

Council on Retention and Graduation 2005-2006

What aspects of the charge to the Council have provided the foci for the Council and what specific goals have you been pursuing?

The Council was asked to examine current activities, to look for best practices, and to develop plans for improving the retention and graduation rates of our students, particularly among those not well represented. The Council's work builds on earlier work by the Doubling Task Force (<http://academicaffairs.iupui.edu/pdf/goals2010/RetentionTLTF.pdf>) and the Foundations of Excellence in the First Year Task Force (http://uc.iupui.edu/staff/research_projects.asp) as well as the ongoing work of University College and the Gateway Group.

The Council works with the Council on Enrollment Management and all the schools in projecting enrollments. Activities of the Council on Enrollment Management have focused on numerical projections with the Council on Retention and Graduation focusing on the academic programs and practices as well as on administrative policies and practices which have impact on retention and graduation.

Retention efforts for IUPUI have centered on the retention of entering students, and this year the Council has led efforts to examine specifically the retention of the fall first-time full time cohort. These students represent only 32% of those who begin study at IUPUI in a given 12-month period; but this is the cohort whose retention is reported as our official retention rate. IUPUI compiles a comprehensive report on retention initiatives each year (<https://www.slashtmp.iu.edu/public/download.php?FILE=keeckert/8033ra4Tkw>). This report gives the wide range of programs in academic and administrative units to enhance student retention. Council efforts have highlighted the curricular (e.g., learning communities, first year seminars, bridge programs, etc.) efforts that have resulted in enhanced retention, and the Council has responsibility for commissioning and reviewing program evaluations which continue to affirm the effectiveness of the programs (<https://www.slashtmp.iu.edu/public/download.php?FILE=keeckert/5844587IZIU>).

The Council has also coordinated IUPUI's efforts to assess and impact student retention beyond the first year. We have reviewed student success rates in 300- and 400-level courses and identified, with IMIR research, unexpectedly low rates of student success in many of these classes (<http://registrar.iupui.edu/emc/ppt/bottleneck.pdf>). School-level reviews have suggested that the Council increase its work with upper division students, and schools

are now also reviewing data on the success across schools in moving seniors to graduation

(<https://www.slashtmp.iu.edu/public/download.php?FILE=keeckert/72463cqFr6Q>).

The Council has commissioned reports on the impact of student finances (not only financial aid but looking at the impact of finance in general for our entering students where low income and first generation students are over-represented relative to many peer institutions). We are now reviewing the proportion of students on the Bursar checklist, precluded from registration, with Student Financial Aid reviewing records on an individual basis. Derek Price, of DVP-PRAXIS LTD, is conducting a study to propose a set of quantitative research activities to more accurately identify the characteristics of students who initially enroll full-time at IUPUI but do not continue to enroll into the second and third academic year.

His research agenda is the following:

- Consultation with the Council and with administrative leadership and institutional research on database development;
- Quantitative analysis of longitudinal cohort database to assess factors contributing to student retention and/or stop-out;
- Preliminary report on the factors that influence student retention;
- Final report on student retention including recommendations for subsequent qualitative research.

For the first time, IUPUI will have longitudinal analyses of student retention which include student preparation, participation in initiatives to support retention, and student finance analyzed over time.

With increasing numbers of transfer students, the Council has participated in a redefinition of the collaborative relationship with Ivy Tech with a report forthcoming this summer with recommendations for enhancing the relationship (including increased joint programming and tracking of students).

A component of the Council's work is identifying means beyond increasing the retention and graduation of "native" students to doubling the number of graduates. The initiatives with seniors and with Ivy Tech are part of this effort, but the Council also recommended increased attention to the assessment of prior learning as a campus strategy.

Appendix A is a listing, with actions taken, of specific objectives for 2005-2006.

How have you approached each of these goals (what activities have we pursued related to each goal)?

The goals (identifying best practices, reviewing activities, activities, develop plans) have included highlighting data on student success including new measures (e.g., specially with the cohort of fall first-time full-time students and students on Bursar checklist), a comprehensive review of all campus programming with wide distribution of best practices, and collaborative programming with the other Councils to attend to IUPUI's doubling goals.

What evidence have you collected and considered for each of the goals and what variables are we tracking to assess progress?

The reports cited above have been considered for each of the goals. The variables include primarily the one-year retention rate and six-year graduation rate, but the Council has broadened the variables to the success of students beyond the first year and to the mediated variables (i.e., participation in learning communities as a function of admission status) ultimately associated with increasing the retention and graduation rates.

The Council developed a CTE proposal (<https://www.slashtmp.iu.edu/public/download.php?FILE=keeckert/65772TueeR8>) to extend the work with upper division students and will continue to seek means to extend these analyses.

Appendix B is a Council Report "Asking the Right Questions" from Fall, 2005. The development of indices appropriate for an urban campus is an ongoing priority.

What have we learned in connection with each goal, and what actions are being taken to address our findings?

We have learned that addressing only the retention of entering students will not "solve" our low graduation rate. We are losing many students in each year of their enrollment. Among the issues identified are students seeking particular degrees (e.g., Nursing) and their leaving IUPUI when not successful in entering the desired programs. The Council collaborated in the development of a successful CTE project for Undergraduate Education in the Health and Life Sciences and the provision of campus resources to help students move across degree programs and find other alternatives in a more intentional way will retain and graduate students at IUPUI.

The Council continues to consider the transfer of students to other programs. Many highly qualified students (including those on prestigious scholarships) move, for example, to Purdue University where retention is not included in our official data, in contrast with internal IU transfers who continue to be tracked across campuses. Statewide data would give all campuses more accurate retention and graduation data.

Particularly on a campus where many students begin with the intent of transferring to Purdue and where they do that, including those students in our reports would give more accurate reflections of retention and graduation rates.

With what other groups or individuals has the Council engaged to pursue our goals and objectives? Are these any other groups or individuals we hope to engage in the coming months?

The Council works closely with the other Councils and with the Gateway Group. The Gateway Group originated in the planning of a group of faculty, staff, and students and whose work includes the following:

- Coordinating communication among those involved in gateway courses across the curriculum
- Disseminating information on best practices for promoting learning in these courses, obtained either through campus experimentation and research or findings from other campuses
- Seeking funding and other resources to foster innovation and improvement
- Promoting existing resources available through University College, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and other campus units
- Fostering best organizational and administrative practices to support student success
- Identifying work that needs to be done in connection with the improvement of gateway courses and early student success and funding task groups to accomplish this work
- Reporting on progress with respect to student achievement in gateway courses and organizational changes that have occurred to better support these courses

The Gateway Group worked with the Office of Information Management and Institutional Research to identify courses that enroll high numbers of first-time full-time freshmen. Most of the efforts of the Gateway Group revolve around these courses.

OPD, in conjunction with the Gateway Group is now discussing and thinking critically about models of student retention and focusing primarily on the factors that can be influenced by individuals, programs, and other institutional efforts. These include institutional, academic integration and social integration variables. The Gateway Group is IUPUI's primarily group for bringing all together, in conjunction with the Council on Retention and Graduation and all the schools, for enhancing student learning and persistence with entering students. SLD (<https://www.slashtmp.iu.edu/public/download.php?FILE=keeckert/92057jKFtmd>) and other campus units continue to implement the recommendations of the Foundations of Excellence in the First Year report (<http://uc.iupui.edu/uploadedFiles/Assessment/ImprovementPlan.pdf>).

The Council is the context for considering new programs, particularly those developed across units, such as the new Mathematics Bridge Program and the Mini-Bridge Program launched in 2006.

Appendix A

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TOP TEN FOR RETENTION AT IUPUI

1. Increase scholarship support coupled with academic support for low income and first generation students, targeting the Twenty-first Century Scholars. National data confirm the very strong association between family income and earning a baccalaureate degree. IUPUI can build on the success of Indiana's Twenty-first Century Scholars program by increasing both financial support and academic support for students enrolled at IUPUI.

ACTION:

- a. To begin addressing the lack of need-based scholarships at IUPUI, the Office of Student Scholarship Services (OSSS) implemented an incentive scholarship for incoming freshman who have received an admission-based (merit) scholarship and who have an expected family contribution of less than \$5000. The incentive scholarship will match the amount of the admission-based scholarship. Approximately 200 offers were extended and the projection is that 50-60% of the scholarships will be accepted. The initiation of the federal Academic Competitiveness Grants for Pell recipients will provide additional funding for low income students during the first two years of study.
 - b. In addition to increased funding, increases in academic support is essential. OSSS in collaboration with University College expanded the summer bridge program with a focus on first generation students. Recognizing that it was not feasible for some of the students to leave their jobs for a two week period, a weekend format is being piloted. If this approach is successful, it will provide a structure that will permit further growth of the summer bridge program.
2. Coordinate communications for prospective and entering students. Present efforts are disjointed and uncoordinated. There is, for example, no letter from the Chancellor. A systematic program of communication (printed materials, emails, letters, post cards, handwritten notes from students, phone calls) should be implemented.

ACTION: A subcommittee on marketing of the Enrollment Management Committee is working on this initiative. A communications calendar has been developed and available at <http://registrar.iupui.edu/emc>.

3. Commission qualitative and quantitative research on students who have left and those who have stayed to better understand the factors impacting student success (and then address the factors working against success that are under our control).

ACTION:

Derek Price, of DVP-PRAXIS LTD, is conducting a study to propose a set of quantitative research activities to more accurately identify the characteristics of students who initially enroll full-time at IUPUI but do not continue to enroll into the second and third academic year.

His research agenda is the following:

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For the first time, IUPUI will have longitudinal analyses of student retention which include student preparation, participation in initiatives to support retention, and student finance analyzed over time.

4. Implement a scorecard for all schools on implementation of powerful pedagogies and programming associated with retention (scholarships, scholarship coupled with academic support, honors, service learning, learning communities and first year seminars, study abroad, undergraduate research, etc.)

ACTION: Priority for 2006-2007.

5. Support faculty development to enhance diversity in the curriculum. Involvement with diversity increased engagement in learning. IUPUI's students are diverse. We need to increase our attention to diversity in the curriculum

ACTION: As part of a grant from the Lumina Foundation, the Center for Teaching and Learning staff developed the Diversity and Learning Website (www.opd.iupui.edu/meiupui). The website was designed to be a one-stop, user-friendly comprehensive online resource for faculty interested in issues of multicultural education. The website consists of five resource areas: (1) a revised multicultural classroom resource guide; (2) multicultural teaching techniques; (3) the Multicultural Teaching and Learning module; (4) a collection of faculty essays, and (5) a dynamic listing of campus resources. Additionally, the CTL partnered with the Office for Multicultural Professional Development to host the first Multicultural Teaching and Learning Institute in March. Twenty-four participants explored various topics including what is multicultural education, how to facilitate difficult dialogues and how to incorporate inclusive teaching strategies.

6. Implement an enhanced program of involvement and support for parents and family members, particularly important for our low income and first generation students.

ACTION: New parent newsletter, fall program.

7. Develop models on campus and with community partners where work can be an asset rather than a deficit in students' educational experiences, not only through internships but also through curricular involvement and through engaging employers as partners in supporting student success.

ACTION: Priority for 2006-2007.

8. Inventory administrative and academic policies and procedures and determine their impact on student success and then address places where we are not satisfied with our performance (e.g., no academic forgiveness in place for entering students coupled with a five-year limit on changing F to W leaves many students in limbo).

ACTION: Ongoing. The campus has broadened participation in the early warning and administrative withdrawal initiatives.

9. Focus on the fall, full time, first time cohort. Engage faculty, staff, and students in strategies to engage and understand the cohort in particular (increased communications, exit interviews, ongoing contact, re-entry scholarships, etc.).

ACTION: Cohort identified, contacts ongoing.

10. Enhance the coordination of student financial aid and bursar policies and procedures, enlisting academic units as partners in understanding issues and serving students, in ways that result in enhanced service to students.

ACTION: The Office of Student Financial Aid Services (OSFAS) and the Office of the Bursar continue to move forward with collaborations to enhance services to IUPUI students. For example, OSFAS has initiated contacts with students in the first time full time cohort who can not register due to a Bursar hold and have offered to work with the students to explore avenues to remove the hold. Educational sessions have been provided for the academic unit personal so that they have a better understanding of the federal and state regulations which mold the policies of OSFAS and the Office of the Bursar. Enhancements in student self service are anticipated with the implementation of SIS upgrade in February 2008. Review of business practices underlying student services is being conducted in anticipation of the move to the Campus Center. (OSFAS staff are the customer service representatives for in person transaction for both the OSFAS and the Office of the Bursar.)

Appendix B

DRAFT/10-26-05

Asking the right questions

There is a lot of attention to the retention of students in higher education. A recent documentary on PBS framed the issue as follows:

- If students don't make it through high school, we ask what is going on with the school system, with the teachers, with the parents, with the community, with the social support system for students.
- When we address the same issue for college students, we seem to “blame” the students or “blame” the campus.

We are dealing with very complex issues in both cases, and we might do well to think about the right questions. Then, we can seek better solutions.

Here are some possible “right” questions:

- Do Indianapolis Public Schools students succeed? No, they don't according to the Schott Foundation. Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the boys who start IPS finish in four years. Indianapolis cannot succeed if we don't turn that around. If anyone can do that, it's Dr. White. How can we support him, teachers, students, and parents? This is the right question.
- What colleges have a great retention rate for their students? The answer is those schools that admit well prepared students and students with relatively high family incomes. Family income is highly associated with students being successful in higher education. Mortensen shows that 73% of students in families in the top quartile of income have baccalaureate degrees have by age 24. The percentage for students from families in the bottom quartile is 9%. What campuses are serving large numbers of low income and under prepared students? That is the right question.
- What is the brain drain problem in Indiana? Why do so many of our students leave? We can approach this in two ways. First, students who come here to study from out of state are likely to leave. Second, students from here who finish college need jobs. My own son was featured in an article on the brain drain stating why he had taken a job in the west. That's where he found a job. We need to educate our own young people and we need to provide jobs for them. It's a bit of a chicken and the egg. How can we simultaneously increase Indiana's chances for success? Two simple answers—educate more of our own students and provide jobs for them.

- Why is education so tough in Indiana? Well, we have the mythology that we are an agricultural state composed of heads of households supporting their families on the family farm. How many are there? The answer is --. This is --% of the population of Indiana. So, maybe we are not an agricultural state in the way we think of ourselves. And, we think our young people can get good jobs in manufacturing without college degrees. Well, last year we lost -- of those jobs. What's the right question? How can we help our leaders and ourselves to understand that we're in a new time, not an agricultural state in the way we like to think of ourselves and not a provider of good jobs without higher education.
- Whose fault is it? This is a favorite question in Indiana. We blame the colleges. We blame the schools. We blame the parents. Maybe we need a big mirror and all take a close look. My son came home from grade school and said that his teacher noted that we have three fingers pointing at ourselves when we point at someone else.

It took the Sputnik crisis to get our country to focus on science education. For awhile (my generation), we did a good job, especially with middle income and above white males. In the 1980's, Ronald Reagan visited Indianapolis and delivered his "a nation at risk" talk in which he stated that we would have declared war on another country who did to our education system what we had done to it ourselves.

I don't think we have a lot of time to get our act together. Declare an emergency. Form a coalition of citizens, business, parents, teachers, students and government to get this state on track to help students succeed. Stop cooking the books with our educational statistics. Ask

- Are students succeeding in K-12?
- Are they getting into college?
- Are they graduating from college?

And ask

- What is the role of government?
- What is the role of the schools?
- What is the role of the colleges?
- What is the role of the parents?

Every day, I talk and email with college students, faculty, and staff, and with the parents of our students. Guess what. All care about our students. Indiana's colleges and universities work together, with support from the Lilly Endowment and the Lumina Foundation, to improve education in our state.

Maybe we should ask

- Which schools are successful and why?
- Where do Hoosier children go to college?
- Are they successful?
- How can we build an educational system in Indianapolis that gets students from pre-kindergarten to a baccalaureate degree, by working together?