

Retention and Graduation Remediation Plan

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Explanation of Why Rates are Low

In looking at our graduation and retention rates, the graduation rates are our main concern. While we would like higher retention rates, our retention rates do not cause citations from accrediting agencies. Increasing retention rates, however, will positively impact graduation rates.

Retention Rate

Program	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	Average
AA – BU does not offer AA degrees	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
BA	58%	51%	39%	50%

Program	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	Average
BA Business	47%	46%	33%	42%
BA Early Childhood Ed	0%	0%	50%	17%
BA Music	100%	N/A	0%	50%

BA IT	64%	78%	N/A	71%
BA Religion	80%	80%	57%	72%
Total	58%	51%	39%	50%

Graduation Rate

Program	Enrolled 2018-19	Enrolled 2017-18	Enrolled 2016-17	Average
AA – BU does not offer AA degrees	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
BA	7.14%	7.06%	1.28%	5.16%

Program	Enrolled 2018-19	Enrolled 2017-18	Enrolled 2016-17	Average
BA Business	6.9%	7.0%	0.0%	4.6%
BA Early Childhood Ed	33.0%	0.0%	11.1%	14.7%
BA Music	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
BA IT	0.0%	0.0%	N/A Program dropped	0.0%
BA Religion	0.0%	6.1%	0.0%	2.0%
Total	7.1%	7.0%	1.3%	5.2%

Understanding the Issues

A number of issues have impacted our retention and graduation rates. Included are COVID, Korean demographics and church involvement, a changing relationship with our founding church, as well as our sports program and large number of international students. However, our biggest crisis relates to an attempted takeover by a group that for a short time they had control of Bethesda. In an email to the BPPE, we explained this as follows:

Our university recently went through a complicated legal battle related to the school's governance. The original Board of Directors was fired, and an opposition Board of Directors and a new administration took over for almost a year. The new board and administration did not comply with many requirements from accrediting institutions and government agencies. Eventually, the Trial Court, the Court of Appeals, and the Supreme Court of California gave control of the school back to the original lawful Board of Directors and administration, which we represent. We can send you the court documents if necessary.

Numeric trends correlate with the struggles of what had been an unhealthy board. Note that after the courts gave control back to the lawful board and Cho returned to the presidency, the number of dropouts declined from 127 to 39. This will certainly impact graduation rates.

	Start of Year	New Student	Drop Out	Graduates	End of Year	Graduation Rate	Retention Rate	Notes
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2018-2019	355	105	87	54	214			
2019-2020	383	169	86	60	237			President Cho appointed
2020-2021	390	153	135	61	194			COVID; Board struggles
2021-2022	359	165	146	53	160	1.3%	39%	Board splits; "Kim Board" fires Cho
2022-2023	271	111	127	42	102	7.1%	51%	Kim controls school during legal battles
2023-2024	261	159	39	51	171	7.1%	58%	Courts decide for Cho; Cho returns as president
2024-2025	261	90 (so far)						

The Kim board and administration, later ruled illegitimate by the courts, made the prodigal son look frugal by comparison. In less than a year, they exceeded the budget by a staggering one million dollars while also failing to generate nearly a million dollars in expected tuition revenue. Their spending was nothing short of extravagant. For instance, they spent \$100,000 for the inauguration of their president, flying in the board members from Korea for the event. This lavish junket included renting luxury vehicles, staying in expensive hotels, and even recreational activities like golf. What didn't they spend money on? Student services and recruiting students. They stopped giving scholarships. They even failed to pay foreign student recruiters for outstanding invoices when they took over, leading to disastrous consequences. Recruiters blacklisted the school, warning others not to work with us. One recruiter even contacted students he had referred to the school, urging them to transfer elsewhere.

How could they cause such a disastrous financial situation? Could it have been simple incompetence or a willful attempt to destroy the school, perhaps in order to sell the property? We do not know. We have no explanation for such bad financial management. Nevertheless, they left us quite a mess to clean up.

Imaging the strain on our human resources. The illegitimate administration had ignored required reports to the BPPE, TRACS, ABHE, and IPEDS. They did not even leave us the data we needed to complete several of these reports. In some cases, we found that they had reported data, but it was false data. No information was provided about passwords and login information for JotForm, ABHE, TRACS, IPEDS, BPPE, Populi, BUC Emails, etc. We have been busy! Thus, the progress we have

made cleaning this up over the previous year is now giving us more time to attend to student services and recruitment.

As mentioned above, there are other factors.

We were started by the pastor of the Yoido Full-Gospel Church, a church in Korea that was formerly the largest church in the world. The founding vision involved training the large population of Korean immigrants. Additionally, the church promoted the school to their members in Korean. Church leadership changed. The Yoido Full-Gospel Church no longer sends us students and money. Two other changes in Korea have impacted us. One is demographics. With a birthrate of 0.75, there are fewer young adults. The other change pertains to the fervor of the Korean church. It is not growing as fast as it had been. It is not sending as many missionaries. Fewer people are aspiring to become pastors or applying to theological schools. Theological schools in Korea are also suffering decreased enrolment.

The COVID lockdowns began in 2020. While graduation rates for bachelor degrees are calculated for a six-year period, many full-time students complete a BA in four years. Without this interruption, some of our 2020 enrollees might have graduated by 2024.

Our large percentage of F-1 Visa students, and our sports program was also a contributing factor. It is not uncommon that foreign students have a lower retention and graduation rate than other students. Similarly, we have had students who were more interested in playing on a sports team than they were in completing their degrees.

Retention – Graduation Remediation Plan

Retention Program

Since regaining control of the school, we have initiated two retention programs. One is the Academic Continuity Engagement (ACE) program. The idea is to identify students who just joined Bethesda with low grades and help them improve their academic performance through specific advisors. This program also allows current students who are struggling academically.

The other program is called Student Care. We recruited two student workers to make phone calls to specific academically struggling students identified through Populi or reported by professors. Both programs are meant to improve student achievements and retention rates.

Plans for Student Services

The update of the strategic plan, created at the beginning of this year, includes a number of items that should help with student retention. As seen below, these are listed under goals for “Facilities and Infrastructure” (and also referenced in the section for “Student Services”)

Strategic Goal 5: Expand and Upgrade Student Services					
2024-25					

1. Suggestion 2024 AR 10	Increase pleasant “hang out” places on campus –. Some areas might just be comfortable chairs, other areas might have a TV or ping-pong table.	Fall	President	\$10,000	10/28/2024 CFO reports that this is complete
2.	Divide large classrooms into smaller rooms (resulting in smaller class sizes and additional spaces to use for various purposes).	Fall	Chair of General Affairs	\$180,000	10/28/2024 CFO reports that this is complete
3. Suggestion 2024 AR 10	Expand social media chat program	Spring	IT Chair	\$500	
4. Suggestion 2024 AR 10	Move equipment from music module to Grace Hall and develop a yoga area	Spring	Music Chair	\$20,000	
5. Suggestion 2024 AR 10	Begin hosting two school parties per year in conjunction with home games	Spring	Chair of Student Affairs	\$5,000	
6.					
2025-26					
7. Suggestion 2024 AR 10	Add to and upgrade the athletics area (which may take some unused space from the library)	Spring	President	\$200,000	
8. <i>Suggestion</i> 2020 AR 9	Install bike racks in parking lot	Fall	Property Manager and Dir of Facilities Management	\$300	
9.					
2026-27					
10. Suggestion 2024 AR 10	Create a one-stop service area for students for all their common services	Fall	President	\$75,000	
11.					
2027-28					
12. Suggestion 2024 AR 10	Purchase additional upgrades to fitness equipment	Fall	Chair of Athletics	20,000	

Local Recruiting

Historically, Bethesda began with a large percentage of students from Korea. As the above mentioned situations in Korea changed, we began recruiting from other nations. While this will help us return to a more sustainable situation, retention problems are more common with foreign students. We need to recruit more local students.

Local Church Outreach

We are looking into the feasibility of an outreach program asking local churches to allow us to do workshops for them. Our internal discussions include the following:

1. Have interested faculty members propose what they would teach at such a workshop. We would evaluate their proposals based on how interested we expect pastors to be in having such a workshop, and how engaging a teacher the professor would be (e.g., do student evaluations show that he or she is one of our most popular teachers)
2. Pay the faculty members when they do an afternoon or evening workshop (How much can we offer?)
3. Have someone manage the program and contact churches. He or she should be a winsome and friendly person. To make appointments, he or she would send letters and follow up with phone calls. The letter would include a response card for the pastors to choose a workshop. (See below)
4. When we do a workshop, we should bring a table (and maybe a display) with literature about our different programs. Someone must staff the table and attempt to get contact information from people who would like more information about studying at BU. This could be the above mentioned manager, or our president.
5. When we put on a workshop, we should work toward building an ongoing relationship with the pastor and youth minister. Give him two or three scholarship certificates for one free class to any members he would like to choose. Invite him to speak in chapel or in a class. Our president's warm personality may be ideal for shmoozing with the pastors. For this reason, he might also want to staff the table at the workshop.

We could approach churches with a survey somewhat similar to the following:

As a partner to local churches, at Bethesda University we are offering free workshops at local churches. One of our professors will conduct a one to two hour workshop on a Sunday afternoon, or the evening of your choice. Which of the following would be a useful event at your church:

- The Pursuit of God through a Variety of Spiritual Disciplines
- Practices of a Healthy Family Life
- How to Start a Business as a Second Income or ...
- What the Bible Teaches about Sexual Health and Gender Issues
- How to
- Children and ...

Pentecostal Community Niche

Since we are theologically Full Gospel, the local Charismatic and Pentecostal communities are a natural niche for us. Large numbers of excited young adults are going to a variety of workshops, seminars, and training programs in Southern California. We are beginning to make a list of places to explore:

- Youth With a Mission (YWAM): There are a few YWAM bases in Southern California. Especially important would be the Circuit Riders. They offer a week-long school on evangelism and other ministry skills before sending young people out to minister at universities. Perhaps they would like to do some ministry on our campus. Perhaps some of their young adults would want an accredited degree. Perhaps some of their staff would be useful chapel speakers or adjunct professors. <https://circuitriders.com/> They have a meeting on Monday evenings at 6:00 PM (The Crossing Church, 2115 Newport Blvd, Costa Mesa, CA 92627)
- “The Send” has large stadium events filled with young people that the speakers inspire to get involved in serving God. The Send will be in Southern California in February and March. Tickets are around \$20. <https://thesend.org/nights/>
- [Harvest Rock Church](#) (AKA H-Rock) is a large Pentecostal church that fills their 1,262-seat auditorium when they offer workshops. First-time visitors to worship services are invited to go meet with someone gifted in giving Words of Knowledge. That is a bit different from churches typically giving visitors a coffee mug.
- Pasadena International House of Prayer (PIHOP) has Prayer Rooms for physical healing, emotional healing, prophetic prayer, etc. <https://www.pihop.com/>
- In Redding, CA, Bethel Church, is greatly respected by such groups. This church has an unaccredited [School of Supernatural Ministry](#). A local School of Supernatural Ministry, modeled loosely after Bethel’s school, meets in Pasadena. It is unaccredited. Over a hundred people regularly show up for classes and over an hour or two of worship.

Explore, Network, and Become a Part of These Communities: To cultivate these communities, our president would have to start visiting, making friends, discovering needs, etc. In addition to visiting some of these communities, we hope to offer resources. We might invite some of them to speak in chapel, guest lecture in a class, teach a class, or do some type of ministry on our campus. Perhaps a place to meet might be offered.

Develop a Curriculum that Appeals to this Niche Market: For people hungry for such training, there are lots of local classes, seminars, workshops... but very few in accredited colleges. Global Awakening College of Ministry (<https://globalawakening.com/gacm/>) in Pennsylvania has this type program. Notice some of the classes they offer:

- Physical Healing 1 & 2
- Inner Healing 1 & 2
- Five-Fold Ministry Gifts
- Spiritual Gifts
- Prophecy: Biblical and Today
- Intercession
- Deliverance 1 & 2
- Church History Courses
 - Reformation to Azusa Street
 - Azusa Street to Present
- (as well as more standard theological courses)

We may find that adding such courses to our curriculum can bring in local students.

If, after exploring, networking, and praying, we feel it is right, we will begin developing a curriculum and marketing in their communities. It may be natural to begin with certificates that can be counted toward degrees.

Professional Help

We have begun exploring companies that help with recruiting and retention, and have identified the following possibilities:

- **Clark Higher Ed – CHE | John Borum**– Leads to Enrollment – www.clarkhighered.com – 682.999.4037 jborum@clarkhighered.com
- **Caylor Solutions | Bart Caylor** - <https://www.caylor-solutions.com/> - a leader in institutional marketing for recruitment. <https://www.caylor-solutions.com/contact/>
- **Legacy Higher Ed | Dave Burke** - enrollment counseling - <https://www.legacyhighered.com/> - 626.945.5956 dave@legacyhighered.com

Agents

- A. The Athletic Director has contracted with agents to recruit international students in various countries in South America, Southeast Asia, Europe, and Africa. The athletic department will introduce additional sports teams, such as volleyball and women's soccer, in the coming fiscal year.
- B. The IT Director has contracted with student recruiting agents in China and Southeast Asia.
- C. The Registrar has begun work with two student recruiting agents in India.
- D. The Undergraduate Theology Chair is launching an outreach program to recruit students through relationship-building with local churches.

Research

We will conduct additional research to better understand areas of strongest and weakest retention / graduation. As noted above, we might consider differences in countries, difference based on rates of different recruiters, etc.

Six-Year Analysis Tables

We will also add six-year analysis tables to our assessment plan.

Retention Trends

Program	2026-27	2025-26	2024-25	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	Average
BA Business				47%	46%	33%	42%
BA Early Childhood Ed				0%	0%	50%	17%
BA Music				100%	N/A	0%	50%
BA IT				64%	78%	N/A	71%
BA Religion				80%	80%	57%	72%
Total				58%	51%	39%	50%

Graduation Trends

Program	Enrolled 2021-22	Enrolled 2020-21	Enrolled 2019-20	Enrolled 2018-19	Enrolled 2017-18	Enrolled 2016-17
BA Business				6.9%	7.0%	0.0%
BA Early Childhood Ed				33.0%	0.0%	11.1%
BA Music				0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
BA IT				0.0%	0.0%	N/A Program dropped
BA Religion				0.0%	6.1%	0.0%
Total				7.1%	7.0%	1.3%

Comprehensive Data

	Start of Year	New Student	Drop Out	Graduates	End of Year	Graduation Rate	Retention Rate	Notes
2018-2019	355	105	87	54	214			
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