

SIUE New REALITY Work Team Reporting Template

Final Reports are due 1/10/14

Submit to pcobb@siue.edu

Work Team: Retention Team

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Summarize what SIUE has been doing in the area under consideration by your work team. Please investigate the scope and success of SIUE's prior efforts. (Bullet points are fine.)

Undergraduate initiatives: SIUE Springboard - SIUE Experience – Summer Bridge – Welcome Week Activities – Academic Probation Informational meeting – Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction – Career Fair – Student Organizations via Kimmel Leadership – CAS Majors & Hands On Fair – 5th Week Assessment (Early Alert) – MAP Works Assessment for all first-year students – Graduate Assistant Orientation – Academic Advising – Homecoming – SIUE Athletic Events – Family Weekend – SIUE TRANSFERmation – Volunteer Services via Kimmel Leadership – URCA – STELLAR – Performances in Music, Dance, Theater and Art & Issues – Occupy the VC – Dean's List Reception in Housing – Sibs and Kids Weekend – Alumni Association Mentoring Program with current students – CAB Activities – Study Abroad – Honorary Organizations – Fraternity/Sorority Options – Career Development Center – Student Success Center

Graduate initiatives: Mandatory academic retention plans for at-risk graduate students – development of the Coordinator for Graduate Retention and Student Services position – electronic thesis submission – expansion of graduate assistant orientation – participation in the Council of Graduate Schools Completion and Attrition in STEM Master's program – new graduate and international recruiting team based in Admissions

Describe promising models from other universities that could be modified, adapted or enhanced for our campus.

In reviewing other universities' retention models via a web search, we confirmed that many of the approaches and programs models which SIUE has are also in place at other universities (success centers, tutoring, learning centers). Strategies which could be modified, adapted or enhanced for our campus are listed below:

- Placement tests for all incoming students (rather than targeted placement testing);
- Students are strongly encouraged to be involved (fraternity/sorority, campus life, etc.);
- Targeted tutoring/more tutoring provided, peer tutoring;
- Expectation to be in class and tracking of attendance;

- Traditional First Year Experience course to continue the transition beyond a welcome week;
- Further development and enhancement of Learning Center/Academic Support Center;
- Development of a Teaching Excellence Center to support pedagogy;
- Peer Mentoring programs;
- Academic Coaching programs;
- Develop Road to Graduation Plans (subtle use of language to re-brand the Four Year Plans);
- High touch approaches (phone call, in person, etc.) to follow-up with students not attending classes or who have dropped classes or who are in academic jeopardy;
- Campus wide committees that actively review retention rates. Goal is to find reasons that students fail to be retained and recommend changes or actions to improve persistence.

Using what you have learned, please outline innovative ideas of your own. Again, please list these as bullet points

Initial discussions suggested a few reasons “why students don’t come back” after their first or second year. These reasons included:

- Could not decide on a major;
- Took a full time job;
- Financial issues impacted ability to continue;
- Did not get into a select program ;
- Did not navigate the college environment well;
- When students hit failure they don’t persist but rather give up;
- Not engaged with their faculty or their intended majors;
- Are not involved with the University and lack a feeling of connection;
- Lack prior knowledge, skills and strategies to complete courses.

With the above information in mind the following ideas were discussed as innovative ideas.

1. Restructure the ways that classes are offered. For example, students take one or two courses that last the entire semester in combination with several one month long courses. An example schedule would look like the following:
 - August – December MATH 120 (3 hours)
 - August – December PSYC 111 (3 hours)
 - September – THEA 111 (3 hours)
 - October – SPCH 101 (3 hours)
 - November – ENG 101 (3 hours)

The main issue with this model would be the logistics of scheduling. However, the committee feels that allowing students to focus on three classes at a time might allow for a better academic outcome.

2. Within the admission application, students indicate a level of academic interest with a specific field. Make this information available to the departments (via a report) and allow departments to utilize it for programming invitations, recruitment of current students, and hopefully aid in

building connections within the college/school and department. Within this change, students should be required to declare an academic major by the end of their freshmen year. Our research found that many other universities allow incoming students to declare a major upon admission. Delaying this process until a student's sophomore and junior year often causes a student to feel unconnected to a major and does not do not aid in persistence or eventual completion.

Please describe two short-term initiatives that your team views as priorities for SIUE. You should include a rationale and description of resources needed.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

1. Increase academic support
 - a. Expand Supplemental Instruction and tutoring to all first and second year courses (100 and 200 level) that have over a 30% D/F/W rate.
 - b. Increase breadth of tutoring and development of a peer mentoring programs led by upperclassmen within the various colleges and schools.
 - c. Collect data regarding academic initiatives already in place and prior to the creation of new programs to determine not only the effectiveness, but also the need.
2. Expansion of early warning/intervention measures
 - a. Institute an early warning system that all faculty are required to utilize. Thorough education regarding the importance of this early warning system would be necessary along with the expectations of complete use communicated by the Provost.
 - b. Develop a feasible action plan (that includes both faculty and staff) to react to notices regarding at-risk students and collect data on the effectiveness of the action plan.
 - c. Ensure adequate staffing in all academic advising units to manage student caseloads and respond for timely intervention.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

1. Increase data collection to assess needs
 - a. Partner with Institutional Research to gather the following data: retention, completion and attrition rates for all graduate programs (2, 3 and 4 year data). This data should also look at gender and race/ethnicity.
 - b. Data Collection performed by the Graduate School and Institutional Research to include: focus groups and surveys to discover what occurs when a student decides to stop out/drop out of a graduate program and what the Graduate School can do to help these students complete their education.
2. Expansion of academic support
 - a. Institute an early warning system that all faculty are required to utilize and develop a feasible action plan to react to notices.
 - b. Improved academic advising for the graduate student population.
 - c. Increase peer mentoring and development of program specific student handbooks.
 - d. Foster an environment that encourages support and communication during thesis writing and research.
 - e. In conjunction with the Registrar's Office, monitor progress of those students who have experienced some level of academic difficulty.

Please describe other short-term initiatives that your team would like to recommend.

- Removal of the WP/WF/UW grade option and extend the withdraw deadline until the last day of the semester (not to include final exam week).
- Collect more data on why students leave SIUE, why students stay at SIUE and why student chose to attend SIUE as freshman.
- Highlight our strengths and provide information about student perceptions.
- Formal outreach plan to connect with students who miss class during the first two weeks of each semester.
- Create a marketing piece that highlights all campus student support services that is given to students at each advising appointment.
- Create a sophomore experience program and change the culture of how we look and appreciate our sophomore class.
- Define student attrition beyond the sophomore year and include transfers and graduate students.
- Emphasize earlier involvement with Career Development Center
- Creation of a withdraw intervention program for students who wish to fully withdraw from SIUE.

Please list and describe three long-term initiatives that SIUE should consider to improve in the area under consideration by this work team.

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

1. Development of a First-Year Experience Course
 - a. This committee feels the University needs a true First-Year Experience Course to help students acclimate to the university, develop a foundation for academic success and integrate into the campus community. In the committee's opinion, the current hybrid model of the New Freshman Seminar (NFS) does not serve this purpose.
 - b. A standardized assessment across all NFS sections regarding the non-academic content of the course should occur, be evaluated and disseminated.
 - c. This course should include the following: exploration of major and career choices, exposure to curricular and co-curricular opportunities, insight into academic expectations, development of skills for academic success, knowledge of academic support services, opportunity to network with faculty, staff, and fellow students, introduction to research tools, support and guidance regarding the transition from high school to college, discussion of the university's mission, vision and goals, and introduction to the various colleges and schools.
2. Student Resources
 - a. Develop an educational campaign to expand communication of student resources through student programming for freshman, transfers, and graduate students, as well as in print-based and web-based mediums to educate and connect students across all levels to services and resources campus-wide.

- b. Streamline the curriculum review process to ensure academic program information is disseminated in a timely manner to prospective students, current students, faculty, staff and the entire academic community.
- 3. Faculty Involvement
 - a. Allow students to declare into their choice of major earlier so they may be assigned a faculty mentor from that department and become more engaged in their academic discipline which fosters a sense of connection.
 - b. Encourage departments and faculty to engage their students outside of the classroom and recognize departments and faculty who successfully engage their students co-circularly.
 - c. Require faculty to participate fully in all early warning and intervention initiatives.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

1. Comprehensive and On-going Systematic Analysis of Retention and Persistence Data
 - a. Consistently gathered data should be analyzed regularly by the Graduate Dean and the Coordinator of Graduate Retention and Services and others individuals in Graduate Programs, to provide feedback to the units through the graduate program directors and chairs.
 - b. Individual academic programs will make improvements based on the information collected regarding drop out and stop out reasons, as well as reasons for completion.
2. Improve Graduate Student Life and Climate
 - a. Provide a web-based resource center for graduate students, which will include orientations and workshops.
 - b. Implement a Graduate Dean's Student Advisory Council. This council will advise the Dean on matters pertaining to graduate student research and program excellence, evaluate student life and campus climate, monitor support services and academic resources for graduate students, and make policy recommendations.
 - c. Offer services during the evening hours for graduate students.
3. Expand GA/TA Orientation and Training to include all graduate students
 - a. This training will aid in the retention of graduate students, as well as undergraduate students.
 - b. Offer informational programming on University Offices which include Career Services, Counseling Services, Retention & Student Services, Disability Support Services, International Student Services, and Dean of Students.
 - c. Provide workshops on topics that impact graduate students such as multiculturalism, sexual harassment, improving teaching methods, important information impacting international graduate student, and other topics that arise in the focus groups mentioned in Short Term Graduate Student Goals 1b.
 - d. The orientations and training will be coordinated with all graduate programs and be led by faculty and staff.