

Identifying Indicators of Attrition for Two-Year College Students

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Using data from a cohort of first-time students enrolled in 16 public two-year colleges in a Midwestern state, this study examines patterns of and influences in student attrition in manufacturing technology and related STEM education programs. The study provides college administrators with a simple technique to identify indicators of students at risk of leaving prior to program completion based on Bayesian methods. The study derives indicators of at risk behavior based on patterns of enrollment behavior, academic achievement, and course-taking behavior that differentiate those who leave in their first year of studies from those who graduate or persist to the second year. Using the information provided by these empirically-derived indicators, college staff can design and develop effective interventions such as academic alert systems, intrusive advising, and modifications to registration procedures and other practices.

This research, previously presented at the 56th Annual Conference of the Council for the Study of Community Colleges, April 3rd to 5th, Washington, D.C. has been submitted for review and publication.