincent Tinto offers a framework for organizing institutional policies and practices that the research on educational attainment and his experience with different types of colleges and universities suggest can positively influence student persistence and degree attainment. . . . Tightly constructed and lucidly crafted, the book opens with a well-researched brief on why college matters to both

individuals and the larger society followed by a succinct overview of the four institutional conditions Tinto asserts lead to completing a program of study. An informative text for higher education and student affairs graduate programs."

(*Journal of College Student Development* 2013-06-04)

About the Author

Vincent Tinto is distinguished professor in the School of Education at Syracuse University. He is the author of *Leaving College: Rethinking the Causes and Cures of Student Attrition* and coauthor of *Where Colleges Are and Who Attends*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nathan Ramsey:

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