

Diversity at Ferris, 2012 – Retention & Student Success
January 11, 2013

The report below identifies the work of the various units in Retention & Student Success to address the institution's diversity and inclusion agenda. Challenges, possible solutions, and new initiatives conclude the report.

Goal 1 – Create a University that is welcoming to diverse populations.

Retention & Student Success includes numerous programming efforts that address this goal as a routine part of their operation. Most notably,

- The **SCHOLAR Peer Mentoring** program provides trained, upperclass peer mentors for more than 100 new students who indicate that they might benefit from having a guide during their first semester or year. The population of mentees and mentors is quite diverse.
- The **Students with Children** initiative offers programming and networking opportunities for nearly 200 Ferris students who are the parents of children aged infant thru high school. These students are typically non-traditional by definition. The group is also quite diverse in terms of race and ethnicity.
- The **Educational Counseling and Disabilities Services** office serves nearly 200 Ferris students with disabilities who qualify for and request accommodations to support their educational experience.
- The **Ferris State University Seminar** program offers a special section of the transition seminar each year to 30-40 non-traditional students to support those from this population who seek support as they begin their studies at Ferris.
- The **Developmental Curriculum** department provides the University College Program (UNCP) seminar for approximately 30-40 students who do not meet admission standards but are granted provisional admission to the University to provide a structured entry to collegiate studies. More than half of the students in this program are students of color.
- The **TIP Scholars Office** supports the more than 1,000 socio-economically disadvantaged students who receive the State of Michigan Tuition Incentive Program grant with advising, programming, and follow-up. This student population is more diverse with regard to race and ethnicity as well as to socio-economic status.
- **Media Production** airs a 30-minute "Expect Diversity" show five days a week on the Ferris cable channel. This department also supports the Diversity and Inclusion Office, the Jim Crow Museum, the International Center, Disabilities Services, and the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs by providing media in multiple formats to promote their initiatives.
- The **Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning's** New Faculty Orientation Week and New Faculty Transition Program aim, among other goals to help establish supportive networks of faculty and staff colleagues. FCTL also collaborated with the Dean of FLITE and others to submit a "Muslim Journeys Bookshelf" grant proposal to NEH.

Goal 2 – Recruit, retain, and graduate a diverse student population.

In addition to the programming listed above, Retention & Student Success was, in large part, designed to fulfill the goals and objectives related to recruitment, retention, and degree completion embodied by this goal. In fall 2012, 42% of our students identified as minority students (none were international students) – the same as for 2011 and up from 40% in 2010 and 37% in 2009. The chart below shows our demographics for new freshmen only (transfers and readmits are omitted):

UNI FTIAC Students	Fall 2009		Fall 2010		Fall 2011		Fall 2012	
	#	% Eth	#	% Eth	#	% Eth	#	% Eth
DPCU Total	327	-	304	-	296	-	327	-
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	<1%	2	1%	1	<1%	0	0%
Asian	5	2%	2	1%	1	<1%	3	1%
Black or African American	98	30%	96	32%	105	35%	93	28%
Hispanic/Latino	15	5%	11	4%	8	3%	14	4%
Multiracial	1	<1%	9	3%	11	4%	24	7%
Unknown	4	1%	8	3%	6	2%	6	2%
White	198	61%	176	58%	164	55%	187	57%

The following initiatives are key elements of those efforts:

- The Developmental Curriculum department offers the aforementioned **UNCP program** that supports this goal. Of the 32 students enrolled in fall semester, with half coming from underrepresented populations. The sole purpose of this program is to offer underprepared students the opportunity to attend college and to support their progress to admission to a proper degree program
- The Developmental Curriculum department also enrolled more than 200 students in **General Studies** (GNST) of whom about 40% came from underrepresented populations. The purpose of GNST is to permit students who qualify for general admission, but not to the degree program of their choice, to have the opportunity to enroll at Ferris and try to qualify for admission to the desired programs by the end of one semester or one year. The first to second year retention rate of 60% for GNST students is only slightly lower than the overall freshman class. The degree completion rates are also lower, running between 25% and 40%.
- In Summer 2012, a summer bridge program was piloted to try to improve these figures. The 18 students from the pilot program are being tracked by R&SS staff and have exceeded performance of other GNST students by every indicator thru the end of the first semester. Operation Excel will be repeated in Summer 2013.
- **Academic support services** such as reading courses, study skills instruction, tutoring, and Structured Learning Assistance serve a wide cross-section of Ferris students each year who arrive with academic skills that need attention in order for the students to have a chance to achieve their academic goals **and** meet the University’s academic standards for retention. SLA has a long record of excellent outcomes and has made some efforts to compare results for groups by sex and race/ethnicity. Those results require additional data from the current year to permit any generalizations.
- The **TIP Scholars** program reports that Ferris enrolled more than 400 new TIP-eligible freshmen in Fall 2012, up 33% from 2011. Overall, TIP enrollments climbed to more than 1,000 students.

Goal 3 – Hire and retain a diverse workforce.

During Fall 2012, there are approximately 55 continuing employees in the unit with 80% female and 82% white. Of the ten staff who identify as minority, eight were African American and two were Asian American. We have conducted numerous searches during the past 12 months and we have worked hard to attract a diverse pool of candidates for each by following the recommendations of Human Resources and the 2011 recommendations from the Diversity and Inclusion Office. Of our three newest adjunct appointments in Developmental Curriculum, two were African American and one was Asian American.

Goal 4 – Create environments for student learning that are inclusive of and sensitive to a diverse student population.

- The **Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning** sponsored or co-sponsored programming during the past calendar year, including:
 - FCTL also collaborated with the Dean of FLITE and others to submit a “Muslim Journeys Bookshelf” grant proposal to NEH.
 - The **Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning** provided travel support for faculty and staff to attend the 22nd Annual Equity in the Classroom Conference at SVSU.
 - FCTL and the Diversity Committee of the Academic Senate cohosted two presentations for faculty led by Dr. Kristen Renn titled, “Intersections of Teaching, Learning, and Identity: Improving Classroom Climate for LGBT Students” and “Diverse by Design: Creating Inclusive Learning Environments to Promote Student Success.”
 - Sessions in the New Faculty orientation and transition programs (e.g., Dr. Pilgrim’s “Creating a Truly Diverse University” and the FCTL director’s “Strengthening Learning Through an Inclusive Approach to Teaching”).

New Initiatives:

- Karen GreenBay obtained a “Keys to Degrees” grant from the Kellogg Foundation to start and operate a Single Parent Initiative during 2012-13. This \$80,000 grant will allow Ferris to offer programming for a pilot group of 10 students who are single parents of a pre-school aged child in conjunction with parallel programs at Eastern Michigan University and Endicott College.
- Karen was also awarded a Diversity and Inclusion mini-grant to complete a “Tour of Museums” project during 2011-12. This program sponsored trips to museums throughout Michigan to expose SWC families to the unique learning opportunities presented at those venues.
- In cooperation with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the Associate Provost has promoted several retention and student success research initiatives about the success of students of color, especially African American students, during the summer and fall semester. These reports are listed below under the fourth bullet.
- Media Production is supervising a student intern for 26 weeks, 20 hours per week, in Spring 2013 to work on video projects for the International Center.
- The FSUS and Foster Youth Initiative programs collaborated to designate a section of FSUS for new students who enrolled under FYI.

Challenges and Updates from 2011:

- The FCTL programming listed above could be enhanced if there was funding to support staff time and expertise for this purpose. One possible solution would be to identify a faculty member with the requisite diversity and inclusion skills, knowledge and experience who could be released

from teaching responsibilities to serve as faculty in residence. During 2012, FCTL staffing was fixed and no new resources were available to meet this challenge. However, two initiatives helped to address this concern. First, *the FCTL Director is working closely with the new Director of the Latino Center for Excellence to support faculty and staff engagement with LCE initiatives.* Second, *FCTL worked with EIO to facilitate workshops for 12 faculty and staff visiting from Changsha, China during fall 2012.*

- ECDS reports that testing for students with disabilities is a challenge at mid-term and final exam times due to the limited number of individual testing rooms. One solution might be to have Academic Affairs provide funding, staffing, and space for a testing center. *No additional space was secured for 2012-13, but three additional testing cubicles were created during fall semester in the former staff meeting room (STR 308).* This additional space will suffice for now, but the staff is also using classrooms during midterms and exam week when they are available to address needs during those peak times.
- After completing a review of our criteria for admission, programming, and performance outcomes for UNCP students during the past ten years, we have decided to close admission to this program for Fall 2013. Retention of these students to the second year is only about 40%, significantly lower than the overall freshman class. The degree completion rate hovers around 20%, also much lower than the overall graduation rate. For these reasons, *we will offer non-degree summer admission to qualifying students for the Operation Excel summer bridge programs with the condition that enrollment in the fall semester depends on satisfactory performance in the three classes they take in the summer session.* If the participating students pass all three courses (READ 106, MATH 010 or 110, and DIST 100) with a C or higher grade, they will be admitted to General Studies for fall. Tuition, room and board will be discounted heavily so that this option will be affordable. Students will also have the option of completing the same set of courses at their local community college to qualify for fall admission to GNST.
- In the preliminary work of the Retention Work Group, data provided by Institutional Research and Testing indicated that the retention rates for students who identify as Black, which had been only holding steady, had dropped for the Fall 2010 cohort of freshmen from the mid-50s to the mid-40s – way below the overall freshman to sophomore rate of 70%. The Associate Provost made this and related topics a high priority for research during 2012 *and the following reports were produced and shared with the Provost and the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion:*
 - *March 6, 2012 – Ferris Retention Analyses*
 - *July 25, 2012 -- UNCP and GNST Ethnicity*
 - *July 25, 2012 – SLA Outcomes by Gender, Race and Ethnicity*
 - *September 12, 2012 – Selected Data About the Graduation Gap at FSU*
 - *December 21, 2012 – Update on Black Retention/Graduation*

Several discussions about these reports and related issues were held between Academic Affairs and Diversity and Inclusion during 2012 and more are expected during the coming year.

Challenges and Initiatives for 2012

- The Associate Provost has invited the Director of the Office of Multicultural Student Services to join him for a review of the research findings listed above and to initiate a discussion about what might be done to improve those outcomes in future years.
- Karen GreenBay has initiated the Single Parent Initiative. One challenge related to this project was to find eligible students (single, one child under age 6, and living on campus) to participate given the grant limitation that no funding could be used for financial aid or for child care.

- The decision to offer non-degree summer admission to UNCP qualifying students for the Operation Excel summer bridge programs with the condition that enrollment in the fall semester depends on satisfactory performance in the three classes they take in the summer session will stretch R&SS staffing in summer. It will also require careful tracking to see if it is successful.
- Continuation of the Operation Excel summer bridge program for selected General Studies students in Summer 2013 at their cost.
- The new Director of the Honors Program will be charged with continuing to explore ways to increase diversity in that population.

W. Potter
January 11, 2013