

2015-16 Retention and Student Success Advisory Group Annual Report

This report lists the advisory group's annual goals for 2015-16 and a brief update on each. We are pleased to report that at the time of writing this update (June 2016), retention for the 2015 freshman cohort is at 87%, currently exceeding the goal of 84%.

1. Continue to develop and implement student success and retention plan through 2020.
 - Graduation rate data was reviewed to determine if it provided avenues for further strategy development. While specific variables were identified that correlated with lower graduation rates, because these same variables had already been identified in reviewing lower first to second and second to third year retention, the data did not present much new information. It is noteworthy that the strong first to second year retention rate for the 2013 cohort carried over to a strong second to third year retention rate. Because historically there has been little attrition after the third year, this suggests that the efforts to help students persist through their first two years will have a positive impact on graduation rates. The FYE-SYE group plans to do more in the future to promote the importance of taking 15 credits per semester to be on track to graduate in four years. The implementation of Elliucian's Student Planner module currently underway by the Registrar's Office, Academic Advisement, and ITS is also expected to help students develop a four year graduation plan. Recommendations from the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force are also expected to include initiatives aimed at improving graduation rates and the RSS Advisory Group will consult with the Task Force on any such plans.
 - The RSS Advisory group discussed the need to improve communication with other planning groups and the campus community in general in order to shape long term student success planning. This will be an area of focus in 2016-17.
2. Plan for and administer NSSE in spring 2016 to assess and inform institutional student success strategies and priorities.
 - An aggressive promotional campaign resulted in a 65% response rate. This excellent response rate and communication with key stakeholders, such as FEC, VPAA Council, and department chairs has laid the foundation for effective use of the NSSE results for strategic planning. A team is also being sought to attend the NSSE Teaching and Learning National Institute in July to craft a specific plan for institutional change based on the NSSE results and other data on the student experience at Nazareth.
3. Explore opportunities to offer growth mindset professional development.
 - The concept of growth and fixed mindset was reviewed and discussed by the advisory group. Although there was some interest in offering as a reading group style professional development opportunity, it was decided that it was best to not compete with another reading group underway for the book *Make it Stick*. Opportunities to offer professional development focusing on growth mindset may exist in the future.
4. Develop a student success awards and recognition program.
 - Appropriate award categories, selection criteria, and timeline were carefully planned. The first Student Success Awards ceremony is planned for fall 2016.
5. Implement new elements of FYE-SYE program and determine next steps in conjunction with the developing Bridge program.
 - Several new events and programs, specifically designed for first and second year students, were offered in 2015-16. A website was also developed to centralize information on the range of first and second year programming opportunities for students. The FYE-SYE planning group has met and will continue to meet with the Bridge Plan group to discuss integration of the two projects.
 - 2014-15 Task Force Membership

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- Andy Morris, Student Support Services (Chair)
- Rachel Bailey-Jones, School of Education, Director of the Core Curriculum
- Sydney Bell, Development
- Thomas Chew, Center for Student Success
- John Garbe, Student Accounts
- Sue Geiger, Development
- Nadine Hylton, Institutional Research
- Nicole Juersivich, College of Arts and Sciences
- Jane Kelly, Campus Life/Student Development
- Nick Lamendola, Institutional Research
- John Mordaci, Undergraduate Admissions
- Jan Scheutzow, Financial Aid
- Dawn Vogler-Elias, School of Health and Human Services
- Jerry Zappia, Dean, School of Management