

The University of Montana

Partnering for Student Success

Fall 2008

MISSION STATEMENT FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA-MISSOULA

The University of Montana-Missoula pursues academic excellence as indicated by the quality of curriculum and instruction, student performance, and faculty professional accomplishments. The University accomplishes this mission, in part, by providing unique educational experiences through the integration of the liberal arts, graduate study, and professional training with international and interdisciplinary emphases. Through its graduates, the University also seeks to educate competent and humane professionals and informed, ethical, and engaged citizens of local and global communities. Through its programs and the activities of faculty, staff, and students, The University of Montana-Missoula provides basic and applied research, technology transfer, cultural outreach, and service benefiting the local community, region, state, nation and the world.

INTRODUCTION: STUDENT SUCCESS AND GRADUATION

This Retention Plan is devised to meet several challenges faced by The University of Montana and the State of Montana. These challenges include: a 28% attrition rate from the first to second year at UM, with significantly higher attrition for students who have yet to declare a major; a six-year graduation rate of 43%; a decrease in the projected number of high school graduates in the State of Montana who will enroll in higher education; and the necessity of increasing the proportion of Montanans who have a college degree by 2020 in order to remain competitive, to ensure Montanans have a good standard of living, and contribute to the reputation and viability of the state as a place to live and work. The approach taken in this plan recognizes that student success is multifaceted and begins well before a student arrives at college. Therefore, the Retention Plan is organized around six "Issues" associated with student success:

1. Preparing K-12 student for college work;
2. transitioning to college;
3. integrating the early college curriculum;
4. engaging students;
5. strengthening student support; and
6. emphasizing faculty and staff development.

In the plan, discussion of each Issue includes an introduction followed by one or more specific Actions, each with Implementation Steps. The Implementation Steps include an assignment of responsibility, a statement defining the nature of the resources needed for implementation, the key benchmarks against which progress will be assessed, and a timeline for completion.

This plan for Student Success has been a collaborative effort between faculty, staff, and administrators from across two campuses. It reflects the work of the Retention Task Force (RTF), led by Arlene Walker-Andrews, Associate Provost, and Teresa Branch,

Vice President for Student Affairs, with critical support from Bob Durringer, Vice President for Administration and Finance. Many retention initiatives have been put into place over the past decade and these efforts have helped The University of Montana maintain its reputation as an excellent, student-oriented institution. The present plan builds on those endeavors and proposes new programs and initiatives. Over a two-year period the RTF, with the support of Teresa Farnum, a Retention Consultant, devised an informal institutional plan that involved targeting specific student populations, and developing key strategies and activities to improve retention rates. To accomplish this task the RTF formed implementation teams (one for each target population): First-Year Implementation Team, Undeclared and Pre-Majors Team, Students of Color Team, Non-Traditional Students Team, and two teams to address the concerns of students in general: Advising Task Force and Early Intervention Team. The teams were responsible for creating action plans to support the strategies. In addition, Teresa Farnum met with faculty and staff from the colleges and schools to engage participants in thinking about the experiences of students in their respective programs. Those program-level efforts have complemented the work of the RTF. The Plan does not include every good idea that was brought forward, but rather it distills and organizes them. Because promoting student success requires all sectors of the campus to collaborate, the responsibilities shown under Implementation Steps are often shared.

Student success stems from a host of factors, including academic preparedness, motivation, response to challenges, development of social and intellectual skills, interpersonal interactions, and financial resources, so a plan to improve students' success requires collaboration across sectors such as Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Administration and Finance. These sectors participated fully in the development of the present plan. Individual schools, colleges and departments must also work to make retention a top priority within the context of their respective programs. Each school or college will supplement this retention plan with program-specific actions that promote student development.

GOAL STATEMENT

The overall goal of the Retention Plan is to improve student success at The University of Montana. Specifically, implementation of the strategies will occur across 3 years. The plan is designed to place UM consistently in the top quartile of public research-intensive institutions with respect to the following metrics: 1) the first-to-second year retention rate and the six year graduation rate for the Mountain Campus, using data from the Center for Institutional Data Exchange and Analysis; and 2) the three-year retention rate and completion rates for A.A., A.A.S. and Certificates for the College of Technology (COT). The target first-to-second year retention rate for the Mountain Campus by AY 2012-2013 is 80% and the six-year graduation rate by 2014-2015 is 57%. The target retention and completion rates at the COT are 60% and 45%.

Though national retention statistics focus on first-time, full-time students, we will direct our efforts to all students, including students who have been enrolled previously and students who are enrolled part-time. UM will collect additional data on these cohorts in order to measure retention across the broader student population.

Issue 1: Preparing K-12 Students

A high level of concern exists at the national level and within Montana that an unacceptably large number of students coming out of high school are not adequately prepared for college-level work, particularly in the areas of Mathematics and English. The recent discussion within the Board of Regents and in the Governor's office about "developmental" work, in which approximately 37% of students entering UM need to enroll, indicates that we must place high priority on improving the preparation of K-12 students bound for college. One of the most important aspects of the transition is the effective alignment of the high school curriculum with the expectations for college, set by the admissions criteria that the Board of Regents have determined necessary to succeed in college (BOR Policy 301.15; 16; 17; 18). UM will take a lead role in the Regental approach to high school-to-college transferability by working within the context of a cohort of K-12 schools. The intent of the cohort model is to make demonstrable progress on a pilot scale, followed by transfer of the practices to a larger set of schools.

Actions

1. *Ensure Adequate Preparation*: Ensure that entering students have adequate preparation for college-level work based on well-articulated curricula in the K-12 system.

ACTIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STEPS	RESPONSIBILITY & TIME FRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED	ASSESSMENT/ BENCHMARKS
ENSURE ADEQUATE PREPARATION			
1. Implement specific learning outcomes and measures of a high school college preparatory curriculum, specifically in the areas of English and Mathematics.	K-12 Cohort Task Force (including high school teachers and university faculty) <i>FY2010</i>	Funds for release time for Task Force members	K-12 Learning outcomes written and approved
2. Create embedded assessment tools that align with college expectations.	K-12 Task Force (including high school teachers and university faculty) <i>FY2010</i>	Funds for release time for Task Force members	Assessment measures adopted in K-12 system
3. Determine the feasibility of implementing electronic transcripts on a state-wide basis.	Provost, Registrar, Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education <i>FY2009</i>	Transferability funds	Recommendation to OCHE finalized
4. Design a communications	K-12 Task Force (including high	Publication and	Number of parents who receive

program that effectively speaks to pre-high school students, their parents, teachers, and counselors about preparing for college.	school teachers and university faculty); Enrollment Services <i>FY2009</i>	dissemination costs	materials and attend informational sessions; number of "hits" on website specific to college preparation for Montanans
5. Continue the development of Programs of Study with Montana high schools to create smooth transitions from high school to technical programs, where applicable.	College of Technology administration and faculty <i>FY2009-2011</i>	Funded by the Carl Perkins grant	Completion of at least 3 Programs of Study within the next three years

Issue 2: Transitioning to College

According to Tinto and others who conduct research on college attrition, the match between a student's motivation and academic ability and the institution's academic and social characteristics is critical to student retention and success. Recent changes in the Montana Board of Regents policies regarding high school preparation and test scores, data regarding the demographics of the Montana high school population, and assessment of the requirements for success at The University of Montana indicate that a change in the admission standards for The University of Montana is important for improving the retention and success of entering students. In concert with these modifications, attention must be given to appropriate placement of students entering the university, as well as effective and continuing orientation for students.

We must also keep in mind that financial background is a major factor in determining whether a student will succeed and graduate with a college degree. Students consistently rank affordability as a top priority and concern. Dual enrollment between local high schools and the university, as has been started by the COT, must also be exploited to offset college costs and to allow students to enter college at a level appropriate to their abilities. We must also increase our efforts to find more financial aid in the form of scholarships, employment opportunities, grants and low interest loans.

Actions

1. *Admissions Standards:* Adopt admission standards appropriate to success at The University of Montana, and direct students to the open-enrollment UM College of Technology for further preparation if they do not meet the requirements
2. *Placement:* Ensure appropriate placement for entering students.
3. *Orientation:* Offer effective, ongoing orientation to new students, clarifying expectations in college and opportunities for growth.

4. *Affordability*: Increase opportunities available to students to make a college education more affordable.
5. *Business Policies and Procedures*: Identify and eliminate policies and procedures that serve as barriers or challenges to student retention (e.g., billing, finalization, drop/add, reinstatement and re-entry)

ACTIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STEPS	RESPONSIBILITY & TIME FRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED	ASSESSMENT/ BENCHMARKS
ADMISSIONS STANDARDS			
1. Develop and obtain BOR approval for an admissions policy suited to the expectations for college-level work at The University of Montana—Missoula.	Provost, Enrollment Management Council <i>FY2009</i>	System costs of moving selected students to 2- and 4-year campuses	BOR approval; published in catalog; students admitted according to policy; change in profile of entering students
PLACEMENT			
1. Implement online Math assessment exams for entering students.	Chair, Mathematical Sciences at Mountain Campus and COT <i>FY2009</i>	Cost of on-line assessments	Completion of assessments before coming to campus or first week of classes; compliance with advisors' recommendations; success in math courses
2. Develop procedures for placement in relevant disciplines (e.g., Math placement derived from placement score and student's major), offered in the high school or university as appropriate.	Director, English Composition at Mountain Campus and COT; Chair, Mathematical Sciences at Mountain Campus and COT <i>FY2009</i>	Reconfiguration of UM introductory sections to accommodate placement patterns	Procedures developed and implemented; students placed (number in each course); % success in math improves
3. Develop short courses that review basic concepts in Math and other competencies.	Math Learning Center Director <i>FY2010</i>	Staff time	Number of students enrolled, success in math and other competencies
4. Develop just-in-time coursework (including Careers course) for students to provide alternative coursework where	Chair, Math and language departments; Math Learning Center Director; School of Education	Staff time; faculty scheduling	Enrollment in just-in-time coursework, success in math and other competencies

critical.	<i>FY2010</i>		
ORIENTATION			
1. Improve website to provide information to potential students	Assistant Vice President for Enrollment <i>FY2009</i>	Web development personnel	Survey students about usefulness of information
2. Develop ongoing orientation activities that provide students with information and support at key points in their progression	Assistant Vice President for Enrollment <i>FY2009-2010</i>	No significant resources required.	Attendance at specific events; hits on website
AFFORDABILITY			
1. Increase financial aid, scholarships and grant opportunities available to students	Assistant Vice President for Enrollment, Academic Affairs, UM Foundation <i>FY2009-2011</i>	Faculty/Staff time; external funding	Number of financial aid, scholarships and grant opportunities
2. Increase part-time employment opportunities for students and, when possible, provide adequate departmental funding to pay competitive wages, including work-study awards	Office of Student Employment, Financial Aid, Human Resource Services <i>FY2009-2011</i>	Staff time	Number of students on payroll
BUSINESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES			
1. Identify and eliminate policies and procedures that serve as barriers or challenges to student retention.	Registrar, Business Services; Policies Review Committee (new) <i>FY2009-2010</i>	Staff time	Integration of policies; removal of barriers

Issue 3: Integrating the Early College Curriculum

The current General Education curriculum at The University of Montana recognizes that students “should become acquainted with issues facing contemporary society, participate in the creative arts, develop an understanding of science and technology, cultivate an appreciation of the humanities, and examine the history of different American and global cultures. Upon completion of the general education requirements

students should be able to articulate ideas verbally and in writing, understand and critically evaluate tangible and abstract concepts, and employ mathematical and other related skills appropriate to a technologically focused society.” The General Education framework requires proficiency in English Writing Skills, Mathematics, Modern and Classical Languages or Symbolic Systems, and introductory, foundational coursework in Expressive Arts, Literary and Artistic Studies, Historical and Cultural Studies, Social Sciences, Ethics and Human Values, American and European Perspectives, Indigenous and Global Perspectives, and the Natural Sciences.

To maintain the rigor envisioned for the General Education framework and provide students with a way to interact intellectually and intensively with the requirements, an additional piece is crucial. General Education programs too often become merely a succession of isolated courses, in which the student must find connections among various disciplines and the discipline-specific approaches to problems. Students become engaged and learn best when they can perceive the application of their coursework to large, real-world problems in full context. Therefore, as part of this Retention Plan, we will implement a guiding structure that provides greater context to the undergraduate major, and helps to ensure a “cohesive and integrated mosaic of curricular and co-curricular experiences united in common purpose by the fundamental goal of transforming students into liberally educated, global citizens (Wick & Phillips, 2008).” This structure will be realized through changes to both the first-year and overall curriculum and initiatives for co-curricular activities.

Our model for providing students with such a curricular structure is based on the inclusion of interdisciplinary, problem-based learning focused on “big questions” or significant issues (such as climate change, world health, and water resources). Several outstanding universities use a similar model (e.g., University of Chicago). The context-based curriculum begins with a set of first-year courses that focuses on a significant issue, either in a small seminar setting or in a large lecture format offered by an outstanding faculty instructor. [Many of the small seminars may be taught in the students’ residence halls as part of a Living-Learning Community organized around the topic...] Students then “design” their undergraduate program, including choice of major, general education coursework, and co-curricular involvement with the help of their advisor. Within this structure, the First-Year Interest Group (FIG) program can serve as a foundation for introducing students to both “big questions” and a major, as well as offer opportunities for student to connect with their peers and faculty. Improving FIGs with retention in mind means giving faculty or graduate students the opportunity to lead FIG Seminars to ensure the quality and consistency of instruction. At the end of the undergraduate program, students enroll in capstone courses that put their education to work on a specific question or problem that requires an interdisciplinary team approach to a solution.

Additional aspects of the curriculum involve the innovative use of Winter Session and developmental coursework to ensure the effective transition of students into college work.

Actions

1. *Context-based Curriculum:* Introduce “big questions” into the early curriculum to motivate and engage students throughout their college experience, making use of the innovative “Freshman Interest Groups.”

2. *Winter Session*: Make creative use of the Winter Session to supplement regular coursework with engaging activities.
3. *Developmental Coursework*: Ensure that students who enter the University without adequate preparation have access to coursework offered by the COT that effectively prepares them. Gather baseline data of students enrolling in developmental coursework to determine the subsequent success levels in college-level coursework.

ACTIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STEPS	RESPONSIBILITY & TIME FRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED	ASSESSMENT/ BENCHMARKS
CONTEXT-BASED CURRICULUM			
1. Complete the redesign of the General Education Requirements	ASCRC, Faculty Senate <i>FY2009</i>	Faculty time	Inclusion of the completed Gen Ed program in the catalogue
2. Develop an integrated curriculum incorporating "Big Questions" that helps foster a more intentional design of the undergraduate experience beginning in the first year, and effectively interfacing with General Education	Provost, ASCRC, Faculty Senate; FIG Director <i>FY2009-2010</i>	Instructional costs of new courses; faculty and graduate student compensation	Number of courses offered; curriculum design published; enrollment in FIGS and related seminars; number of courses offered
WINTER SESSION			
1. Create innovative Winter Session coursework, focused especially on lower-division students but open to all students, that exploits the opportunities for travel and sustained attention	Provost and Continuing Education <i>FY 2009-2011</i>	New course development resources	Enrollment in Winter Session coursework
DEVELOPMENTAL COURSEWORK			
1. Offer developmental coursework and academic support to provide sufficient preparation for success in specific areas and competencies	Provost, Office for Student Success; Dean, COT <i>FY2009-2010</i>	Course section resources	Enrollment; success in course; success in subsequent courses

Issue 4: Engaging Students

Research indicates that college students who are actively engaged in both academic and out-of-class activities gain more from the experience than those who are not so

involved (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Initiatives that emphasize student involvement with faculty and peers in all facets of learning are critical to student success. The co-curricular opportunities afforded to students will build on the “big questions” curriculum by emphasizing these issues and providing a variety of ways to explore solutions and become engaged.

Decisions regarding recruitment, admissions, and retention of students should be made in light of data regarding the current student population. For example, the College Board recently published data describing the aspirations, attitudes, and demographics of incoming students that need to be considered in the design of academic support. In addition, programs for academic enrichment should be coordinated in order to offer the greatest breadth of opportunities.

Actions

1. *Co-curricular Opportunities*: Offer expanded, structured, co-curricular opportunities, both on and off campus, such as internships, civic engagement experiences, study and work abroad, and undergraduate research. Create a campus culture that supports and encourages participation in all student activities, including student groups and student leadership positions within student government and Student Affairs.
2. *Living/Learning Communities*: Establish Living/Learning Communities to involve students more fully. Organize many of these communities around the big questions such as wealth and poverty or climate change.
3. *Millennial Generation*: Consider the abilities and preferences of the Millennial Generation, and the generations that come after, when developing and designing academic programs, co-curricular offerings and support services.

ACTIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STEPS	RESPONSIBILITY & TIME FRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED	ASSESSMENT /BENCHMARKS
CO-CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES			
1. Establish a “one-stop” Center for Academic Enrichment to coordinate and promote opportunities across campus.	Provost <i>FY2009</i>	Increased workload and responsibility for faculty or staff Director	Number and quality of opportunities
2. Increase number and variety of internships; Service Learning opportunities, civic engagement experiences, Study/Work Abroad prospects, and undergraduate research opportunities	Internship Services, Dean of Davidson Honors College; International Programs; Office of Civic Engagement; Career Services <i>FY2009-2011</i>	Designated International Internship coordinator; additional support staff; scholarships for students; research awards; travel	Number of interns; number involved in research; number presenting research at national/regional conferences; number of students in Study Abroad and Work Abroad

		funds for students	
3. Increase leadership, multicultural, and other student activities designed to promote personal development; acknowledge faculty who support participation in these programs.	Vice President for Student Affairs and Provost <i>FY2009-2011</i>	Resources to carry out programmatic activities	Number of students involved in leadership programs; number of students involved in campus activities
LIVING/LEARNING COMMUNITIES			
1. Identify student audience; select themes and faculty participants; and plan for Living/Learning Communities	Vice President for Student Affairs; Provost <i>FY2010</i>		Number of students enrolled; number of faculty participants
MILLENNIAL GENERATION			
1. Inform the campus community about research findings concerning the incoming "Millennial Generation," including their attitudes, values, outlook, and learning proclivities.	Vice President for Student Affairs; Human Resource Services <i>FY2009-2011</i>	Workshops and publications	Number of participants in workshops, training sessions, as well as communications designed to inform the campus about the characteristics of student generation

Issue 5: Strengthening Student Support

Support services for students at The University of Montana and COT include academic support, such as advising, tutoring, programs for at-risk students, and special coursework, as well as support services located in Student Affairs, such as Career Services, Counseling and Psychological Services. Meeting the emerging needs of students is a critical component of promoting students' success and graduation. An Office for Student Success will be established with a Director to coordinate the activities of the academic units, including advising, tutoring and a Learning Commons, as well as opportunities for developmental coursework, TRIO-SSS, and Upward Bound.

Because many students who drop out do so because of health issues or for unidentified personal reasons, it is critical that we expand support services in both Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. Almost two-thirds of students who withdraw for medical reasons do so because of mental health issues. This highlights the importance of campus-wide efforts to identify, refer, counsel and treat students with health problems, particularly

mental illness. Research also shows that students' GPAs are inversely related to the amount of alcohol consumed. This adds a level of importance and value to Curry Health Center educational efforts regarding alcohol.

Because more non-traditional students continue to enroll, it is important to take into consideration the special needs of this cohort. As we begin to consider adding new special services and enhancing existing ones, such as degree programs offered through online, evening and weekend classes, and childcare services, we will develop an online orientation for non-traditional students who might not be able to take time away from their jobs and families to attend traditional orientation.

Finally, we must reach out to students of color by improving our commitment to diversity and creating a culture on campus that supports diversity. We will promote and improve the image of UM as a campus that strives to learn about and promote diversity.

Actions

1. *Office for Student Success.* Establish an Office for Student Success with a Director to coordinate advising (Undergraduate Advising Center, department and unit-level advising), tutoring services (the Writing Center, the Math Learning Center, the Learning Commons), developmental coursework, and funding for the enhancement of faculty teaching and advising.
2. *Special Programming:* Provide special programming for at-risk students.
3. *Early Alert:* Provide interventions through an Early Alert program that identifies academic, personal and health problems.
4. *Non-traditional Students:* Provide special support for nontraditional students to promote college completion.
5. *Students of Color:* Provide a comprehensive program that addresses the particular needs of students of color, ensuring a supportive environment in which they can thrive.

ACTIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STEPS	RESPONSIBILITY & TIME FRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED	ASSESSMENT/ BENCHMARKS
OFFICE FOR STUDENT SUCCESS			
1. Establish an Office for Student Success with a Director to coordinate student support services (including advising, tutoring, Learning Commons, and other retention programs) across UM and implement the COT advising plan.	Provost's Office <i>FY2009</i>	Director position	Director hired; expanded service for students (e.g. opportunities for and use of appointment availabilities increase, number of walk-in visits increase significantly); COT plan adopted.
2. Upgrade technological support for advising and	Director, Office for Student Success	Allocation within units	New technologies; improved efficacy

tutoring as well as gather quantitative data for assessment.	<i>FY2009</i>		(number, attendance and distribution of visits); new computers and software purchased on a schedule
3. Initiate systematic and ongoing assessment of advising and academic support services, including staff audit, and create advising training for faculty, graduate students, and staff.	Director, Office for Student Success	Staff time; funds for workshops; funding for graduate student advisors	Reports; modifications in response to data; staff duties tailored to student needs; greater efficacy in service; number of participants; surveys
3. Adopt a proactive advising approach, including expansion of the schedule for advising Undeclared students at the UAC (& departments, where feasible), and require all probationary and reinstated students to meet twice per semester with their assigned advisor	Director, Office for Student Success; Registrar; Director of Undergraduate Advising Center	Creation of on-line schedule; staff monitoring of probationary and reinstated students	
SPECIAL PROGRAMMING FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS			
1. Require students on academic probation or reinstated students to participate in targeted support program (Summer Program approved by BOR; appointments at the Learning Commons and with advisor).	Director, Office for Student Success <i>FY2010</i>	Staff time	Increased participation; increase in reinstatements and subsequent increase in overall GPA
2. Establish content-specific study groups, located in a common setting, for drop-in participation.	Director, Office for Student Success; STUDY JAM; Math Learning Center; Writing Center <i>FY2009-2010</i>	Staff time	Participation rates; improved GPA in targeted courses
3. Develop and offer sections of a Careers	Dept. of Counseling,	Section resources	Enrollment numbers; increase

Course with strong academic content.	Associate Provost <i>FY2010</i>		in retention rates; students declare major after taking course
EARLY ALERT INTERVENTIONS			
1. Fully implement Early Alert System for freshmen and sophomore students.	Registrar's Office <i>FY2009</i>	No significant resources	Increase in passing rates; number of faculty participants
2. Institute/continue "gateway exam" in lower-level mathematics courses as needed.	Mathematical Sciences Department <i>FY2009-2010</i>	No significant resources	Number of students who change to another course; overall success rate in mathematics courses
3. Expand campus-wide educational efforts to train faculty and staff to identify and refer students with health problems, particularly mental illness.	Vice President for Student Affairs <i>FY2010</i>	No significant resources	Number of programs; number of attendees; surveys of attendees.
4. Continue to educate students about alcohol abuse and the correlation with lower GPAs.	Vice President for Student Affairs <i>FY2009-2011</i>	Programmatic resources	Number of SOS classes taught; number of participants; relapse rate.
NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS			
1. Create online orientation for nontraditional and returning students.	Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Services <i>FY2010</i>	Resources to support technical programming	Number of nontraditional and returning
2. Investigate the need and interest in specific degree programs for weekends, evenings, and online access; implement as practical	Academic Affairs, Provost; Continuing Education <i>FY2011</i>	Instructional commitments	Number of courses; degree programs offered at non-traditional times; number of students enrolled
STUDENTS OF COLOR			
1. Identify advisors with the skills and experience to effectively engage students of color.	Director, Undergraduate Advising Center; Academic Deans <i>FY2009</i>	No significant resources	Number of advisors who acquire the skills to work with students of color
2. Develop a comprehensive portfolio of activities, events and training that support	Vice President for Student Affairs; Provost, Academic Affairs	Staffing and financial resources	Amount of financial support; attendance at events

diversity.	FY2010		
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Issue 6: Emphasizing Faculty and Staff Development

Faculty intervention both in and out of the classroom is an important factor in retaining students and helping them to succeed. Data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) suggests that student-faculty interactions, participation in class discussion and the ability to engage with faculty outside of the classroom are all implicated in students' completion. Students also report that they listen to faculty and take their advice. Faculty and teaching assistants also require help in developing new pedagogical approaches, incorporating technological resources in the classroom, devising assessment methods and strategies, and otherwise improving their teaching. Both advising and teaching functions can benefit from awareness of multicultural issues.

As the "frontline" in serving students on a day-to-day basis and in meeting student needs outside the classroom, staff members also play a critical role in retaining students. However, many staff members are unaware of how important retention is to the University, and how they can make a difference. We must educate the campus community about retention issues and rely on staff to help us retain students who have personal, financial, physical or mental health issues.

Actions

1. *Program for Innovations in Teaching and Learning:* Provide competitive funding for faculty awards to support innovations in teaching and learning.
2. *Multicultural Training:* Offer multicultural training for faculty, staff and graduate teaching assistants. Continue to educate faculty, advisors and staff about specific populations (American Indian, students with disabilities, students with mental health issues, foreign students, undecided students, etc.).
3. *Staff Training and Communication:* Offer training to staff on retention issues, including how to identify when a student may be in trouble, and how to make an appropriate referral.
4. *Campus Communication:* Develop regular communication with the entire campus about progress in the area of retention.

ACTIONS & IMPLEMENTATION STEPS	RESPONSIBILITY & TIME FRAME	RESOURCES REQUIRED	ASSESSMENT/ BENCHMARKS
INNOVATIONS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING PROGRAM			
1. Establish competitive fund for Innovations in Teaching and Learning projects.	Office for Student Success; Faculty Advisory Board FY2010-2011	Funds for project competition	Number and type of projects funded

MULTICULTURAL TRAINING			
1. Provide training for faculty and graduate students for advising and teaching specific student populations.	Office for Student Success; Undergraduate Advising Center; Center; COT Retention and Advising Coordinator <i>FY2011</i>	Staffing	Number of faculty and graduate student participants; results of faculty survey regarding diversity
STAFF TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION			
1. Offer training to staff on retention issues, including how to identify when a student may be in trouble, and how to make an appropriate referral.	Vice President for Student Affairs; Academic Affairs, Provost; Human Resource Services <i>FY2009</i>	No significant resources	Number of staff participants; number of referrals made by staff
2. Educate staff on how to identify at-risk students and make appropriate referrals; create an At-Risk Staff Committee that will create a "We Care" campaign focusing on at-risk students	Curry Health Center; Staff Senate <i>FY2010</i>		Number of staff participants; referrals to Curry Health Center
3. Identify "key staff" with strong institutional knowledge who will be listed as the "Retention Contact" for their area or department;	Staff Senate <i>FY2009</i>		Number of reported contacts
CAMPUS COMMUNICATION			
1. Develop periodic communication to inform the entire campus about progress in the area of retention	Retention Task Force; Institutional Research; President's Office <i>FY2009</i>	Staff time to post electronic materials	Number of communications each year focused on progress in the area of retention; information posted on UM website

IMPLEMENTATION

The Retention Task Force approved the Partnership for Student Success at its last meeting in August 2008. A new implementation committee will be formed to provide oversight for the plan and monitor the progress according to a reporting schedule. Units will report achievement of milestone targets on January 1, April 1, and July 1, with a Quarterly Report to be issued 15 days later. Units will report annual progress on October 1, with an Annual Progress Report issued 30 days later.

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