

## **Goal 1: Excellence in Teaching and Learning**

### ***D. Improve retention in the student pipeline; increase graduation rates***

#### **Retention issues**

*Study the leaky student pipeline—identify where the leaks are and try to plug them with ideas. Stipend/reward for students who have very good GPAs in two consecutive semesters, provided they enroll continuously. Provide adequate academic/tutoring help in basic courses. Consider performance of transfer students, including intercampus transfers. Might there be a graduation incentive?*

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#### **Current Status**

- The six-year graduation rate has improved markedly over the last five years, but graduation rates for the first-time full-time cohort remain the lowest among our peer institutions.
- Retention problems persist throughout the academic “pipeline.”
- Multiple interventions and considerable resources have been directed to improving retention and graduation, but these efforts remain largely uncoordinated.

#### **Recommendations**

- Recruit for retention—target students in upper 50 percent of high school class.
- Develop more effective ways of identifying students who are likely to struggle and use this information to tailor retention strategies more effectively (e.g., early warning mechanisms).
- Consider tighter control of course selection for high-risk cohorts.
- Develop and implement “strengths-based advising.”
- Have peer mentors in critical Gateway courses focus on students who are not attending class or completing assignments.
- Support mandatory programming for all students on probation after the first semester and first year.
- Create “academic progress” scholarships for students who move off probation.
- Direct students to “powerful pedagogies,” such as service learning, undergraduate research, and study abroad, to improve engagement.
- Streamline readmission and transfer policies.
- Encourage students deferred from IUPUI to complete at least 30 hours of credit at Ivy Tech before attempting to transfer back to IUPUI.
- Provide expanded support for programs with proven success in retaining African Americans and other under-represented groups.
- Develop specific advising strategies for part-time students.
- Pilot a “discounted senior year” in a program with an “excess” of seniors.
- Create a financial planning service for students.
- Undertake a systematic review of the undergraduate curriculum to remove barriers to retention while maintaining high academic standards.

#### **Implementation**

- Undertake a campus-wide effort to address retention issues in a systematic, sustained fashion, similar to the approach used to develop the PULs: a) prioritize initiatives, b) coordinate efforts, and c) provide ongoing assessment tied to attainable goals.
- Tie improvement in retention and graduation to our institutional reward structure (resources).

(Revised October 11, 2007)