Council on Retention and Graduation
Annual Report
2007–2008

1. **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 on Retention and Graduation (CRG) 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 the Numbers Task Force and the Foundations of Excellence in the First College Year Task Force (http://uc.iupui.edu/staff/assessment/national.asp) as well as the ongoing work of University College and the Gateway Program.

    The Steering Committee wanted to continue the great work done by the retention action team. Therefore, the fall council meeting was used to discuss the report from the retention action team. Rick Ward, a member of the council and chair of the retention action team, was invited to present his action team's conclusions to the full council. The council narrowed down the recommendations of the retention action team to a few areas that the council should focus on, and the Steering Committee followed up by developing task forces in the following areas: seniors who do not graduate, issues of sophomore students, retention of transfer students, developing a uniform set of metrics, and the retention of underrepresented minorities. It was decided to postpone developing a task force for the retention of underrepresented minorities until the new vice chancellor of diversity was selected. The Task Force on Seniors spent the year working on a survey to find out from students why some seniors do not graduate. The members of this task force have collaborated with several offices across campus, including the Center for Teaching and Learning, IMIR, and some of the academic units. The work on this survey will continue through the summer. The task force hopes to have the survey ready to distribute to seniors by the fall.

    Another area of emphasis was student employment on campus. The spring council meeting was used to discuss employing students on campus because the data show that these students have a higher rate of persistence. Staff members from IMIR, University College, and Human Resources presented information to the council. The presenters asked the council what worked well and what did not. Many ideas were discussed, including understanding how to support student employees, using grant money, connecting students to research, and helping students notify the campus during the orientation process if they are interested in student employment.

    Retention efforts for IUPUI have centered on the retention of entering students, and the council has led efforts to examine the retention of the fall first-time, full-time cohort. These students represent only 36 percent 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 (http://uc.iupui.edu/staff/assessment/retention.asp). This report gives the wide range of

programs in academic and administrative units to enhance student retention. Council efforts have highlighted the curricular efforts (learning communities, first-year seminars, bridge programs, etc.) that have resulted in enhanced retention. The council has responsibility for commissioning and reviewing program evaluations that continue to affirm the effectiveness of the programs.

Appendix A is a listing, with actions taken, of specific objectives for 2007–2008.

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

The fall and spring council meetings were devoted to these goals. The fall meeting was focused on the work of the retention action team; the spring meeting was focused on getting more students employed on campus. In addition, the Steering Committee has developed four task forces: Task Force on Sophomores, Task Force on Seniors, Task Force on Transfer Students, and the Task Force on Metrics. The task forces are in various stages of development. Each task force has a chair and will be continuing work started this spring.

The goals have included highlighting data on student success, including new measures (e.g., especially with the cohort of fall, first-time, full-time students), a comprehensive review of all campus programming with wide distribution of best practices, inviting faculty and other council members to hear special guests, and collaborative programming with the other councils.

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

The work cited above has 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.

This year the CRG's Task Force on Seniors has been working on a survey to find out why some seniors do not graduate. The members of this task force have worked hard to collect ideas from the CRG Steering Committee and have collaborated with several offices across campus, including the Center for Teaching and Learning, IMIR, and some of the academic units. With the work on the survey continuing through the summer, the task force hopes to have the survey ready to distribute to seniors by the fall. This data will be very helpful in making improvements to programs and services available to senior students, which should ultimately increase the graduation of these students.

4. **What have you learned in connection with each goal, and what actions are being taken to address your 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, including the senior year. Among the issues identified are students seeking particular degrees (e.g., nursing) and leaving IUPUI when not successful in entering the desired programs. The Task Force on Seniors is developing a survey to find out why seniors are not graduating. Kathy Johnson and Marianne Wokeck, co-chairs of the task force, are continuing their work on this survey during the summer. Frank Ross, chair of the Task Force on Sophomores, is conducting research on the issues of second-year students. Gary Pike, chair of the newly formed Task Force on Metrics, is continuing his work through the summer. Cathy Buyarski, chair of the Task Force on Transfer Students, attended a national conference on the issues of transfer students. When she reported back to the Steering Committee, we discovered there is much we do not understand about this issue. She has been talking to many people on campus about this issue and has had several volunteers to serve on this task force.

5. **With what other groups or individuals has the council engaged to pursue our goals and objectives? Are there any other groups or individuals you hope to engage in the coming months?**

    The council works closely with the other councils on campus and with the Gateway Program. The Gateway Program originated in the planning of a group of faculty, staff, and students. This summer the program moves under the University College administration. This will provide an opportunity for the Gateway Program to work closely with other first-year programs and resources, such as first-year seminars, themed learning communities, and the Bepko Resource Center. This collaboration will promote enhanced communication across the curriculum, disseminating information on best practices, and promoting existing resources.

    The Council on Retention and Graduation is the context for considering new programs, particularly those developed across units, such as the new Mathematics Bridge Program, the Mini-Bridge Program launched in 2006, and the expanded Summer Academy Bridge Program in 2007. The Steering Committee has offered suggestions to University College for making changes to the Summer Academy Bridge Program in the future.

    The task forces developed this year are chaired by members of the Steering Committee. The chairs are seeking people to serve on the task forces from across campus. The council's primary activity this summer will be continuing the work of the task forces and moving forward with initiatives in the campus academic plan. The council seeks to better understand factors associated with retention as it works with the schools in enhancing student academic achievement and persistence.

Appendix A

TOP TEN FOR RETENTION AT IUPUI

1. <u>Increase scholarship support coupled with academic support for low-income and first-generation students, targeting the Twenty-first Century Scholars</u>. National data confirm the very strong association between family income and earning a bachelor's 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 address the lack of need-based scholarships at IUPUI, the Office of Student Scholarships offers an incentive scholarship for entering students who have received an admission-based (merit) scholarship and who have an expected family contribution of less than $5,000. The incentive scholarship will match the amount of the admission-based scholarship. 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. The Office of Student Scholarships, in collaboration with University College, has expanded the Summer Academy Bridge Program with a focus on Twenty-first Century Scholars and First-Generation Scholars. Twenty-first Century Scholars are strongly encouraged to participate. In some cases, additional financial incentives may be available for the Twenty-first Century Scholars who participate, depending on their financial need. All First-Generation Scholars are required to participate as a condition of their scholarships.

2. <u>Coordinate communications for prospective and entering students</u>. Present efforts are disjointed and uncoordinated. There is, for example, no letter from the chancellor. A systematic program of communication (printed materials, e-mails, letters, postcards, handwritten notes from students, phone calls) should be implemented.

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

3. <u>Commission qualitative and quantitative research</u> 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:
   Last year, Derek Price, of DVP-PRAXIS LTD, conducted a study 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 years. For the first time, IUPUI has

longitudinal analyses of student retention that includes student preparation, participation in initiatives to support retention, and student finances analyzed over time.

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

   ACTION:
   Priority for 2008–2009. The CRG Steering Committee's Task Force on Metrics is working to develop a standard set of metrics for the campus. This work will be a foundation for implementing a scorecard.

5. <u>Support faculty development to enhance diversity in the curriculum</u>. Involvement with diversity increases 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 (CTL) staff developed the Diversity and Learning Web site (http://ctl.iupui.edu/diversity). The Web site was designed to be a one-stop, user-friendly, comprehensive, online resource for faculty interested in issues of multicultural education. The Web site consists of five resource areas: (1) resource guide, (2) teaching techniques, (3) multicultural teaching and learning, (4) IUPUI resources, and (5) faculty essays. In addition, the CTL partnered with Adaptive Educational Services and Counseling and Psychological Services to host the Multicultural Teaching and Learning Institute in October 2007.

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

   ACTION:
   University College has a newsletter targeting parents of entering students and a fall program for parents and family members.

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

   ACTION:
   The spring council meeting was used to discuss employing students on campus. Staff members from IMIR, University College, and Human Resources presented information to the council. In addition, a pilot program was launched under the direction of Cathy Buyarski. The Skills Bridge Program was piloted over the summer. They hope to roll out the program in the summer or fall. The program trains supervisors to look at the PULs to

see how jobs and skills match the PULs. It helps students to understand the importance of learning transferable skills and how their educational experiences are linked with professional careers.

8. <u>Inventory administrative and academic policies and procedures,</u> 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. <u>Focus on the fall, full-time, first-time cohort</u>. Engage faculty, staff, and students in strategies to engage and understand the cohort in particular (increased communications, exit interviews, ongoing contact, reentry scholarships, etc.).

   ACTION:
   The cohort has been identified and contacts are ongoing.

10. <u>Enhance the coordination of student financial aid and bursar policies and procedures, enlisting academic units as partners</u> 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 are unable to 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 personnel so that they have a better understanding of the federal and state regulations that mold the policies of OSFAS and the Office of the Bursar. Enhancements in student self-service have been implemented with the SIS upgrade this year.