

Six Facts We've Learned About Students
A Summary of Noel-Levitz Research Findings
Preview Day Chapel
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In 2011 Noel-Levitz, a recognized leader in higher education consulting conducted numerous studies on the behaviors and attitudes of prospective and current students in higher education as they relate to student success, student retention, and new student enrollment. At the end of 2011 they summarized the most important facts gleaned from their research.

Meanwhile, Lancaster Bible College was already identifying and addressing these very issues. I would like to share with you a summary of six of the Noel-Levitz findings and describe how we have been responding to the needs of students.

1. ***One in three freshmen lacks confidence in academic preparation for college.*** According to Noel-Levitz, up to one-half of first-year undergraduates nationwide acknowledged that their academic preparation wasn't as solid as they may have hoped. First-generation freshmen in particular were apprehensive about their abilities in math and writing.

According to this report, 33% of you in the audience who are thinking about attending LBC lack the confidence that you are academically prepared. I am happy to tell you this morning, "It's okay!" We know how you feel! And we've designed our curriculum and provided resources that will help ease you into your college experience.

Curriculum Sequence:

Two years ago, we completed an entire revision of our undergraduate curriculum, keeping the "finish line" the same. We knew where we wanted you to be at the end of your four years. What we did, though, was recognize that the starting line needed to be adjusted. We made sure we sequenced your curriculum so the courses you take build on earlier courses. And we provide entry -testing to make sure you are placed in the right courses.

Reaching Academic Potential/Academic Mentoring Services

As a smaller institution we have an advantage in being able to identify and proactively help students with learning needs. LBC has a Reaching Academic Potential Center (soon to be known as Academic Mentoring Services) that provides tutoring services to assist students in developing study skills and taking tests.

Our Academic Mentoring Services also provide a three-week head-start program called **Project Excel**, for students entering LBC with a demonstrated academic need. Project Excel helps students get an early jump on college by successfully completing a 3-credit math or English course in the weeks leading up to the start of the semester.

Our **Writing Center**, staffed by our own students, assists students with written assignments by helping to develop creative and technical writing skills. Last semester, the Center served 235 students in a total of 428 sessions!

Mentoring

We provide an academic advisor who journeys with you as you map out your courses at LBC. We intentionally connect students with a faculty or staff member to assist in the challenge of transitioning to college by providing prayer, support, and encouragement.

Our hope is that we have created a safe environment giving you the confidence you may lack as you begin your studies at LBC.

2. ***One of the top undergraduate recruiting practices in 2011 was addressing students' concerns about costs.*** According to Noel-Levitz, students responded well to activities that encouraged prospective students to take action, address their concerns about costs, and built relationships between them and institutional representatives.

Personal Attention

We provide personal attention to each potential student and their families, engaging with both parents and students to make a premier LBC education most affordable. When a student is accepted, we send a financial package to them. We then initiate a series of planned follow-up phone calls to help walk through a plan to address financial needs.

Financial Aid Office

Today, following this chapel, our Director of Financial Aid, Mrs. Karen Fox, will meet with parents in the private dining room to address specific challenges you are facing in investing in a college education. Mrs. Fox, a member of our team for 14 years and considered an expert among her peers in other colleges, is here with her team to help you navigate numerous financial aid options.

Financial Assistance

In addition, we have established a Loan Repayment Assistance Program that helps students pay back their loans based on their income after graduation. Mrs. Fox can give you more information about this.

Our **Scholarshare Fund**, which was specifically created to assist our students with their college tuition, totaled over \$1.75 million in 2010-11. This support is provided through friends of LBC who believe in our mission and vision and who want to make a quality biblical education available to our students. Nearly three out of four students receive scholarship aid at LBC.

At every level of this institution, we are committed to excellent customer service. Your journey is truly our focus and our Business and Financial Aid offices are eager to work with each individual to develop a plan that makes your investment affordable.

3. ***College students today tend to be more satisfied than their counterparts from 15 years ago, but 40% remain dissatisfied.*** Noel-Levitz found that overall, today's students are more satisfied than students in 1995, although a significant percentage of students remain dissatisfied across sectors. Student satisfaction has increased the most at four-year public institutions, increasing 10% from 47% in 1995 to 57% in 2010.

In our most recent student satisfaction survey, 84% of our students were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall LBC experience. This is well above the national average. Additionally, 64% of those surveyed said that we exceeded their expectations.

We are intentional with our programming to make sure that we do things with excellence. But you know what? It's not just what we do or don't do that makes our students satisfied. We rely heavily on our students to contribute to the overall LBC experience. For example, this afternoon you will see an outstanding musical. It takes well over 100 students to pull off what you will see. That contribution creates an environment of satisfaction. Our students interact with each other and their professors in the context of the classroom. That interaction creates an environment of satisfaction.

We aren't perfect. We know that. But we are intentional in pursuing excellence. At LBC we constantly measure our events, activities, classes, or productions by asking, "Was that premier?" In fact, our vision is to be a premier Bible college that intentionally develops the head, heart, and hands of our students.

4. ***Nearly 60% of prospective undergraduate students are researching college choices with their parents.*** Noel-Levitz found both parents and students look for links related to academic programs and admissions information when first visiting college web sites. In addition to indicating that they were researching colleges together, 49% of students and 61% of parents said the final decision on where to enroll would also be made together.

We have set up our website specifically to help parents understand the key areas of consideration for selecting a college, primarily the academic and financial components. When you visit www.lbc.edu, you can click on the "PARENTS" tab and find helpful information to assist in the college search process. Our goal is to make the information you need as easily accessible as possible.

5. ***Between 9 and 19% of first-term freshmen fail to return for their second term.*** Noel-Levitz revealed that first-to-second-term attrition was greater for first-year students than for second-year college students, but the difference wasn't as big as some may have thought.

Almost 90% (89.51%) of new students returned for their second semester this year. That rate is among the best in the country and speaks to the experience and value of an LBC education. It also identifies that we are looking for a certain type of student. Our mission, "...to educate **Christian students to think and live a biblical worldview and to proclaim Christ by serving Him in the Church and society,**" is very focused, and we are recruiting carefully to find students who fit that mission.

6. ***One of the top undergraduate retention practices in 2011 was giving students practical work experiences in their intended majors in order to apply their learning.*** Noel-Levitz ranked 53 emerging and widely-used practices for keeping today's undergraduates on track to complete their degree. In addition to identifying widely-used practices, the report identifies a few top-ranked practices that were used by only half or less of the survey respondents.

I am happy to tell you that LBC excels in providing you practical work experiences related to your respective major. Your experience begins in your freshman year and continues through to your senior year.

We have a specific leadership curriculum that takes place in your freshman and sophomore years. By the end of your second year, our goal is to make sure that you have a clear understanding of your giftedness as it relates to your major. We review the most basic leadership skills as well as methods that you can use to share the good news of Jesus Christ through the building of relationships with people that God puts in your life.

Then in your junior and senior years you will have multiple work experiences related to your specific major. Hundreds of hours of internships and practicums will give you experiences in the elementary classroom, the counseling office, the church's youth group, the worship team, the athletic team, or the social work office. You will be able to apply the theory you learn in the classroom directly to real world experiences.

I've seen countless times when these experiences turn into full-time employment for our graduates. It is projected that today's college graduates will experience 10-12 jobs in their lifetimes. We like to think that we are preparing you for a lifetime of leadership and ministry, regardless of what occupation God has for you.

Ultimately, we provide a unique college experience centered on the Bible that prepares you for your journey, your mission to serve God, your mission to help others. While we do many things well, we are not content to rest on our achievements. Even after today, please stay in touch, ask questions, share your concerns, and allow us to help you in your college decision-making process. We are deeply committed to keep on top of issues facing students and their families today and will continue to find and implement solutions, making a premier Bible college experience within reach for each person God calls to LBC.