

Degree Completion Task Force

Version 1.0

Recommendations of the Task Force:

1. Advising for returning students (especially for Spring advising for Fall semester).

- a. Create weekly reports in each department of student registration status (i.e., who is registered/not registered), for Deans and Chairs, during the regular advising periods. Change timing of reports.
- b. Continue stronger effort in classes and via campus-wide postings to get students to register for their next semester. Use Skype and other electronic communication channels for this effort during the regular semesters and over the summer. Policy for advising returning students during summer must be developed.
- c. Advise returning students (as well as new ones) during the summer, with faculty entering their students' schedules in MyState immediately. Compensate faculty for this new summer advising.

2. Development of a more proactive advising approach for returning students.

- a. Standardize the advising process across the campus, using curricular check sheets and Degree Works for all programs of study.
- b. Register all students who have under 30 credit hours during the advising session, (i.e., during the session, enter these students' schedules in MyState). Make incoming and students under 30 credits understand proper scheduling and how to navigate registering using MyState.
- c. Encourage students to register for at least 15 credits. Communicate to parents, students and faculty the "opportunity cost" of registering for more than 12 credits per semester (i.e., credits over 12 but under 18 don't cost any more tuition).
- d. Develop, implement and publicize an evaluation process for students who have reached 90-hours to encourage/ensure timely graduation.
- e. Add advisors and their contact information in MyState.
- f. Allocate extra office hours for faculty to handle appointments during the advising period. Going forward, make use of technology (i.e., a smartphone app) for making an advising appointment.

3. Development of interventions for students who are not making an honest effort (e.g., attendance or assignments) in one or more of their courses.

- a. Communicate the revised Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy to faculty and students, and in particular post the revised SAP in large letter signage in the Financial Aid office.
- b. Develop an "administrative withdrawal" policy for no-shows during the first two weeks of classes (and before first disbursement of financial aid). Once this policy is developed, communicate it regularly and clearly to faculty, staff, students, and parents.

4. Development of pilot block scheduling to establish "learning communities" for Fall, 2014

Employ coordination among the faculty advisors, Deans, Chairs, and the staff in the Office of Academic Affairs (and other offices which bear responsibility for student scheduling) to identify and develop

appropriate time/day blocks of classes for particular student populations. Naturally courses would mostly be in the general education core curriculum that apply in most every major.

5. Changes to developmental education

- a.** Phase out purely developmental education classes in math and writing which do not count for graduation credits. (Research shows that most students in those classes, even if they pass, drop out of school).
- b.** Begin or continue to develop graduation-credit-bearing classes that combine developmental and college-level skills and steer students to them.
- c.** Development of an academic skills class as a freshman experience option for low performing students.
- d.** Develop a plan for adequate staffing of developmental courses in light of planned enrollment increases. Course size in developmental courses (or “hybrid” courses) should follow best practices.

6. Development of a clear policy for students undecided about their major

- a.** Designate faculty to be responsible for advising students who have not declared a major.
- b.** Develop an “exploratory studies” schedule of courses, so students can explore the major options.
- c.** Encourage students to decide on a major in their first 30 hours, so they can avoid taking too many classes that won’t transfer to a different major. (Keep in mind that departments/programs are being pushed to limit their curriculum to 120 credit hours).