Retention Ideas from Our Colleagues

**Carrots**

1. Have raffles and prizes to award good/regular attendance – gift cards, pens, notebooks, prize jar, goodies, etc. (Sorry, the department can't reimburse you for these expenses.)

2. Award perfect attendance certificates every 8 weeks or every month.

**Communication**

3. Get students’ correct addresses and phone numbers.

4. Make up and have students fill out a Student Info Sheet (Be sure to follow-up and catch missing information every 2 weeks). These sheets might include: name, address, phone number, work info, CLC ID, Date of Birth, and family information. After a student misses 2 classes, call the student.

5. Call students right away and follow up, if needed. Continue to call.

6. Make a phone call during class from the teacher and students to absent students using a cell phone.

7. Show students how to use our Voice Mail system and practice in class (on speaker phone and/or give homework to leave telephone messages.)

8. Write a letter to missing students. Include homework or class papers with the letter.

(Because many students might feel uncomfortable sharing phone numbers with other students—for many valid reasons—we would discourage teacher-initiated phone lists.)

**Community**

9. Develop teacher-student and student-student relationships.

10. Give a consistent motivational pep talk.

11. Make classroom a safe, non-threatening, friendly learning environment.
12. Use name tags so that students know other students’ names, and repeat this for the 2nd 8 weeks of class.

13. Include ice breakers to help students form friendships.

14. Develop a “Buddy System” or academic partner.

15. Ask students to write a letter to another student that they didn’t know.

16. Be flexible - allow students leeway if they work late.

17. Make students aware of funding/attendance relationship (funding) and class community responsibilities.

18. Initiate a discussion of the benefits of good attendance in class; ask students what they would like you to do/themselves to do/classmates to do to encourage good attendance.

19. Teach students how to use the college website/PeopleSoft system to find their ID number, update their personal contact information, print their class schedule, and use CLC e-mail in order to make them feel part of the college community. Then have them use their class schedule to get a student ID. (The schedule for student IDs is available each semester.)

20. Ask students to develop class attendance policy and procedures and post them in the classroom.

21. Share community resources (such as the Lake County United Way website) that may offer students means to overcome barriers to regular attendance and persistence.

22. Review transfer procedures and get a grid of our classes so that you can refer students to other sections of class if they can no longer attend yours.

23. Share a list of tips similar to this one with your students; ask them to choose which ones they would like to use in class.

Curriculum

24. Give students a needs / interests survey so that lessons are meaningful and useful.
25. Use dialogue journals between teacher and student and/or student and student. Occasionally, include prompts about attendance, such as students’ barriers to attendance and continuing, what helps them overcome barriers, their past history of attendance and persistence in school, and their perceptions of regular attendance’s effects on learning.

26. Have students write letters to themselves that include:
   a. Reasons that they are there
   b. Their goals

   Have them review and revise their letters periodically.

27. Make group projects a part of class activities.

28. Have students keep a class portfolio where students can track their own attendance.

29. Get (curricular) ideas from student involvement. If a student brings up a topic relevant to others, incorporate it in class.

30. Use a variety of classroom activities that encourage interaction and accommodate different learning styles.

31. At the end of class, give students a short “exit strip” activity. On the paper, students write what they liked about the class, what they would like to have included in the class, and/or what will bring them back to class next time.

32. Give students a syllabus that includes clear class expectations and goals and teacher contact information. Consider including an attendance contract.

33. Invite a guest speaker to talk about benefits of good attendance and progress towards goals. Speakers might include counselors, enrollment services staff, associate deans, and former successful students.

Please share your good techniques and methods for encouraging regular attendance and persistence in your classes. Send your tips.
to Suzanne Leibman, at suleibman@clcillinois.edu, or to her mailbox at GLC, Building 4, room 418.