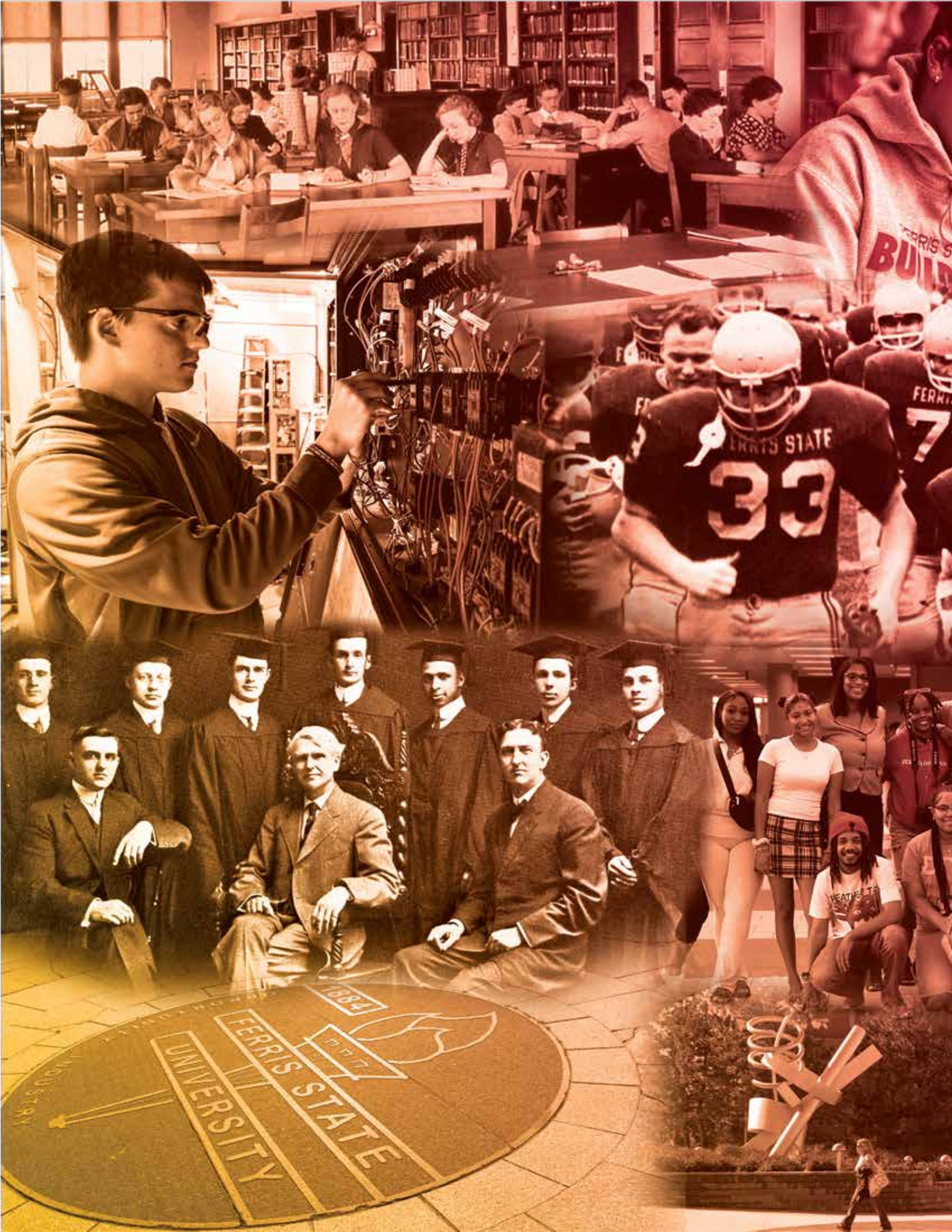


2025-2030
RETENTION PLAN

CHAMPIONS *FOR* **SUCCESS**

EVERY STUDENT. EVERY STEP. EVERY FINISH LINE.





INTRODUCTION

Student success represents a core mission priority at Ferris State University. As a regional public institution serving many first-generation and financially vulnerable students, Ferris remains committed to providing access and pathways to degree completion. With more than 4,000 Pell Grant recipients and 1,648 students eligible for the Michigan Tuition Incentive Program (TIP), the need for intentional, strategic, and responsive student-centered support is clear.

Student persistence and retention are vital indicators of institutional effectiveness and student success. While progress has been made to reduce attrition, challenges remain – especially for first-generation, low-income, and academically underprepared students. The 2025-2030 Retention Plan, *Champions For Student Success* centers on critical areas of academic readiness, belonging, and student success to advance support for all students.

Champions For Student Success aligns with the University's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, *Ferris Forward: Relevant and Responsive*, which emphasizes four institutional pillars:

- 1. Belonging:** Ferris State University is committed to cultivating an environment of belonging by ensuring access, inclusion, and representation across all areas of campus life. This includes orientation and belonging initiatives, which center orientation programs, peer mentorship programming, and cultivating institutional connections.
- 2. Innovation:** A culture of innovation enhances educational experience and operational efficiency. Our academic readiness strategies integrate innovative advising approaches, developmental coursework, and support services to prepare students for university-level expectations.
- 3. Student Excellence:** Ferris prioritizes student excellence by providing resources and opportunities that support academic achievement and personal growth. This directly ties into our student success pillar, which ensures holistic support, including financial stability, mental health services, and access to essential resources.
- 4. Sustainability:** Institutional sustainability reflects Ferris' commitment to making thoughtful, regenerative decisions that balance people, the environment, and economic health. By championing sustainability, the university fosters a campus that conserves and enhances resources for future generations. These efforts reflect the university's mission to prepare future leaders while contributing positively to the environment and community.

Aligned with these institutional priorities, *Champions For Student Success* is structured around three strategic pillars that directly address persistence, retention, and student success:

- 1. Academic Support and Readiness:** Ensuring students are prepared for the rigors of higher education by implementing proactive advising, developmental coursework, and academic support services designed to scaffold their transition to university-level expectations.
- 2. Community and Belonging:** Creating a welcoming and inclusive campus environment through structured onboarding programs, strategic communication and process streams, peer mentorship opportunities, and initiatives that foster a strong sense of community and institutional affinity.
- 3. Student Care and Success:** Supporting holistic student development through targeted interventions that address financial stability, mental health and well-being, and access to essential resources, ensuring that students have the foundation needed to thrive academically and personally.

By implementing evidence-based strategies within these categories, *Champions For Student Success* aims to enhance student retention and persistence while reaffirming the university's commitment to student success. In doing so, the institution seeks to cultivate an environment where all students, regardless of background, can reach their full academic and personal potential.

RETENTION INITIATIVES

ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND READINESS

Ensuring students are prepared for the rigors of higher education by implementing proactive advising, developmental coursework, and academic support services designed to scaffold their transition to university-level expectations.

1. Review course availability and align registration process with student needs.
2. Pilot identification and support for high DFW courses.
3. Fully adopt Navigate360 tools (e.g. creating student journeys and increasing faculty and staff engagement around advising, student reports and coordination of care).
4. Institutionalize the work of hold reform committee.
5. Within new student programming (e.g. Orientation and Admitted Student Open House), build unique interactions for students who enroll with more than 1 semester of credit hours inclusive of but not limited to advising, Honors program, and professional programs.

COMMUNITY AND BELONGING

Creating a welcoming and inclusive campus environment through structured onboarding programs, strategic communication and process streams, peer mentorship opportunities, and initiatives that foster a strong sense of community and institutional affinity.

1. Increase retention and the student experience by strengthening collaborations and communication across divisions.
2. Collaborate on resource use to improve efficiency, streamline outreach, and enhance strategy (e.g., minimize duplication and over-surveying, and improve student communication).
3. Identify procedural efficiencies for degree completion (e.g. Award software).
4. Review and refine class schedule forfeiture policy and procedures.
5. In partnership with K-12 guidance counselors and teachers, develop a virtual onboarding program for students that highlights our Founders' legacy and helps them prepare for the transition to college.



STUDENT CARE AND SUCCESS

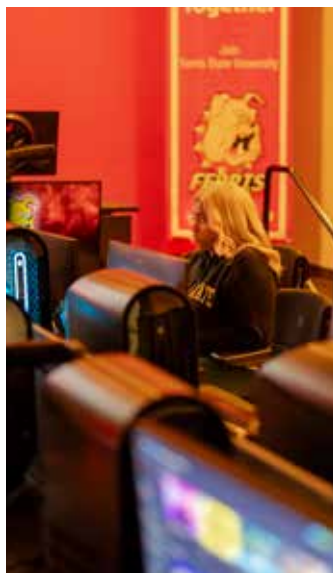
Supporting holistic student development through targeted interventions that address financial stability, mental health and well-being, and access to essential resources, ensuring that students have the foundation needed to thrive academically and personally.

1. Enhance institutional collaborations to ensure every student engages in a career readiness experience that incorporates future-focused workforce trends and high-impact experiential learning practices (e.g., PERT Exam, Career Readiness Inventory).
2. Expand the orientation and onboarding process to support students in navigating campus life, increasing resource awareness, and easing their transition to college. Strengthen the alignment and sequencing of key programs—such as online orientation, in-person orientation, and the first-year experience course—to create a cohesive and connected student journey.
3. Identify procedural efficiencies and collaborations for emergency resources.
4. Establish learning communities that connect students through shared academic interests and provide coordinated support for belonging, academic success, and persistence through graduation.
5. Foster financial literacy to help students prepare for their financial future and long-term career success.
6. Embed evidence-based practices for first-generation student success into campus-wide policies, programs, and support services to ensure sustainable impact in outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Student success remains a campus-wide responsibility. *Champions For Student Success* outlines where we must act—across academic support, belonging, and student care—and how we can achieve this together. The plan outlines a focused and collaborative approach to meeting the needs of all students—particularly those who are first-generation, low-income, and academically underprepared.

By aligning our goals with Ferris State University's strategic priorities and committing to clear, measurable action, we can strengthen retention, address gaps, and ensure more students persist to graduation. The work ahead will require coordination, accountability, and a shared commitment to putting students first. With this plan as our guide, we are ready to move forward—focused, united, and determined to make a lasting impact.







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