



DATA SIZZLE

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DARE...

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Institutional Effectiveness Newsletter



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The Case of the Disappearing Students

It was a dark and stormy census night when we noticed... something chilling in the numbers. The persistence rates had vanished into the abyss. Between Fall 2024 and Spring 2025, 66% of our brave scholars returned to face another semester. But from fall to fall, only 60% dared to come back. That's right, four out of every ten students have mysteriously vanished into the fog of "life happens."

Whispers in the data hallways tell of students who once roamed the campus freely but were lost to transfer portals, job shadows, childcare demons, or the dreaded "forgot my login" curse. Some say you can still hear their sighs echoing through building K.

The legends speak of the Under 20s, who once persisted at a lively 76%, but whose return rate fell to 58%, perhaps lured away by part-time jobs or Netflix's algorithmic dark magic. The 35-and-overs fared even worse, their persistence plunging from 39% to 28%, as if adult responsibilities had dragged them into the administrative underworld.

Even our heroic First-Gen adventurers couldn't escape unscathed, slipping from 64% to 61%. And though Asian students managed to persist at higher rates than most (61% to 46%), it seems even they weren't immune to the persistence plague haunting our institution.

Down in the Degree & Transfer Dungeon, the news is mixed. Overall persistence stands tall at 65% (bravo, brave souls!). Yet even there, cracks appear as students aged 25–34 saw a drop from 64% to 38%, and those with GPAs below 2.5 are barely clinging to their transcripts.

So what's the moral of this terrifying tale? Beware the ghosts of lost persistence! They lurk in forgotten counseling appointments, haunt unfinished FAFSA forms, and whisper, "Maybe I'll take a break next term..."

Only through the ancient rituals of early alerts, student support, and timely interventions can we summon them back from the data graveyard.



The Phantom Students of Census Eve

Every fall, as the census deadline creeps closer, a strange phenomenon occurs across campus. Students appear in our systems by the hundreds, registering at midnight, logging in once (maybe twice), and then... vanishing without a trace.

These aren't your average "life got busy" withdrawals. No, these are the phantom students, mysterious figures who enroll just long enough to haunt our headcounts before disappearing into the data fog.

Last fall, we enrolled 12,293 students before census... but when census day arrived, only 11,469 remained. A harmless 7% drop, you say? Perhaps, until you notice the 99 students flagged for possible fraud lurking in the shadows. That's 1% of total enrollment, just enough to make your spreadsheets shiver.

It wasn't always like this. Back in fall 2016, the fraud rate was zero. It was a simpler time, before the great "Application Boom" summoned the spirits of fake IDs and bots disguised as learners. By fall 2022, the hauntings had grown stronger. 104 suspicious accounts, 12% of those not enrolled at census. The fraud rate had reached poltergeist levels.

Our brave analysts, armed only with Excel and caffeine, battle these fraudulent phantoms each term by filtering, cross-checking, and invoking the sacred spell:

```
=IF(ISBLANK(Student_ID),"Ghost","Legit")
```

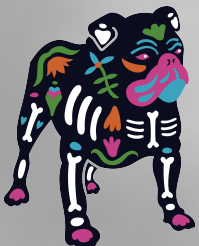
Still, they persist.

Each year, new ghosts arise, some seeking financial aid they'll never use, others perhaps sent by dark algorithms from beyond (the web). Their names are familiar yet... off. Their logins last seconds. Their Canvas footprints? Barely a whisper.

So next time you see an enrollment spike (no pun intended) that seems too good to be true, beware. It might just be the work of the Phantom Students of Census Eve.

Remember: not every student who enrolls is really there.

And in IE, we know one thing for certain, the scariest thing about data isn't the numbers... it's when they disappear overnight.





The Haunting of Data Warehouse 2.0

It was a dark and stormy Friday afternoon in Institutional Effectiveness. The fluorescent light in the work room flickered, Outlook calendars groaned, and someone whispered those fateful words:

“Hey, should we go check on the data warehouse?”

Craig, the fearless Executive Director, raised an eyebrow. “You mean the data warehouse? The one that hasn’t been updated since 2019?”

The team exchanged nervous glances. Somewhere in the distance, a pivot table crashed.

Still, curiosity (and Craig’s sense of duty) prevailed. “Let’s go,” he said, grabbing a flashlight and his favorite KPI dashboard.

They gathered their tools: Erica with her color-coded report templates, Armando armed with an analytics dashboard, Erik clutching a laptop glowing faintly with SQL queries, and Stephen bringing snacks, moral support, and an incredibly appropriate dramatic lantern.

The door to the data warehouse creaked open with the sound of corrupted CSVs. Inside, rows of obsolete files lined the walls. A cold draft swept through, possibly from A-401, possibly from unarchived data ghosts.

Erik typed cautiously:

```
SELECT * FROM warehouse WHERE spooky = TRUE;
```

The system responded:

“Error: Unknown column ‘hope.’”

Everyone gasped.

To be continued...



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Thanks for reading to the bottom line!

