

Academic Affairs
2011-2012
Major Initiative
June 14, 2011

A Focus on Retention

The gateway to student success begins with student retention. In 2010-2011 a series of recommendations was produced by the Ferris Academic Affairs Graduation Group (see attachment) that focused on identifying a series of activities designed to promote increases in retention and thereby increases in graduation. For 2011-2012 the central efforts of academic affairs are to help students successfully move from one semester to the next, one academic year to the next and on to graduation. Each college within Academic Affairs will focus on their roles in promoting high academic standards and providing students with the engaged experiences and keeping students on track toward graduation and beyond with the goal of creating a unified approach and investment in increasing student retention

Implementation of Academic Reorganization

In 2010-2011 an Academic Affairs reorganization plan was recommended by the academic senate. The next stage in this process is the development of an implementation plan followed by specific implementation activities. For 2011-2012 Academic Affairs will develop the implementation plan and begin the implementation of that plan.

Dean Searches and Leadership Team Development

Beginning summer 2011, Academic Affairs will launch the processes for searching and filling key academic leadership positions (deans) in five areas – College of Arts and Sciences, College of Allied Health Sciences, College of Engineering Technology, College of Pharmacy and FLITE. These, along with the implementation of changes in the office of academic affairs are critical components in the development of a leadership team for Academic Affairs for the foreseeable future.

Implementation of Diversity Workforce Plan

Bringing greater levels of diversity to our campus community continues to be a critical priority for Academic Affairs. For 2011-2012 Academic Affairs will develop an implementation plan of the recommendations provided through the Diversity Workforce Committee. Each college will also be expected to develop an implementation plan in order to identify a precise set of activities designed to bring great levels of diversity to our faculty and staff within Academic Affairs.

Academic Affairs
2011-2012
Student Success Recommendations
Ferris Academic Affairs Graduation Group
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Recommendation # 1: The Provost should request that each dean prepare reports of retention and graduation rates, similar to existing models. Early in the spring semester of 2011, this topic should be the subject of a deans' council discussion where deans are asked to report on comparative program achievements and share potential explanations of any significant differences. Plans for improvements in the lowest-achieving programs should be submitted within 30 days of the deans' council discussion.

Recommendation # 2: The Retention Pro software should be implemented ASAP and employed to permit more careful data collection and analysis by the colleges and departments. Either IR&T sources or Retention Pro should permit comparison of retention and graduation rates by sex, race, and admission criteria for FTIACs and transfers.

Recommendation # 3: The Group agreed that where it is possible to do so that students be enrolled in both the associate's and bachelor's degrees at the point of admission or of a program change. Then, it is up to departments to encourage those students to complete the associate's degree as they progress to completion of the bachelor's degree.

Recommendation # 4: The Group concurs that where it is possible to do so, for students who are able to do so, that accelerated degree completion options be encouraged.

Recommendation # 5: Because of the importance of academic advising during the first year or two of enrollment, the Group recommends that advising specialists be appointed to be responsible for that advising load where this practice is not already employed.

Recommendation # 6: Somehow, the University needs to determine the "choke" points for effective interventions to deter student attrition. For example:

- Mid-term grades for students enrolled in 100-level classes (2 or more low grades warrant some kind of intervention)
- End of semester probationary status (using existing measures that generate some kind of letter, but now include an intervention)
- Failure to reapply for financial aid, housing, or early register for classes
- Eligible to do so, but fails to apply for graduation
- Applied to graduate, but did not actually complete
- Failure or D-F-W rates in gateway courses

Recommendation # 7: The Group also agreed that immediate steps be taken to establish benchmark data about student attrition at the degree program level. Factors to be included in this consideration include:

Entering ACT and HSGPA credentials
Academic Probation status
Academic Dismissal status
Transfer outs (within Ferris and beyond Ferris)
Finances
Disciplinary suspension
Known/verified personal reasons (health, military service, marriage, employment, family care)

Recommendation # 8: Based on the Deans' Council discussion the Academic Affairs division host a "Retention Summit" for administrators that is similar to the Enrollment Summit held by Enrollment Services in October, 2010. The difference would be that the Retention Summit would consider the current state of retention and degree completion at Ferris, compare our situation to available benchmark data, consider existing interventions, become better acquainted with helpful tools such as MyDegree and RetentionPro.

Recommendation # 9: That the Academic Affairs host a reprise of the "Retention Summit" during faculty week to involve faculty.

Recommendation #10: Work toward incorporating responsibility for student retention into all employee position descriptions.