

IUP Taskforce on Undergraduate Retention and Persistence (TOUR)

RECOMMENDATIONS – January 11, 2018

FOCUS AREA	PRIORITY INITIATIVES
<p>I. Institutional: Create a permanent office or committee responsible for continuing the work of improving retention and persistence and serving as the communications hub for retention and persistence efforts across divisions.</p>	<p>A. Continuing a granular analysis of the existing data to identify the key factors causing the gaps in retention and persistence, and developing initiatives to address those specific factors and closing those gaps. Recommending cohort based initiatives, services or programs needed, based on the findings of the data analysis, to ensure a holistic approach to retention and persistence.</p> <p>B. Developing a simple assessment tool to determine the effectiveness and appropriateness of initiatives.</p> <p>C. Coordinating, to the extent possible, existing efforts and aligning them with the University Strategic Plan.</p> <p>D. Engaging the Division of Marketing and Communications in developing a communications outreach plan for retention and persistence efforts that is consistent with the behaviors of today’s students.</p> <p>E. Examining the impact of recent policy changes including, the N grade and timing of schedule purges for “ghost” students, the per-credit tuition model, SAT optional admission, and moving the former Punxsutawney admission group to the Indiana campus.</p> <p>F. Investigating technology that tracks student engagement across all aspects of University retention and persistence programming so that data can be used in assessment efforts. An example of this is an I-card swipe system.</p>
<p>II. Academic and Skill Based: Fully implement the University College. The following collaborative efforts will be happening across divisions, but should be coordinated by the University College with reporting to the office of retention and persistence.</p>	<p>A. Centralizing, formalizing and implementing first-year experiences (FYE)s with targeted, cohort-based activities tailored to the needs of specific student groups. FYEs are a high impact practice and there are a number of successful programs at peer institutions that could be adapted to IUP. FYEs could include orientation activities, multi-day early arrival activities prior to the first day of classes, linked courses in the first semester, living-learning activities, structured peer mentoring, etc.</p> <p>B. Investigating advising models, tailored to disciplines and/or colleges. These may include employing “academic coaches” to support the work of faculty academic advisors.</p> <p>C. Implementing formalized training for academic advisors.</p> <p>D. Implementing an academic early warning system with intentional and targeted intervention.</p> <p>E. Formalizing and centralizing a peer mentoring program for all incoming students, perhaps starting as early as orientation.</p> <p>F. Embedding co-curricular courses in first-year courses and/or experiences.</p> <p>G. Developing resources for students to help them understand the impact of withdrawals, repeats, and academic probation on their progress toward degree.</p>
<p>III. Financial:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Include financial literacy information in Orientation and first-year experience (FYE) activities. 2) Develop financial literacy education programs for parents. 3) Consider a capital campaign to enhance IUP’s endowment specifically to be used for reducing student debt. (The University College (Orientation and FYEs), the Office of Financial Aid and University Advancement would be responsible for each of these activities, respectively.) 	
<p>IV. Psychological and Social:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Assess the IUP Counseling Center resources, availability, and hours of operation to determine efficacy for a university that is our size. 2) Employ a case manager who connects students with University and community resources such as housing, food, emotional support, legal services, etc. 3) Implement a College Transition Survey to gauge student preparedness and motivation toward college including academic preparation, academic confidence, persistence and grit, interpersonal maturity, and social interaction. 4) Re institute a fall pause in the academic calendar. 5) Implement the recommendations of the President’s Commission on Diversity to address campus climate and academic issues for underrepresented populations. 6) Develop a social component to the FYEs that directly partners the residence halls and living/learning communities with classroom activities within the first half of the fall term. <p>(The Counseling Center and case manager would report to the Division of Student Affairs. The assessment tool would be implemented by the University College, as part of Orientation or FYEs resulting in an individual profile that can allow student success services to be shared with the students as they begin their academic careers.)</p>	