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A Comparison of Student Retention and First Year Programs Among Liberal Arts Colleges in the Mountain South

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Among Liberal Arts Colleges in the Mountain South**

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ABSTRACT

Institutional administrators in higher education struggle with student attrition and work to develop programs and support mechanisms to boost retention (Derby & Smith, 2004; Jacobs & Archie, 2008; Tinto, 1993). Half of all students who do not persist in college drop out by the end of the first year and do not return (Tinto, 2002). This has led to increased efforts by colleges and universities to develop, refine, and sustain first year student programs and services (McPherson, 2007). The most important factors in increasing student retention are interaction with other members of the campus community, including faculty, staff, and peers, as well as successful student integration into the social and academic fabric of the campus are (Astin, 1993; Tinto, 2002).