

# Change, Student Success & The Shifting Road Ahead

Pamela Cox-Otto, Ph.D.  
CEO, Interact

**interact**  
2-Year College Experts

interact

# A Bit About Me and Mine

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

P

- Former Television News Reporter (KVIQ, KSBW, KXTV, KCBS)
- Former PIO at Rio Hondo College (Whittier, CA)
- B.A. – Humboldt State
- M.A. – Long Beach State
- Ph.D. – University of Minnesota in Web-Based Persuasion at 2-year colleges
- Adjunct Faculty: Rio Hondo Community College and Viterbo University
- Faculty: University of Minnesota, Twin Cities
- VP of Advancement, at Western Wisconsin Technical College

interact

# Interact Communications

- For 20 years.... Working with two-year colleges **ONLY**
- All staff have 2-year college experience
- We mix academic research with pragmatic marketing
- And just like **THIS IS YOUR LIFE...**

***It's Ours, Too!***

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

P

interact

Why I Love Community Colleges...

California's Community Colleges, specifically.

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

P

interact

**It's a Strange Place...**

**In Which We Find Ourselves!**

**Change.... Some we **don't** want....**

**Some Can't Happen Soon Enough..**

**Like Stop it with the Hurricanes, Floods, and Fires.**

# interact

## Things That Are Going!

They used to be in every home... now, they're predictively in the homes of retired people and families with young children...

How Many of You Still Have Landlines?

**You are part of the 49.2%\* of the population still hanging on. Each year, 5 – 7% shift to cell phone only.**



\*Business Insider, 2017



interact

# Things That Are Gone!

How many people here ...

Had a camera that used film when you were a kid?

Had a disposable camera?

Well, the tech behemoths at Polaroid and Kodak are struggling...

And everyone with a phone has a camera...



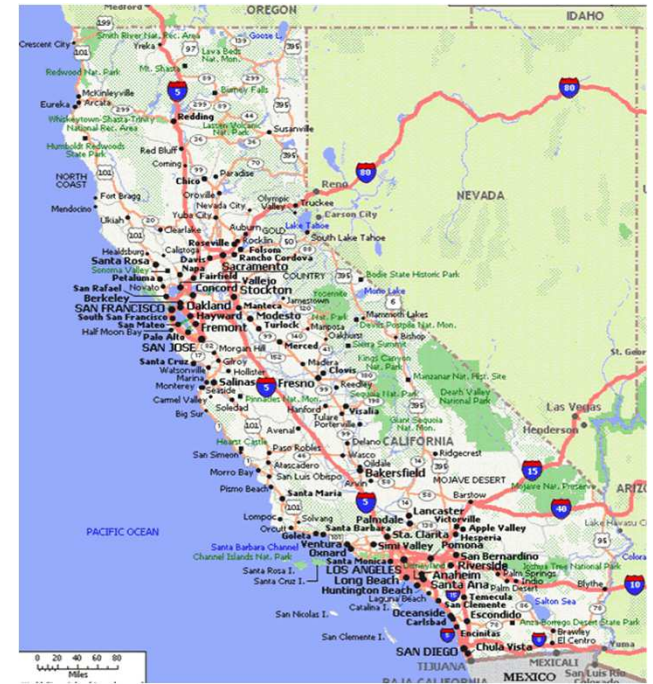


interact

# Things That Are Gone!

What item did everyone have in their glovebox?  
Or in your backseat?

Paper maps are dead...  
And the companies that made them?  
Struggling to catch up to Google and Apple.



interact

And So Much is Simply ...

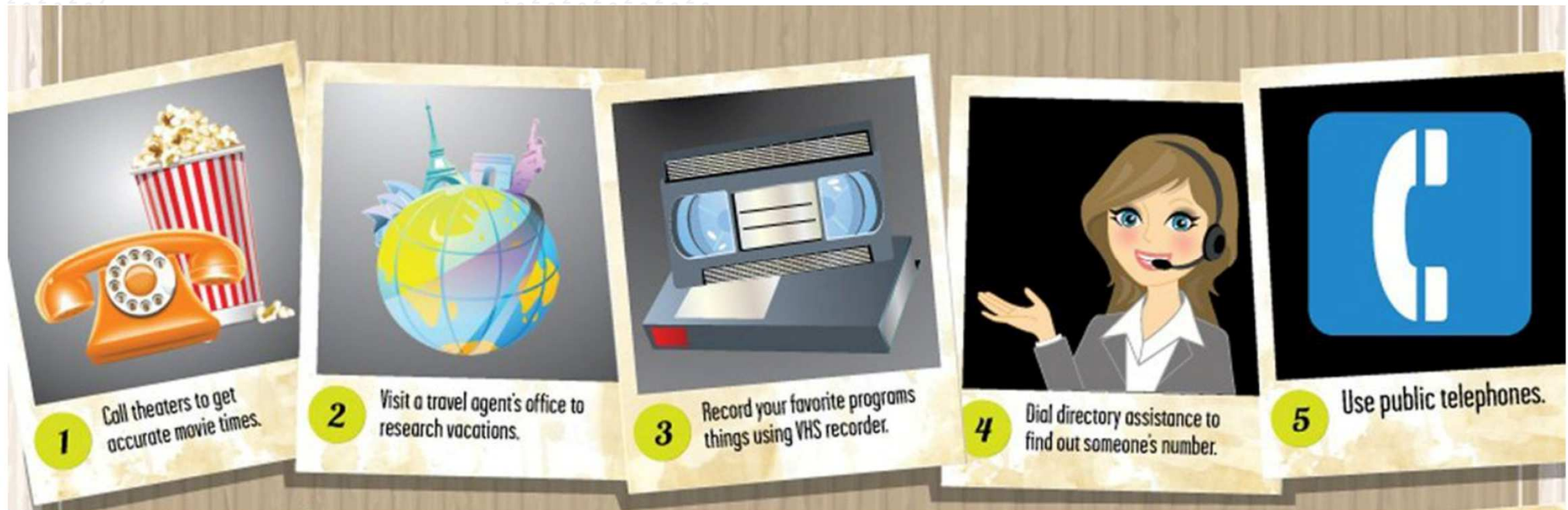
Not a Part of our Lives Anymore.

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

interact

We Don't...



Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

P



interact

We Don't...



Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

P

interact

**And by 2025...**  
**These things will be gone, too:**

Car Mirrors

Plastic Credit Cards

Cords and Chargers

Human Operators



Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

P

**interact**

**And if the World is Shifting...**

**There is NO WAY Education is  
NOT in the Eye of the Storm.**

**Research / Strategy / Creative**

**2-Year College Experts**

- 70 years after WWII... 2 million returning GIs went to college, and almost ALL of them Graduated
  - **Today, at Community Colleges, that number is 15% for FT and 7% for PT (Hechinger Report, Complete data set 2014)**
- 50 years after, most communities could not build Community Colleges fast enough....
  - **Enrollment at MOST Community Colleges (nationally) is sliding**

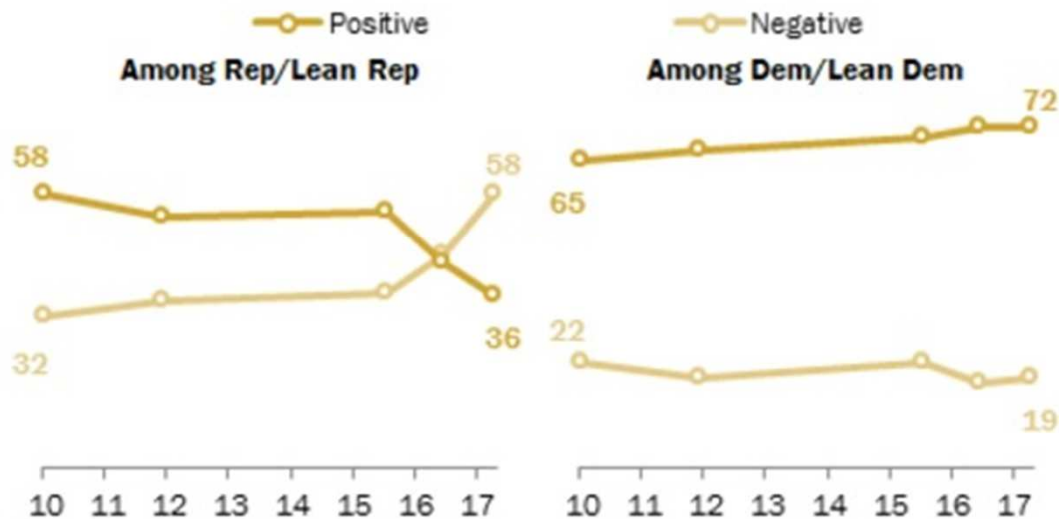


- 40 years after higher education spawned and fueled -- the creation of Silicon Valley through its incredible base of STEM education...
  - **We are now trying to rebuild the STEM base we (all) once had**
- Completing college used to be about the student's drive to finish... We were supposed to make them run the Gauntlet...
  - **Now, we have significant responsibility to help them persist, as a million environmental factors have changed the equation.**

## Education as the Path to Social Mobility is Seen as “Fake News” by Many

**Since 2010, Republicans’ views of the impact of colleges have turned much more negative**

% who say colleges and universities have a \_\_\_\_ effect on the way things are going in the country



Note: Don't know responses not shown.  
Source: Survey conducted June 8-18, 2017.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

ews 2017

epublicans and Republican leaning now  
on the "way things are going"

## The Belief in Education as a Game-Changer?

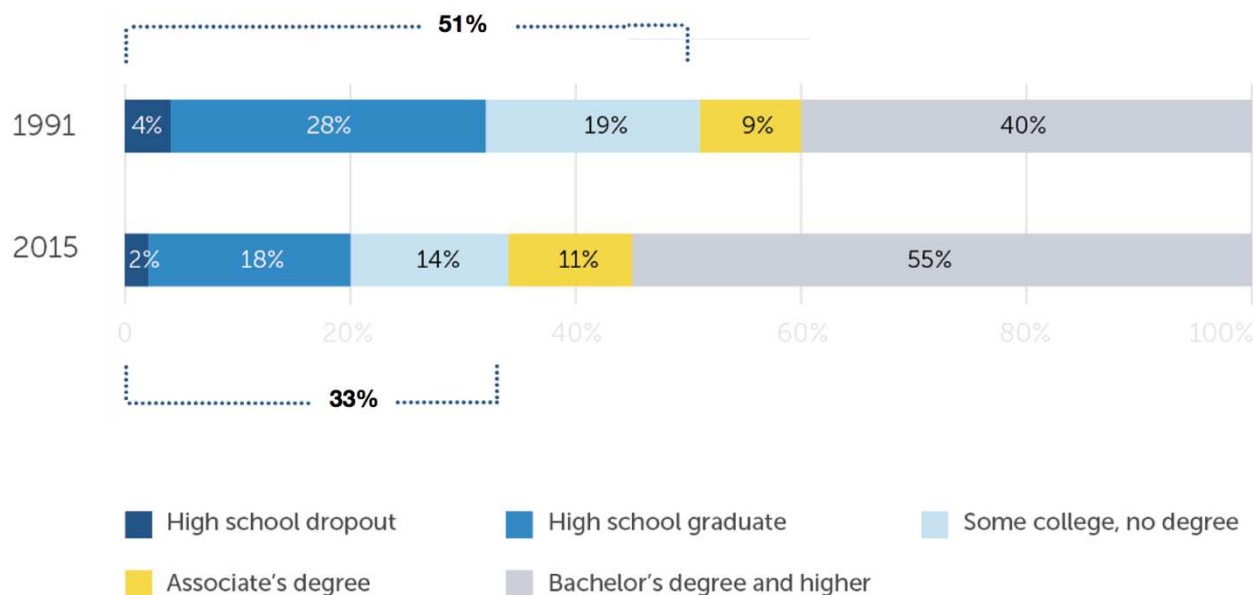
- Poll of white, working class voters by Brodnitz/Normington for Democrats (July 2017)

<http://static.politico.com/f2/08/7cab64cb4a0a91a46b57a9a7784a/house-majority-pac-poll.27.pdf>

- **57% say a college degree “would result in more debt and little likelihood of landing a good-paying job”**
- **83% say a college degree was “no longer any guarantee of success in America”**

# At the Same Time...

**Between 1991 and 2015 the share of good jobs going to workers without a BA or AA fell from 51% to 33%.**



n is THE

ig-share-good-

Source: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce analysis of *Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement* (March), 1992-2016.

**2-Year College Experts**

P

interact

SO...

NEVER have we been so needed...

NEVER have we been less trusted...

NEVER have we had this much change in this short a time.

The Agricultural-to-Industrial Age shift was a freaking *cake-walk*!



# interact

## So Here We Are...

In incredibly turbulent times...

With the need to (dare I say it?) *pivot*...😊

Responding to the Calls to Change...

*(IEPI, CTE, Guided Pathways and shifts at the college, community and class level...etc.)*

interact

We Have Day Jobs...  
And It's Not like Change is easy.



Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts



interact

# So... What to Do?

A Reality Check...

5 Things We Must Do...

One More Thing...

interact

# A Reality Check...

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

P

# interact

- FIRST Inquiry \$100
- Application +\$50
- Assessment +200
- Counseling +300
- Transcripts etc. +\$200
- Registration +\$250
- Payment Day +\$300
- Day One +\$500

## Why We All Care Money Side

\$100  
\$150  
\$350  
\$650  
\$850  
\$1,100  
\$1,400  
\$1,900

### PLUS THE LOSS OF

- Year 1 of FTEs
- Year 2 of FTEs

interact

**I HATE Talking About Money and Students....**

**But Nothing Runs... If We Don't**

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

P

## Why We **REALLY** Care Student's Lives

- They are risking:
  - Their Money
  - Their Families
  - Their Jobs
  - Their Lives
- Because *they believe us* when we say “education will change your stars.”
- The more students that end up with the college debt, *without* the college degree...

**The More Distrust  
Grows.**

interact

**5 Things We MUST DO  
Right Now  
For Our Students...  
Our Colleges...  
Ourselves.**

*So We Don't Break Ourselves...*

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

interact

#1:

We Must...

*Move it. Move it.*

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts



# interact We Tend to Take a While to Fix Broken Things.

A problem or need is identified...  
and our solution process is... um, er, uh...

... Assign it to someone else

... Wait for it to change

And the dreaded...

interact



Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

**interact**

**Examples?**

Study Signage for 2 Years  
Three Years to a Retention Plan

**Research / Strategy / Creative**

**2-Year College Experts**

## What Works?

Break up the problem and ask a team to solve ONE problem (in a VERY short time [2 weeks])

*Odessa and Marketing*

Learn from our students and embrace the fast fail.

*Seattle and Giveaways*

interact

#2:

Embrace the New Stuff

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

interact

# We are in the Post- “Rinse and Repeat” World

Our students are not US.  
They need different things than we did.

Changes are shocking... but necessary.

*Cal State and the move away from Placement Testing  
Embracing Guided Pathways*

Will these things solve our Retention/Graduation Rates?

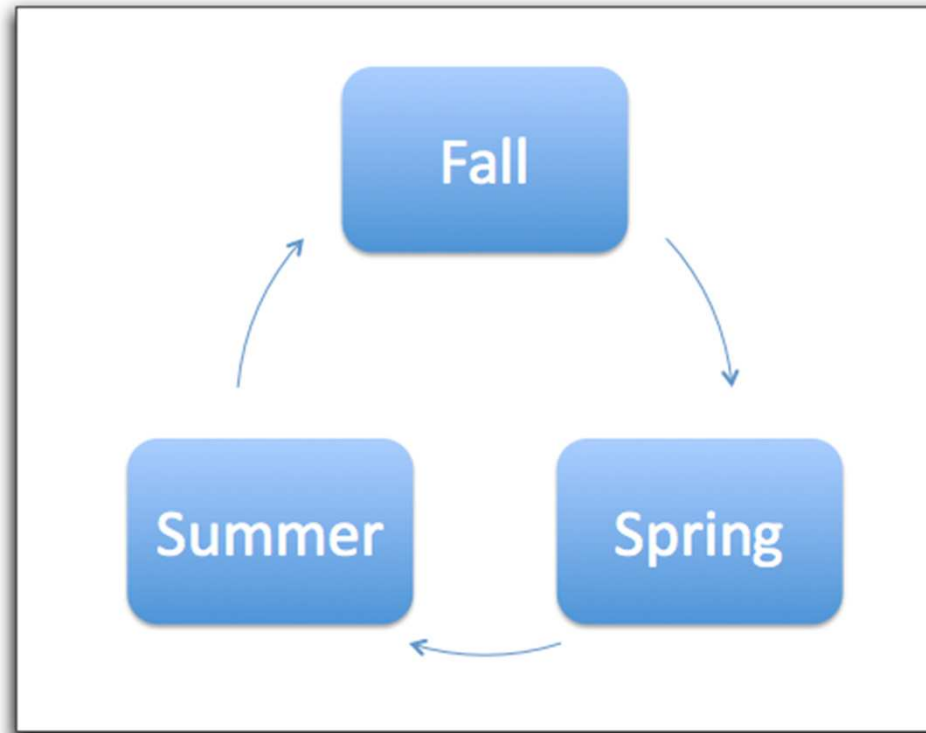
*I don't know... but what we are doing is not  
getting us the outcomes we want.*

**interact**

**Over and Over and Over**

**The Merry-Go-Round  
is now a Roller Coaster**

**Old Movie: Parenthood**





## Examples of Waiting Too Long

Anything that you are still doing that your predecessor did, and you have no idea why?

The more we hold on to old things that don't work... the less bandwidth we have to try new things that MAY or MAY NOT work.

Evening Open House... Alone.  
Facebook...  
Reddit...

Find the mission-critical “thing”  
that you are studying to death  
(Theoretical Approach)

Try a controlled change...Make a small change  
and make it bigger if it works... Or, *move on*.  
(Experimental Approach)



interact

## Think of It This Way...

We see ourselves as the Senate.

Deeper Thinkers  
Slow to Shift  
More Deliberative

But We Market Ourselves as the House...

Quick to Adapt  
Fast to Engage in Changes  
More Responsive to the Workplace  
(compared to 4-year colleges)

interact

#3:

## RADICAL IDEA

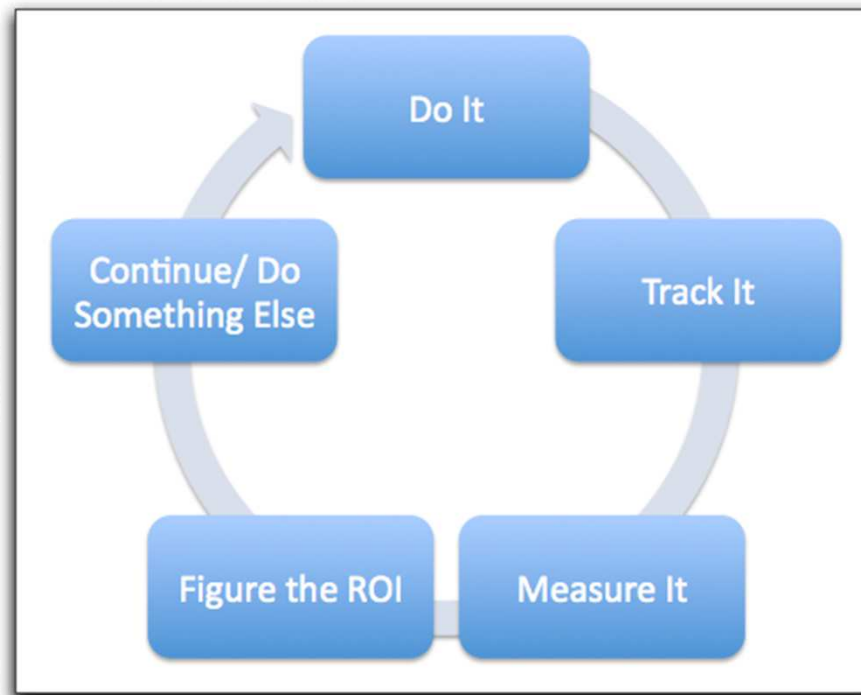
Your Time is NOT Free.  
Measure the REAL Cost of Ideas.

interact

# Don't Just Measure Outcomes... Measure the Work Involved.

Dump the  
DRAINING Ones

Do the Math:  
Hours Per Outcome



*If you don't...  
You will NEVER have the  
bandwidth to do new things*

Time on Task

Objective Outcome

- Calls
- Hits
- Satisfaction

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

## What Works?

Find what is eating up resources that you need...

That you know in your heart is not working...

Stop doing that, and give others the power to do the same thing.

Try something *different*...

interact

#4.

There is Only a “Little” Home-Field Advantage...

...by being the “local” college



**interact**

**But the Message Cannot Be...**

**Affordable...**

**Accessible...**

**Close-to-Home.**

## Why? Heuristics.

*Shortcuts to make fast and painless decisions...  
Cognitive processing patterns we have developed.*

### Common Heuristics

Cost = Quality

Rare = Value

Competition = Best

Far Away = Exotic

More People Agree = Truth

interact

So...

When we say “Affordable”...

*They hear “Cheap”.*

Cost = Quality... So Low Cost = No Quality

**Who Does It Well?**

*Private Schools*

*Schools that Invest in “Scholarships”*

interact

So...

When we say "Accessible"...

*They hear "No Competition".*

Who Does it Well?

*Schools that make students feel "special"*

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

*When we say Close to Home....*

*They hear Not Rare, Not Far Away...*

Exotic = Unique, Special *Like Every one of you.*

Not Exotic... Same old Same old. Nothing Special.

**Who Does It Well?**

*Schools that tie themselves to fast-entry into the  
Big, Wide World of Work*

interact

## The Good News is...

*The Community has absorbed those messages*

*In almost every survey... they POP.*

## The Bad News is...

*They make us mundane.*

*They make us the “best-kept secret.”*

interact

What Works?

*Knock it off.*

*Your Brand MUST be Unique so students  
have a real choice...*

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts



interact

#5

# Silos & the Us/Them Mentality

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

interact

## Why Colleges Excel At Silos

It's Simple, Really...

- The Nature of our Job is to Classify
  - a. Grades
  - b. Assistance level
  - c. Education Track
  - d. So we come with **HUNDREDS of gradients** to our perspective

# interact

## We Are Not Alone in this..

- As is...
  - a. Military
  - b. Police
  - c. Hospitals
- Silos are TENSE Places
  - a. Hinge on elite “technical experts”
  - b. There is a dynamic tension between the experts and leadership
  - c. You are in our Silo... or you are not.

interact

This Tension...

Between the people who DO the main work...  
and  
Those who lead or *do not* do the main work...  
Feeds the “Us v. Them” dichotomy.

*My silo is great... yours is causing the problems.*

interact

# Colleges that Break their Silos Are...

Quicker to Make Shifts

More Flexible

More Resilient

More *Happy*

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

# interact Colleges Can Change... *and Fast!*

**But it's like the old trope....**

How Many Psychologists Does it Take to  
Change a Light bulb?

**One... But the light bulb has to  
WANT to change.**



interact

So... Silos Are Natural

They Just Aren't **GOOD** for Us.

The Truth is:  
We are all in this together.

We Sink...We Swim...  
Together.

And So Do Our Students

**interact**

**Student Don't Remember the Silo...**

**They Remember the Experience...**

**Recruitment? Everyone's Job.**

***Just like welcoming and embracing students...***

**Retention? Everyone's Job.**

***Just like supporting students...***

**Example? Hawaii**

interact

**SOMEDAY, WHEN YOU HAVE TIME...**

**I HAVE 50 WAYS TO LEAVE YOUR SILO...**

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

interact

# One More Thing...

While there are Many Things we Need...

*We Must...*

*Do Better...*

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

interact

Never Doubt The Work You Do...

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

interact

# We Hear A Lot About How “Bad” Our Graduation Rates Are...

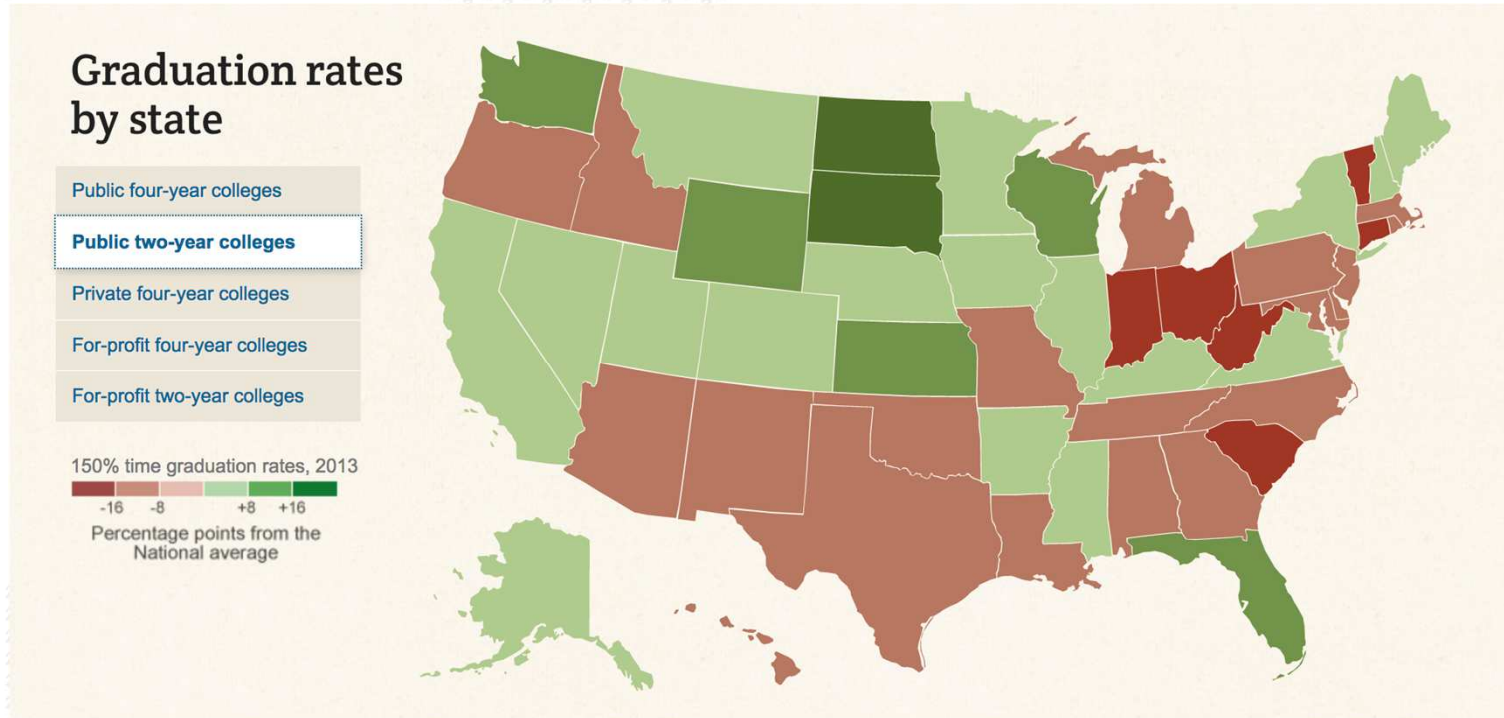
Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts



interact

# Graduation: We (And Our Students) Struggle



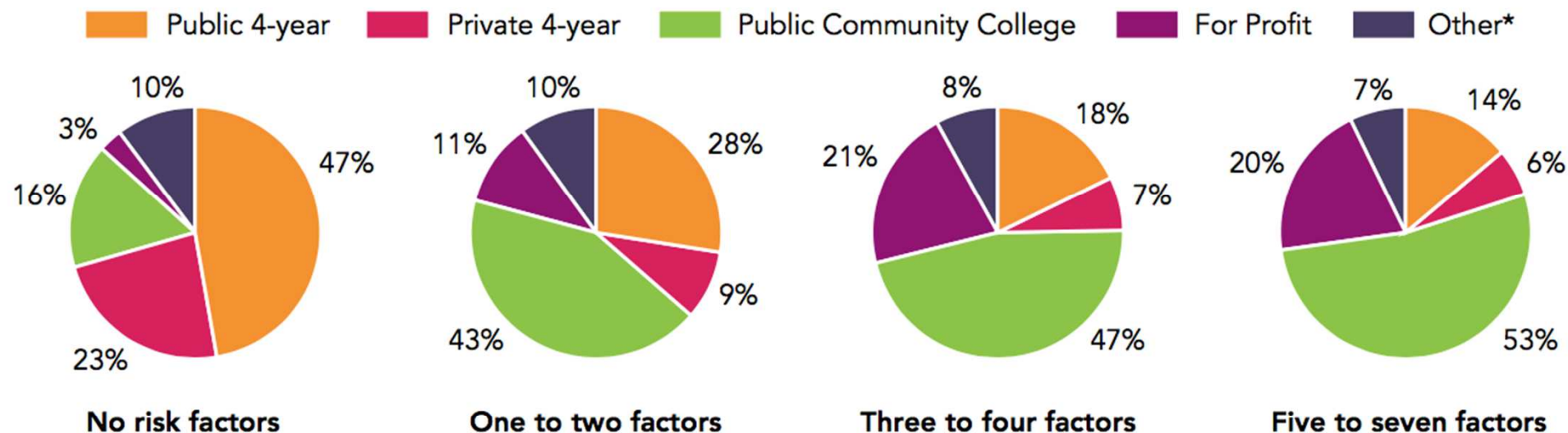
National Rate: 23% in 150% of time

Research / Strategy / Creative

<http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/>

2-Year College Experts

# We (And Our Students) Struggle



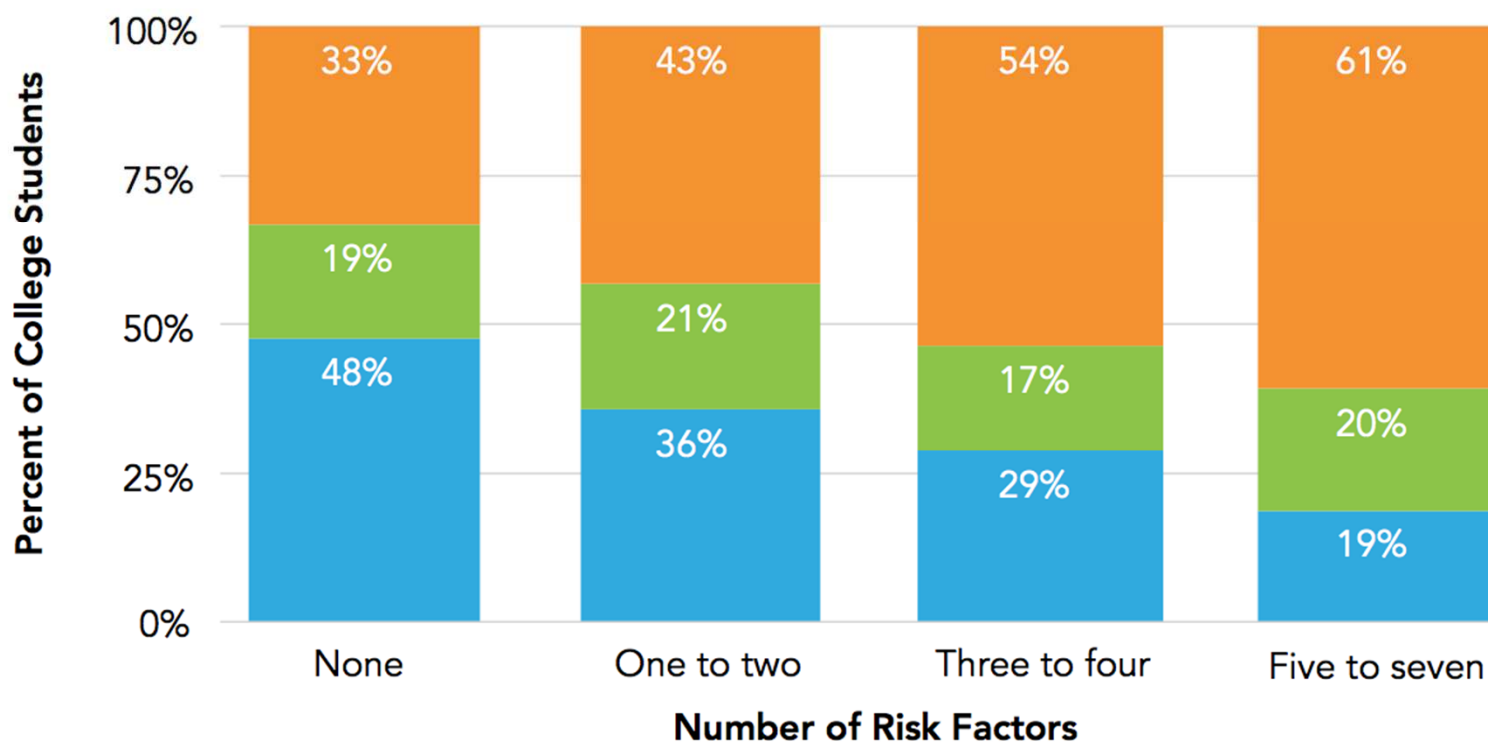
**Figure 2. Distribution of Risk Factors by Sector: 2011-2012**

Source. Author's analysis of National Postsecondary Student Aid Study (NPSAS:12) using PowerStats (<https://nces.ed.gov/datalab/powerstats/default.aspx>).

interact

> Risk Factor = > Stop Out Danger

- Graduated
- Persisted
- Stopped Out



**interact**

# **Our Students... With All Their Risk Factors...**

**Dare Great Things...**

**They are willing to try...  
Because They Believe Education Will Change Everything.**

**interact**

# We Need to Meet Their Courage to Grow and Change...

**With Our Own.**

## So... We Have Work To Do

### 5 Things To Do Now

1. We Must Move it... Move it.
2. Embrace New Stuff
3. Radical Idea... Count Your Time as Cost
4. Home Field Advantage is gone
5. Silos Don't Help Us



interact

# Remember The Decision to Come To Community Colleges...

*Is Not a Logical One.*

It's an Act of Hope and Aspiration.

interact

Every. Single. Day.

We Need to Be Better...For Them.

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

# interact

Download: [2yearexperts.com](https://2yearexperts.com)

## Interact



Interactcom



Interact



Interactcom



Interactcom

## Pam Cox-Otto



pamcoxotto



pamotto

Research / Strategy / Creative

2-Year College Experts

# interact

## 2-Year College Experts



interact



You  
Tube



interactcom

2yearexperts.com