

Goal 1: Excellence in Teaching and Learning

C. Enhance undergraduate student learning and success

Senior Year Experience

Inventory current capstone courses and identify best practices. Sufficient help/information for graduate studies or job searches.

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Current Status

- Few existing programs specifically target the objective of helping seniors to graduate as expediently as possible.
- IUPUI has several sources of data on the senior year experience, including progress through the major and cross-campus comparisons of retention and graduation of seniors.
- We have few school-specific indices of where problems might lie.

Recommendations

- In order to improve support for seniors, consider collecting additional data—for example, on efficiency of progress through majors, on effectiveness of career specialists within schools, and on the impact of internship experiences on timely graduation and job placement.
- More consistent and intentional advising and career services should be deployed across the Schools of Liberal Arts and Science and the professional schools. The locus of administrative control for these services could be either campus-wide or school-specific.
- IUPUI should expand its internship offerings to take advantage of partnerships developed through the IUPUI Solution Center, the Office of Service Learning and other programs. Marketing such opportunities could be an effective recruitment tool, and could enhance the experiences of seniors preparing to enter the workforce.
- Schools should continue to examine capstone offerings to determine to what degree they include instruction and assignments pertaining to post-graduation planning and to strategies for achieving post-graduation goals.
- The provision of incentives for timely completion of degrees should be piloted, and, if successful, rapidly implemented. The committee suggests two possibilities: making special scholarships available to students who progress rapidly through their programs and offering combined baccalaureate/master's degrees.

Implementation

- Many suggestions for implementation of specific action steps are provided in our report. We also offer the overarching recommendation that the campus prepare an “exit strategy” for seniors as comprehensive in scope as current Gateway initiatives for beginning students. The challenge to implementing such programming is that there currently is no campus-wide administrative unit that could readily coordinate implementation and assessment activities. In the absence of centralization, activities would need to be administered within schools or departments and monitored in a distributed fashion.

Resources

- Funds would be necessary to support the collection of additional assessment data, the implementation of specialized career and advising services for seniors, enhancement of internship opportunities, and the provision of incentives for timely graduation.

(Revised November 20, 2007)