

HSU Graduation Rate Improvement Plan

Improving graduation rates for all students at HSU requires active intervention and support throughout our student’s time of residence. The following recommendations involve strategies, procedures and policies aimed at all first time freshman, selected groups of first time freshman with particular emphasis on underrepresented minorities, selected populations of sophomore and upper division students, and all students as they approach graduation. They represent a mixture of measures of identification, proscriptive policies and actions, counseling/advising, and academic support. We are mindful that the goal is not to “fix” our students so that they fit within our academic systems, but rather to review our processes and campus culture and adjust them to meet our student’s needs. These adjustments include changes that directly influence students (e.g. streamlining major requirements) and improvements to the campus culture through faculty and staff development and enhanced student support services.

These measures, over time, will help students succeed academically, stay at HSU, move expeditiously toward graduation within 4 – 6 years and reach our goal of improving graduations rates by 15% for under-represented students and 12% for the rest of the student population by 2015. We have tried to focus for the most part on broad issues and initiatives with the expectation that the processes for implementation and assessment will be developed by others.

CURRENT STATUS:

An analysis of yearly retention rates and 6 year graduation rates for first-time freshmen (FTF) at Humboldt State University since 1990 leads to the following average retention and graduation rates by year:

Current Average Retention and Graduation Rates for HSU FTF

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4		Year 5		Year 6		Eventual
Retain	Retain	Retain	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Grad
75.2%	60.0%	55.1%	43.1%	9.7%	19.8%	30.2%	7.5%	43.0%	46.5%

Given the current first-time freshmen cohort of 1338 students, if the past average retention and graduation were to apply then the year-by-year enrollments and graduates would appear as follows:

Projected Yearly Retention and Graduation with Current Trends for HSU FTF

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4		Year 5		Year 6		Eventual
Retain	Retain	Retain	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Grad
1006	803	737	577	130	265	404	100	575	622

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Similarly, the average retention and graduation rates for transfer students are as follows:

Projected Yearly Retention and Graduation with Current Trends for HSU Transfers

Year 1	Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6
Retain	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Grad
81.0%	54.2%	18.8%	23.2%	47.1%	11.1%	60.0%	3.1%	68.0%	71.0%

If these rates are applied to the Fall 2009 transfer cohort of 574 students then we would see the following trends:

Current Average Retention and Graduation Totals for HSU Transfer Students

Year 1	Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6
Retain	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Grad
465	311	108	133	270	64	344	18	390	408

However, the above rates will leave HSU well short of its FTF 6 year graduation rate target of 57.2% which translates into approximately 765 graduates at the end of year 6. Similarly, HSU is also short of its transfer target of 77% which would equate to 442 transfer graduates after 6 years. Consequently, the following action steps and policy implementation will be taken to move toward this ambitious graduation target.

GRADUATION RATE GAP:

HSU is committed to promoting equal opportunity and academic success for all of its students. One of the themes in HSU's current WASC reaccreditation effort is to promote academic success for underrepresented minority (URM) students. Using the CSU's definition of URM students, HSU currently has a 6 year graduation gap of 9%. I.e., Non-URM FTF students at HSU have a 6 year graduation rate which is 9% higher than the 6 year graduation rate for URM students. The action steps and best practices that arise from our Educational Effectiveness Plan will be implemented in order to close this gap. The goal is to halve this gap for students in the Fall 2009 FTF cohort. This translates into increasing the 6 year graduation rate for Non-URM students by 12% and the rate for URM students by 15%.

The gap for transfer students after three years has averaged about 4% so the goal will be to halve that gap for the Fall 2009 cohort.

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ACTIONS:

1. Institute block scheduling for all students for the freshman year consistent with major requirements for those who have declared a major. This will allow us to ensure students are meeting requirements and progressing through their first year with a logical and achievable sequence of courses. **Begin phasing in Fall 2009, full implementation fall 2011**
2. Designate a Associate Dean of Student Retention and Success – see attached document for draft of duties and responsibilities (from Provost’s Retention Work Group). **Finished Spring 2010**
3. Develop an early intervention program including manual and technological indicators and processes. Review commercial software available for this purpose (e.g. STEAR – Student Early Alert Tracking System) for online tracking of student progress in the first year. **Identify system Fall 2010 for implementation Fall 2011**
4. Improve Advising.
 - a. Enforce Mandatory Advising Policy. **Finish Spring 2010**
 - b. Recommend a Structured Advising Experience and procedures for all students and advisors. **Finish Fall 2010/Implement Spring 2011**
 - c. Institute assessment of advising through student and peer evaluation.
Start process Fall 2010 to implement in Spring 2011
 - d. Develop and implement individualized student graduation plans in conjunction with DARS reports with mandatory deadlines and required course registration leading to timely graduation. **Start process Fall 2010 for implementation Fall 2011.**
5. Remove or diminish curricular and delivery impediments to graduation. **Implement Fall 2010**
 - a. Eliminate excessive numbers of units in majors, lack of clarity in major requirements or set course rotation schedules to assist students in navigating major pathways.
 - b. Reassess the way GE classes are counted. Encourage departments to propose courses of study to Upper Division General Education courses both in their areas and area E.
 - c. Exercise greater flexibility in accepting AP and transfer classes in majors and General Education.
 - d. Centralize all scheduling to maximize room use, course availability and minimize class conflicts.
6. Under the coordination of the Associate Dean of Student Retention and Success, establish or identify ongoing mentoring, advising and supplemental instruction with

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the object of creating balanced and coherent experiences for all students, with a special focus on inclusive academic excellence for traditionally underrepresented students in the areas of access, persistence, and graduation. This will include ongoing assessment and modification of programs as needed. **Finish Spring 2011**

7. In order to better foster a culture of student success, we will establish and encourage professional development training for faculty, staff and administrators. This will provide them with information, resources, and strategies useful in supporting a variety of student learning needs and enhancing the academic success and out-of-classroom experiences of students from diverse backgrounds. All new faculty, staff and administrators will have this training during their orientation process. **Begin phase in Fall 2009, full implementation Fall 2010**

8. Develop and implement 3-unit freshman GE courses that are required for all students. These courses will link skill building with course content and include elements of a "University 101" type freshman experience seminar while fulfilling a lower division GE requirement. Course content would include, but not be limited to, time management, study skills, career exploration, information technology competency, personal finance, and orientation to academic expectations in college. **Implement Fall 2012**

9. Enhance sophomore-to-junior retention by hiring additional on-campus student workers from among the sophomore ranks as peer mentors and peer advisors; tutors in the Writing Center, Math Center, and Learning Center; undergraduate research assistants; and other student leadership positions. Work with the Financial Aid office to identify sophomores with "unmet financial need" and invite them specifically to apply. **Implement Fall 2010**

POLICIES:

1. Students must declare a major by the time they have taken 45 units (or at entrance for upper division transfer students) and file a Major Contract with the Registrar by 60 units (or at entrance for upper division transfer students). **Policy approved in Spring 2010**

2. The process and timelines for dropping classes should be reviewed and changed if necessary to facilitate tracking of students to ensure they are taking needed courses. **Completed in Spring 2010**

3. Develop a policy restricting the conditions under which students may declare a second major or minor(s). **Implement Spring 2011**

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4. Students who have taken 110 units must file a plan with the department and Registrar indicating how they will achieve graduation within two semesters.

Implement Fall 2011

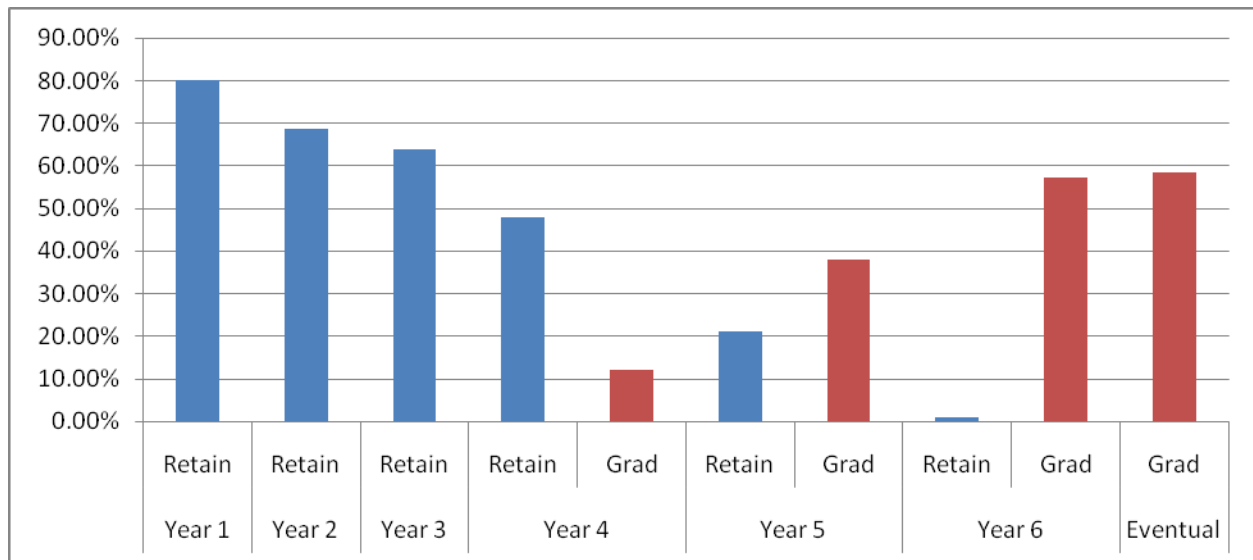
The proof will be in the ultimate execution of these initiatives and policies, but it is our expectation that the cumulative effect of these actions will be to increase retention and reduce the number of units students take before graduation and move students more quickly to graduation. While the implementation goals focus on the next 4 semesters, most of these programs will take several years to achieve maximum effectiveness and in some cases constitute difficult cultural shifts for the campus community. We also ask that the Chancellors Office share all of the plans that are generated by our sister institutions to see if they have other ideas that would be useful for us to consider.

TRAJECTORY ANALYSIS:

As the above actions are taken and policies implemented, we project the following.

Revised Average Retention and Graduation Rates for HSU FTF

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4		Year 5		Year 6		Eventual
Retain	Retain	Retain	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Grad
80.0%	68.8%	64.0%	48.0%	12.0%	21.0%	38.0%	1.0%	57.2%	58.3%



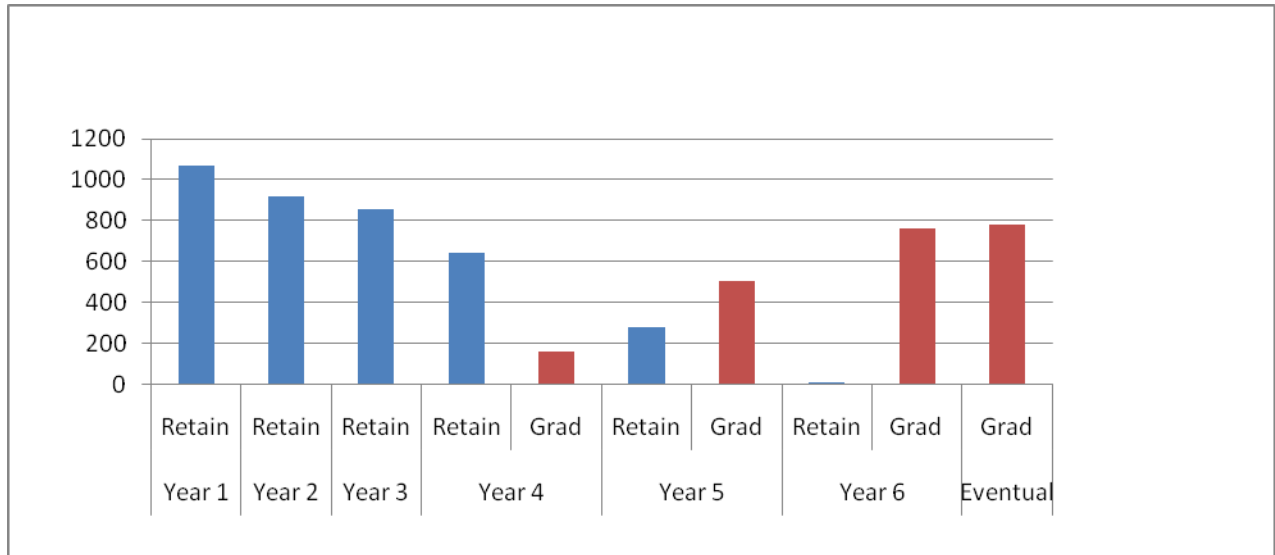
Translating these retention and graduation rates for the Fall 2009 FTF cohort at HSU we would see enrollments and graduates approximately as follows:

Estimated Retention and Graduation Results with New Action Steps/Policies for HSU FTF

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4		Year 5		Year 6		Eventual
Retain	Retain	Retain	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Grad

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1070	921	856	642	161	281	508	13	765	780
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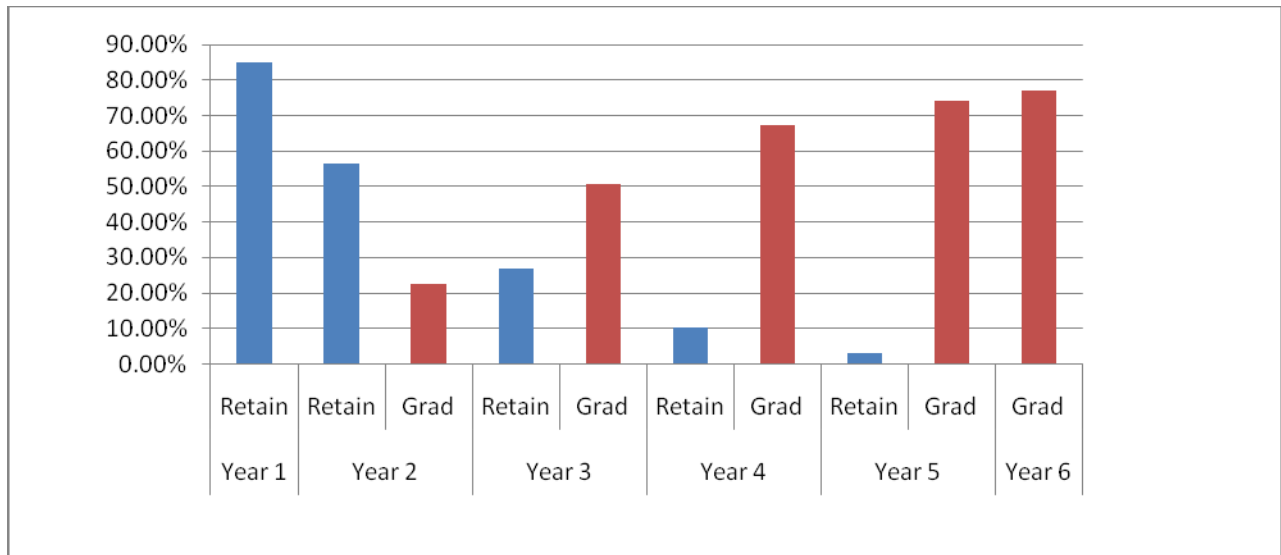
These “stretch” goals will be difficult to achieve, and especially so for the Fall 2009 cohort since first year retention is an important ingredient in this plan and the most critical retention decision period for first year FTF has already passed.

Again, taking the steps outlined above, the transfer 6 year graduation rate target of 77% could be achieved if the following retention and graduation rates were met:

Revised Average Retention and Graduation Rates for HSU Transfers

Year 1	Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6
Retain	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Grad
85.0%	56.5%	22.5%	26.9%	50.8%	10.2%	67.2%	3.0%	74.2%	77.0%

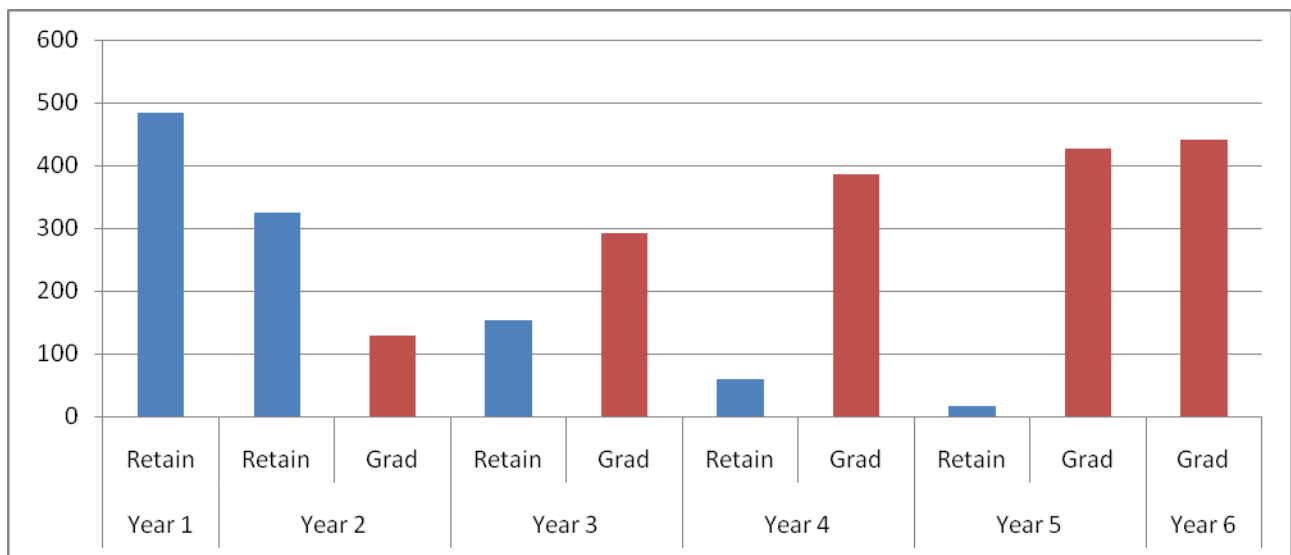
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Using the Fall 2009 cohort of 574 transfer students and the retention and graduation rates from the table above we would see the following results:

Estimated Retention & Grad Results with New Action Steps/Policies for HSU Transfers

Year 1	Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6
Retain	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Retain	Grad	Grad
484	324	129	154	292	59	386	17	426	442



Achieving these results for transfer students will be challenging but the target of a 77% 6 year graduation rate seems to be a good “stretch” goal for Humboldt State University.

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ACTIONS	STRATEGY	POINT PERSON(S)*	RESPONSIBLE UNITS*
1. Block scheduling for all FTF	<p>Institute block scheduling for all students for the freshman year consistent with major requirements for those who have declared a major. This will allow us to ensure students are meeting requirements and progressing through their first year with a logical and achievable sequence of courses</p> <p>Fall 2011</p>	<p>Jena Burges, Vice Provost</p> <p>Grace Dempsey, Registrar</p>	<p>Determining courses: Vice Provost, Deans, Department Chairs</p> <p>Implementation: Registrar's Office</p>
2. Designate a Associate Dean of Student Retention and Success	<p>Current and proposed retention activities occur in a wide range of places and units on campus; assigning responsibility for their coordination to an individual with the appropriate expertise will maximize retention results by reducing redundancy, assuring assessment and refinement of our retention strategies, and maintaining campus attention on consistent</p>	<p>Robert Snyder, Provost</p>	<p>Enrollment Management Task Force</p>

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ACTIONS	STRATEGY	POINT PERSON(S)*	RESPONSIBLE UNITS*
	implementation of student success efforts. Spring 2010		
3. Early Academic Intervention Program	Develop an early intervention program including manual and technological indicators and processes. Review commercial software available for this purpose (e.g. STEAR – Student Early7 Alert Tracking System) for online tracking of student progress in the first year. Fall 2010	Jyoti Rawal, Associate Dean of Student Retention and Success	Policy: Academic Senate, Creation & implementation of process: Advising Center, Learning Center, EOP/SSS, Athletics, Career Center, Registrar’s Office, SDRC, ITS. Review & Selection of Model: Academic Deans, Academic Senate, Undergraduate Studies
4. Improve Advising	a. Enforce Mandatory Advising Policy. Spring 2010 b. Implement a Structured Advising Experience and procedures for all students and advisors. Fall 2010 c. Institute assessment of advising through student and peer evaluation. Fall 2010 d. Develop and implement individualized	Jena Burges, Vice Provost Grace Dempsey, Registrar Jay Verlinden, Chair, Academic Senate Ken Ayoob charged with organizing a group to bring back a recommendation by the end of fall semester.	Process and Evaluation: Vice Provost, Academic Deans, Academic Senate Implementation: Registrar’s Office, Faculty, Advising Center, Career Center

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ACTIONS	STRATEGY	POINT PERSON(S)*	RESPONSIBLE UNITS*
	<p>student graduation plans in conjunction with DARS reports with mandatory deadlines and required course registration leading to timely graduation.</p> <p>Fall 2010</p>		
<p>5. Remove or diminish curricular and delivery impediments to graduation</p>	<p>a. Eliminate excessive numbers of units in majors, lack of clarity in major requirements or set course rotation schedules to assist students in navigating major pathways.</p> <p>b. Reassess the way GE classes are counted.</p> <p>c. Exercise greater flexibility in accepting AP and transfer classes in majors and GE.</p> <p>d. Centralize all scheduling to maximize room use, course availability and minimize class conflicts.</p> <p>Fall 2011</p>	<p>Cindy Moyer, Chair, Integrated Curriculum Committee (ICC)</p>	<p>Policy and reassessment: ICC and College Deans (items a and b)</p> <p>Flexibility: Registrar, Associate Deans (Item c)</p> <p>Centralizing schedule: Vice Provost Registrar, Deans, Associate Deans (Item d)</p>
<p>6. Coordinate Campus Retention Efforts</p>	<p>Under the coordination of the Associate Dean of Student Retention and Success,</p>	<p>Jyoti Rawal, Associate Dean of Student Retention and Success</p>	<p>Coordination: Associate Dean of Student Retention and Success</p>

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ACTIONS	STRATEGY	POINT PERSON(S)*	RESPONSIBLE UNITS*
	<p>establish or identify ongoing mentoring, advising and supplemental instruction with the object of creating balanced and coherent experiences for all students, with a special focus on inclusive academic excellence for traditionally underrepresented students in the areas of access, persistence, and graduation. This will include ongoing assessment and modification of programs as needed.</p> <p>Spring 2011</p>		<p>Creation & Implementation of process: Faculty, Dean of Students, Advising Center, Learning Center, EOP/SSS, Athletics, Career Center, SDRC, ITEPP, INRSEP.</p> <p>Assessment: Office of Institutional Research and Retention Coord.</p> <p>Coordination: Associate Dean of Student Retention and Success</p>
<p>7. Require professional development training</p>	<p>In order to better foster a climate of student success, establish and encourage professional development training to provide faculty, staff and administrators with information, resources, and strategies useful in supporting a variety of student learning needs and</p>	<p>Steve Smith, Chair Jyoti Rawal ODI Financial Aid Rep Financial Serv Rep Residential Life Nikola Hobbel A.S. Rep</p> <p>Charge: Identify and prioritize existing training and new training needs across campus</p>	<p>CELT, Human Resources, Academic Personnel Services, Office of Diversity & Inclusion</p>

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ACTIONS	STRATEGY	POINT PERSON(S)*	RESPONSIBLE UNITS*
	<p>enhancing the academic success and out-of-classroom experiences of students from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p>Fall 2010</p>		
<p>8. Develop and implement 3-unit freshman GE courses required for all students</p>	<p>These courses will link skill building with course content and include elements of a “University 101” type freshman experience seminar while fulfilling a lower division GE requirement. Course content would include, but not be limited to, time management, study skills, career exploration, information technology competency, and orientation to academic expectations in college. Fall 2012</p>	<p>Cindy Moyer, Chair, Integrated Curriculum Committee</p> <p>Jena’ Burges, Vice Provost</p> <p>Eric Van Duzer, Chair, Academic Policies Committee, Academic Senate</p>	<p>Policy: Academic Senate</p> <p>Curriculum: ICC</p> <p>Implementation: Faculty</p> <p>Support: Career Center, Learning Center, Information Help Desk, Student Life and Leadership, Advising Center</p>
<p>9. Enhance sophomore-to-junior retention</p>	<p>Hire additional on-campus student workers from among the sophomore ranks as peer mentors and peer advisors; tutors in the</p>	<p>Kim Coughlin, Director, Financial Aid</p> <p>Annie Bolick-Floss, Director, Career Center</p>	<p>Career Center and Financial Aid</p>

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ACTIONS	STRATEGY	POINT PERSON(S)*	RESPONSIBLE UNITS*
	Writing Center, Math Center, and Learning Center; undergraduate research assistants; and other student leadership positions. Work with the Financial Aid office to identify sophomores with “unmet financial need” and invite them specifically to apply. Fall 2010		

POLICIES	STRATEGY	POINT PERSON(S)	RESPONSIBLE UNITS
1. Major Declaration	Students must declare a major by the time they have taken 45 units (or at entrance for upper division transfer students) and file a Major Contract with the Registrar by 60 units (or at entrance for upper division transfer students). Spring 2010	Eric Van Duzer, Chair, Academic Policies Committee, Academic Senate	Policy: Academic Senate Implementation: Registrar’s Office
2. Dropping Classes	The process and timelines for dropping classes should be reviewed and changed if necessary to facilitate tracking of students to ensure	Jena Burges, Vice Provost Grace Dempsey, Registrar	Implementation: Academic Advising, Registrar’s Office

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POLICIES	STRATEGY	POINT PERSON(S)	RESPONSIBLE UNITS
	they are taking needed courses. Spring 2010		
3. Declaration of second major or minor	Develop a policy restricting the conditions under which students may declare a second major or minor(s). Spring 2011	Eric Van Duzer, Chair, Academic Policies Committee, Academic Senate	Policy: Academic Senate Implementation: Registrar's Office
4. Required Graduation Plans for students with 110+ units	Students who have taken 110 units must file a plan with the department and Registrar indicating how they will achieve graduation within two semesters. Fall 2011	Eric Van Duzer, Chair, Academic Policies Committee, Academic Senate	Policy: Academic Senate Implementation: Academic Departments, Registrar's Office

*"Point persons" are responsible for assembling working groups, monitoring their progress, and reporting back to the Steering Committee. "Responsible Units" are recommended personnel from which the Point Persons may draw their working groups, but composition of those groups is not limited to the designated units and is at the discretion of each point person.