From the Desk of the Chancellor

Helping Students Succeed

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by Charles R. Bantz

Data-driven decision making is something we do well at IUPUI. It allows us to direct resources to where they have the greatest impact. So each year, we need to examine the characteristics of our student body and apply what we know about helping student success. As I’ve mentioned before, over the past decade we’ve seen some dramatic changes in our student body; this year, more than ever.

This fall, we admitted our largest incoming class. They are better prepared academically than ever before. For freshmen, the average high school GPA is now 3.38 (up from 3.32). The average SAT score is now 1029 (up from 1023), and 65% of our in-state students have completed a Core 40 Diploma with Academic Honors (up from 59%). Those who are not as well prepared are benefiting significantly from our Summer Bridge programs. In 2012, students who participated had higher one-year retention rates (79%) compared to nonparticipants (71%). Because of this multiyear pattern of success, we’ve steadily increased the first-time full-time students participating in Summer Bridge programs from 182 in 2003 to 625 this past summer.

With the opening of University Tower, we have more first-time beginning students living on campus than ever before (39% in 2013, compared to 25% in 2009), and we expect that these students will do better academically than those who live off campus.

Fully 85% of first-time beginners expect to be engaged in class and out of class in some form of service learning, community service, undergraduate research, or study abroad—the high-impact practices for student persistence we have dubbed the RISE to the IUPUI Challenge.

First-time beginners who are Indiana residents are 94% of the total in fall 2013. While many are first-generation college students, where neither parent attended college (35% in 2013), the percentage has steadily declined in recent years (from 56% in 2007). Prior years’ data show first-generation students are less successful in persisting to second year (68%) compared to others (76%) in 2012. So we need to work harder at helping those students continue their education.

One way to increase student success is to encourage them to take more credits in their first semester. So, we have worked systematically with advisors to encourage students to take 15 or more credit hours in their first semester as students. As a result, the percentage taking 15 or more credits more than doubled from last fall to this fall—to 51%! With efforts like this, we will help IUPUI students graduate on time.

To view these and other data presentations that inform the work of the Enrollment Management Council, go here.

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