2011-12 RETENTION INITIATIVES

Organizational Efforts –

1. Reclassification of Dean of University College to Associate Provost for Retention & Student Success effective July 1, 2011 to serve as an institutional mentor/guide for retention, degree completion, and other student success issues. STATUS: wheels are definitely turning.

2. Reclassification of College Counselors to Directors of Student Academic Affairs in each undergraduate college effective beginning July 1, 2012 to serve as college specific retention and student success officers. STATUS: Changes begin next month so it is too early to tell.

Informational Efforts –

3. System-wide “Retention Summit” to commence Faculty Week in August 2012 attended by more than 200 faculty and staff. Intent was to raise awareness about retention and student success issues via keynoter, faculty/staff best practices panel, student panel, and breakout sessions. STATUS: very successful program by all accounts.

4. System-wide “Retention Workgroup” met throughout 2011-12 to consider student success-related issues such as data, trends, intervention programs, technologies, and national best practices. Group included representatives from each undergraduate college, Extended and International Operations, Enrollment Services, Housing, Financial Aid, and Multicultural Student Affairs. STATUS: this group collected data and information about best practices, vetted the MAF-works product and the summer bridge pilot program.

Academic Advising Efforts

5. Academic Advisor professional development for faculty offered by the Educational Counseling and Disabilities Services staff in collaboration with the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning. Seven sessions were offered during 2011-12, one session about a different topic each month. Attendance averaged 12 faculty per session, with approximately 35 different faculty attending at least one session. STATUS: very successful, with good attendance from most colleges; special session designed for academic advising specialists planned for July 2012.

6. Appointment of Academic Advising Specialists across campus including:
   - Allied Health Sciences (2) – both pre-Allied Health
   - Arts & Sciences (3) – pre-science, pre-pharmacy, and social sciences (coming soon)
   - Education & Human Services (2) – education and criminal justice
   These positions serve the large numbers of students enrolled in pre-programs for the areas listed and allow faculty in those colleges to advise students who have been fully admitted to their programs. STATUS: it must be working well as college continue to add specialists to their advising operations.

Technology Enhancements

7. MyDegree degree audit platform purchased and implemented in 2010 allows students and advisors to monitor progress toward degree. STATUS: full impact will not be realised until the Class of 2014 enters senior year.

8. MAP-works attrition tracking platform scheduled for purchase and implementation in Summer 2012 will permit survey results from new first-year students and new transfer students to be combined with information about those students in Banner to identify attrition prone students and offer more timely intervention by advising, counseling, and housing staff members. STATUS: on track for implementation by Fall semester with staff training in July.
Interventions --

9. Offered DIST 100 probation seminar to College of Engineering Technology students who were readmitted or on final academic warning during fall and spring semesters (2 sections each semester) as a way to provide structured help for those students seeking to regain good standing. STATUS: Fall sections achieved 60% recovery rate, similar to UNIV and COB; too early to know outcomes from spring sections.

10. Contacted students who failed to attain Satisfactory Academic Progress thru the Dean’s office in each college at the end of Fall Semester and Spring Semester to develop an individualized plan to achieve SAP as soon as possible either at Ferris or elsewhere. STATUS: Work in progress at this date for spring lists.

11. Contacted students who applied for graduation but did not receive a degree thru the Dean’s office in each college in order to identify an individualized completion plan for each student at the earliest possible date. STATUS: Work will begin after the 6-week degree completion window; too early to know outcomes.

Innovations --

12. Operation Excel summer bridge program to be implemented as a pilot program in Summer 2012 for 24 General Studies students so that the students can complete required developmental courses in reading and mathematics before the fall semester begins. STATUS: on track to offer to first cohort; too early to know outcomes.

13. Woodbridge Premise College Prep Program to be implemented as a pilot program during 2012-13 for up to 50 area high school students in collaboration with those schools and the MOISD so that the students can complete required developmental courses in reading and mathematics before graduating from high school. STATUS: on track to offer beginning in November; too early to know outcomes.

Continuing Efforts Related Directly to Retention and Graduation --

1. FSUS transition seminar required of all new first year students
2. SLA program of supplemental instruction for high risk for failure courses
3. Strategies for Your Academic Success program for students on academic probation
4. Directed Studies program for CET and UNI students who are readmitted on probation
5. Tuition Incentive Program programming for TIP students to follow up on retention and graduation of those students

Coming Attractions Related Directly to Retention and Graduation --

1. Enhancement of data provided via IR&T Office that will specifically show what happens to students over time, both at Ferris and any MI university to which they transfer by program of origin
2. Work with Education Advisory Board group to identify additional interventions, programming, and best practices related to retention and graduation
3. Initiation of data collection and analysis about student success in Housing, Financial Aid, and Athletics departments.
Whereas it has become necessary for Ferris State University to become more proactive with regard to assuring that as many students as possible complete degree requirements and receive their degrees, it has become critical that each division, including Academic Affairs, identify ways that the University can achieve that goal. One way to accomplish improved degree completion rates is for colleges and degree programs to identify and follow-up on degree candidates who, for some reason, do not actually receive their degrees. To that end, every summer after the final graduation list for the May commencement period has been published:

1. Each dean shall require that each degree program in their respective colleges create a list of the students who applied for a degree (at any level) for 2011-12 who did NOT receive said degree at the expected date.
   a. Check first to see if the student is still enrolled here and progressing to completion in the next academic year.
   b. Check next for those who are no longer enrolled by calling directly to find out what they need to do and how we can help them.

2. Each dean shall require that each degree program in their respective colleges create a list of students who have earned more than 100 credits towards a bachelor degree but are no longer enrolled at Ferris for the next academic year.
   a. Check next to see now if there is no clear reason for departure without a degree (e.g., death, illness, military service, disciplinary withdrawal, dismissal for grades).
   b. Of those who remain on the list, have staff call them directly to find out if they have plans to finish and what Ferris can do to facilitate completion.

3. Each dean shall require that each degree program in their respective colleges create a list of students who have earned more than 50 credits towards an associate degree but are no longer enrolled at Ferris for the next academic year.
   a. Check next to see now if there is no clear reason for departure without a degree (e.g., death, illness, military service, disciplinary withdrawal, dismissal for grades).
   b. Of those who remain on the list, have staff call them directly to find out if they have plans to finish and what Ferris can do to facilitate completion.

4. The program coordinator, chair, head, director will require the development of a completion plan for each student and then follow up over the course of the next year to make sure it happens. Each dean should file a preliminary report, with names, by August 15, 2012 and a final report with outcomes by June 30, 2013.

5. To facilitate those students who indicate a desire to finish, the following incentives should be developed:
   a. set aside some one-time funding for grants to help students pay the tuition - a “completion grant” - even if they are finishing at a local community college,
   b. develop an on-line course or courses if there are sufficient numbers of students who need, say, advanced comp, and possibly offer the course at no charge when such an opportunity is present,
   c. offer students the opportunity to take proficiency exams or prior learning assessment to finish up remaining work,
   d. make a seat available in a face-to-face class in BR or elsewhere, even if it is over the course cap, to help students get done as quickly as possible, and
   e. launch a public relations initiative inviting students who resemble those listed in items 1, 2, and 3 above to contact their dean’s office to inquire about completion possibilities.