Organizational Strategies for Equalizing Undergraduate Student Success

Submitted by the Leadership Council for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity
May 2014

Objective

Enhance Undergraduate Student Success – Develop and implement a comprehensive five-year plan to monitor, improve, and equalize undergraduate student academic success rates across racial and ethnic identity groups.

Background

The Leadership Council for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (Council) presents recommendations for organizational changes that are intended to increase the university’s effectiveness in equalizing undergraduate student success across racial and ethnic groups. The recommended changes also serve as steps toward identifying success gaps for other identity groups and increasing our potential to enhance the success of all undergraduate students.

The Council set out to craft recommendations that would both enhance success for all undergraduate students and equalize success across racial and ethnic groups. (Appendix A) We reviewed literature, consulted university experts, reviewed comparator institutions’ practices, and deliberated extensively. Admittedly without having fully explored the challenges of implementation, we recommended in November 2013 the creation of a comprehensive, central organizational structure – an Undergraduate School – that would be effective in ensuring undergraduate student success in the way that the Graduate School attends to graduate student success. The Council also recommended that a task force be formed to work out the organizational details of an Undergraduate School and determine how it would interface with academic colleges and other relevant units.

In December 2013 the Council met with President Ray and Provost Randhawa to present and discuss our recommendation. The President and Provost saw the potential in the idea of an Undergraduate School; however, instead of forming a task force to address the details they requested that the Council identify existing organizational structure(s) that are providing services toward undergraduate student success, determine where there are gaps, and propose structural changes to address gaps and add value. To complete this request they suggested that the Council also involve others whose perspectives would be necessary or helpful.

Following the discussion with the President and Provost, the Council formed a subcommittee to consider organizational structures for student success. The committee included Kate Hunter-Zaworski, Becky Warner, Brenda McComb, Larry Roper, and the two co-chairs, Angelo Gomez and Susana Rivera-Mills. The subcommittee quickly realized that Oregon State University’s existing organizational structures delivering direct student success services include a confusing mix of ad hoc, cross-disciplinary committees organized around particular topics, such as the First Year Experience. (Appendix B) Extensive scrutiny of existing organizational structures led us to conclude that they leave serious gaps in the delivery of experiences necessary to promote undergraduate student success and equity. The gaps include such shortcomings as mixed and varied consistency of programs across colleges, weak coordination of diversity support programs and services, a lack of central infrastructure for experiential learning, and a lack of a common set of standards and goals for First Year orientation courses.
The Council realized that we must create a foundation of collaboration and partnership that produces results more quickly toward the objective of equalizing student success and expands the vision of undergraduate student success. All units integral to such success must own this vision. Because the need for equalization of success is the most urgent, poses a challenge that is growing rapidly, and is substantially challenging on its own, the Council decided that we should reorient and intensify our focus specifically on equalizing success in order to produce well-focused strategy recommendations that hold promise for immediate positive impact.

With this renewed focus, the Council reviewed prior surveys and reports on equalizing success, engaged with others in the university doing related work, deliberated extensively, and arrived at a consensus on a set of recommendations. We are confident that these recommendations are achievable.
The analysis for this report builds on the data presented in the Council’s original recommendation and draws on institutional data to provide additional context for transforming national best practices into effective practices for Oregon State University. The Council reviewed three sources to assess the experiences that influence the success of underrepresented and underserved students and to identify the elements of an organizational delivery system that positively influences success: 1) Underrepresented Students at Oregon State University: Modeling Data From a Study of Student Success (Eduventures Custom Research Report, 2008); 2) Underrepresented Minority Success (University Council on Student Engagement and Experience, 2012); and 3) Assessing Underserved Students’ Engagement in High-Impact Practices (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiences that influence the success of underrepresented and underserved students</th>
<th>Elements of an organizational delivery system that positively influences success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Underrepresented Students at Oregon State University: Modeling Data From a Study of Student Success (Eduventures Custom Research Report, 2008) (Appendix C)</td>
<td>Experiencing a sense of belonging and having positive experiences in the living environment • Produces a strong sense of belonging and mattering to others • Creates a feeling that others know you, feel positively about you, care about you, and value you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessing financial grant, scholarship, or fellowship</td>
<td>• Awards grants, scholarships, or fellowships • Provides financial counseling resources • Helps students identify and apply for job opportunities • Provides coaching sessions to help students manage personal finances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceiving the OSU experience as positive</td>
<td>• Produces a positive overall experience and strong relationships with other students, faculty, and university employees • Demonstrates that the university notices and shows concern for students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being an officer or holding leadership position in a student club or organization</td>
<td>• Studies the benefits of participation in clubs or organizations, such as fraternities and sororities • Explores the possibility of recreating the most positive elements of the Greek experience in on-campus living communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling respected by faculty members</td>
<td>• Promotes respectful treatment by faculty members • Facilitates positive interactions with faculty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2) Underrepresented Minority Success¹  
(University Council on Student Engagement and Experience, 2012) | • Coaches students on how to approach faculty, ask for help, share ideas, and identify a mentor  
Having good study habits | • Connects students with resources such as the Academic Success Center  
• Provides additional support services such as peer mentoring workshops and learning to learn courses  
• Provides time-management training and tools |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | • Accessing culturally relevant academic success and retention resources | • Situates retention specialist positions in cultural centers  
|  | • Having positive educational experiences, particularly within key gateway courses | • Incentivizes curriculum redesign and pedagogy enhancement in key courses |
|  | • Engaging in high-impact practices that are designed to ensure access and equity of participating | • Creates new leadership in colleges to promote high-impact practices and to ensure access and inclusion for underrepresented students |
|  | • Learning in positive, supportive environments | • Shores up DPD program implementation to ensure that courses fulfill the true program intent |
| 3) Assessing Underserved Students’ Engagement in High-Impact Practices (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2013)² (Appendix D) | Participating in the following high-impact practices:  
• First year seminars and experiences  
• Learning communities  
• Writing-intensive | • Supports intentional curricular design and faculty development to integrate high-impact practices into undergraduate student learning  
• Encourages intentional co-curricular design that harmonizes with curricular efforts and |

¹ This report asserted that action must be taken to affect the overall campus landscape by addressing the student realm, faculty and staff realm, and the OSU broader community realm (including families and statewide Oregon communities). Although the report made fifteen recommendations, the four listed here were prioritized.
² The publication concluded that High-Impact Practices (HIPs) have a pronounced effect on the experiences of underserved students. Positive gains, as reflected in self-reported gains, grade point averages, and retention, were more pronounced for students in particular groups: African American and Latino/a students, and students with relatively low ACT scores.
It is clear from these reports that success is a product of broad campus climate issues, and that it cannot be isolated within one realm of students’ experiences. For example, the delivery systems that engage students in high-impact practices (HIPs) are located in the colleges, and the practices are also delivered through particular offices in Academic Affairs and Student Affairs, as well as through businesses and organizations that sponsor internships and service learning and community-based learning opportunities. The same is true for delivery systems that produce a sense of belonging.

Although the main focus of the three reports reviewed is underrepresented minority students, the third report on high-impact practices also focuses on the success of all students. The conclusion of the AAC&U report is that more widespread student engagement in HIPs would benefit all students, and such engagement would be of particular benefit to African American and Latino/a students, and to students with relatively low ACT scores. Thus, organizational changes aligned with the elements outlined above have the potential to both address gaps across racial and ethnic groups and enhance success for all students.

**Organizational Strategies**

**Analysis of Effectiveness of Current Strategies**

Before proposing new organizational strategies, it is important to consider the efficacy of current systems in producing experiences that influence success of underrepresented minority and underserved students. Current systems have produced gains in the form of improved rates of retention and graduation rates, as demonstrated by trends in six-year graduation rates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000 Cohort (%)</th>
<th>2007 Cohort (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>55.2⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Students</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>61.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

⁴ While the rate has fluctuated dramatically, the volatility is likely due to the small number of students
The increase in graduation rates during the eight-year timeframe suggests that our delivery system has achieved success in producing positive experiences; however, while we have achieved some success in narrowing the gaps, the overall six-year graduation rate has remained stagnant. Additionally, recent U.S. News and World Report Rankings place Oregon State University tenth among Pacific-12 Conference schools with six-year graduation rates just slightly above the University of Utah and Arizona State University. Thus, thoughtful organizational changes that strategically enhance the existing delivery system are needed to realize the objective of equalizing success.

Gaps
While the organization of present efforts is accomplishing much, the current delivery lacks the components necessary to promote student success and equity. Gaps in organizational strategies that limit Oregon State’s ability to foster undergraduate success and equity include the following:

- Equalized success across identity groups
- Diversity as a critical component of undergraduate student success
- Coordination across diversity support programs and services
- University environments focused on engagement and mattering that create welcoming environments and provide undergraduate students with a sense of belonging
- Sufficient scope of authority and level of resources to align a full range of functions
- Resources to scale current effective initiatives
- Clearly marked paths to success
- Identifiable leadership for all key functions
- Consistency of programs across colleges
- Planning and collaboration across the university for career development
- Central infrastructure for experiential learning
- Academic support for the most challenging courses and assessment and peer education regarding best practices
- Common standards and goals for first year orientation courses
- Central leadership for innovation and implementation of the baccalaureate core
- Connected and consistent experiences for students
- Support for transfer students
- University environments focused on learning and faculty-student engagement in educationally purposeful activities in and outside of class such as research opportunities, mentoring, service learning, community partnerships, writing, team projects, and discussions
- Shared responsibility for educational quality and undergraduate student success, including robust and strong webs of support and connections that foster a sense of belonging
Proposed Strategies

Short-term Strategies

**Academic Affairs**
- Collect and analyze data to measure success across identity groups, including data that identifies success differentials that may exist for identity groups in addition to underrepresented minority students
- Charge with responsibility (shared with Student Affairs and the Colleges) for equalizing undergraduate student success
- Provide additional resources to make it feasible to carry out the charge of equalizing success (e.g., adding resources to enable creating a position of Director of Advising and other supporting positions as necessary)
- Partner with academic colleges in developing strategic curricular enhancements in key gateway courses and metrics for analyzing early indicators of student success, with particular focus on identifying courses that are obstacles for underrepresented students and on identifying early indicators that are most effective for underrepresented students and other underserved groups
- Designate an academic lead to oversee faculty development in undergraduate teaching and learning with specific focus on fostering development of curricular enhancements that incorporate HIPs, and with the specific goal of fostering curricular approaches that equalize success across identity groups
- Provide additional funding to incentivize integration of high-impact practices
- Charge with tracking accountability measures for equalizing student success

**Academic Colleges**
- Devote the equivalent of at least 1.0 FTE per college (or more depending on enrollment) to equalizing undergraduate student success
- Charge with developing metrics that would assess the impact of college-level efforts on equalizing undergraduate student success
- Charge with developing college level programs that promote inclusive excellence and are culturally responsive, using models such as: SACNAS, LSAMP, MANNRS, and CAMP
- Partner with Academic Affairs in developing strategic curricular enhancements in key gateway courses and metrics for analyzing early indicators of student success, with particular focus on identifying courses that are obstacles for underrepresented students and on identifying early indicators that are most effective for underrepresented students and other underserved groups
- Partner with Academic Affairs to facilitate faculty development in undergraduate teaching and learning with specific focus on fostering development of curricular enhancements that incorporate HIPs, and with the specific goal of fostering curricular approaches that equalize success across identity groups

**Student Affairs**
- Collect and analyze data to measure success across identity groups, including data that identifies success differentials that may exist for identity groups in addition to underrepresented minority students
  - Develop and implement efforts to assess the factors contributing to differentials
- Charge with responsibility for equalizing student success and specifically with shepherding and stewarding university-wide efforts, including
  - Coordination across summer bridge programs
  - Coordination in orientation and onboarding
  - Promotion of engagement in high-impact practices in ways that are culturally relevant
• Facilitate career development that meets the needs of underrepresented minority students and underserved students, and create a set of practices around comprehensive career development that would be spread across all programs
  o Partner with the Graduate School to highlight pathways

**Provost**
• Assume responsibility for creating an operational body for equalizing undergraduate student success to convene relevant parties from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Academic Colleges to
  o Achieve alignment around common goals and objectives toward equalizing success
  o Establish common metrics and methods to assess progress
  o Share knowledge and information about what contributes to success and what gaps exist in delivery of success related experiences,
  o Facilitate collaboration and coordination across the three realms around common best practice strategies
  o Assess progress toward equalizing success on at least an annual basis
• Charge the operational body with reporting annually to the Provost and the Leadership Council for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity its assessment of progress toward equalizing success
• Establish a fund to provide resources to match college contributions to develop or enhance existing college-level or central initiatives and efforts to engage students in HIPs (e.g., SACNAS, MANNRS, LSAMP, and CAMP)
• Charge the Faculty Senate with identifying changes to the university’s promotion and tenure guidelines that will appropriately increase the valuation and reward of faculty efforts that advance the goal of providing a transformative educational experience for all learners.

**Enrollment Management**
• Charge with expanding and identifying enhancements to the university’s diversity related grants, scholarships or fellowships, and with identifying strategies for providing students with financial counseling or connecting them with financial counseling resources in culturally responsive ways
• Charge with developing a comprehensive diversity plan that incorporates best practice strategies in both admissions and financial aid programming

**Long-term Strategies**

As noted in the Council’s original recommendation, additional strategies for undergraduate education can be implemented over a longer period of time to continue to equalize student success across identity groups and enhance success for all undergraduate students:

• Integrate or align existing functions that are essential to undergraduate student success into one structure
• Appoint an academic lead parallel in status to the Graduate School Dean and with representation on relevant leadership bodies such as the Provost’s Council
• Allocate resources to support the delivery of services to undergraduates
• Deliver optimal support and structure for a coherent first-year experience and a seamless transition for both traditional and transfer students.

**Value Added**
• Establishes equalization of success as an imperative
• Identifies point persons in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Academic Colleges
• Encourages coordination across diversity support programs and services
• Adds resources where necessary to equalize undergraduate student success
• Assigns explicit responsibility to convene across units to achieve alignment, collaboration, and coordination
• Fosters university environments focused on engagement and mattering that create welcoming environments and provide undergraduate students with a sense of belonging
• Establishes infrastructure for high impact practices
• Facilitates planning and collaboration across the university for career development
• Develops academic support for the most challenging courses and assessment and peer education regarding best practices
• Creates consistency of programs across colleges
• Implements common standards and goals for first year orientation courses
• Develops university environments focused on learning and faculty-student engagement in educationally purposeful activities in and outside of class such as research opportunities, mentoring, service learning, community partnerships, writing, team projects, and discussions
• Establishes sufficient scope of authority and level of resources to align a full range of functions
• Identifies leadership for all key functions
• Provides resources to scale current effective initiatives

Conclusion

Implementation of the short-term organizational strategies has the potential to immediately address the gaps identified as impacting the equalized success of underrepresented students, and consideration of long-term strategies allows for additional gains in undergraduate student success overall. Collaboration will be critical to the success of the strategies outlined in this report. It is essential that there be shared responsibility for educational quality and undergraduate student success, including robust and strong webs of support and connections that foster a sense of belonging. This is particularly true for collaborations across Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, and Academic Colleges.

Adoption and implementation of the strategies included in this report will reflect a higher degree of institutional commitment and will move us toward equalizing student success and toward overall undergraduate student success. These efforts will lay the foundation for what can become a more comprehensive organizational structure devoted to undergraduate education that has the explicit purpose and design to promote the success of undergraduate students.

While implementation of this proposal has great potential to enhance our student success efforts, as noted by scholar and author Daryl G. Smith in her book Diversity’s Promise for Higher Education, “Successful institutions are those that create an ethos of commitment to student success, with all the intentionality that requires. This commitment must be shared throughout the institution and built into its commitment to excellence.”

Our hope is that implementation of this proposal will be regarded as the first step to sustaining an ethos of commitment to student success and increasing collaboration of a shared vision for inclusive excellence at our university.
Appendix A: Recommendation for Enhancing Undergraduate Student Success

Submitted by the Leadership Council for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity
November 2013

Objective
Enhance Undergraduate Student Success – Develop and implement a comprehensive five-year plan to monitor, improve, and equalize undergraduate student academic success rates across racial and ethnic identity groups.

Background
In developing a recommendation for enhancing undergraduate student success, the Leadership Council reviewed literature, engaged in conversations with experts throughout the university, and considered best practices in place at comparator institutions. Some of the institutional qualities that we know foster undergraduate student success include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Diversity as a critical component of undergraduate student success
- University environments focused on engagement and mattering, and creating a welcoming environment that provides undergraduate students with a sense of belonging
- Clearly marked paths to success for all undergraduate students
- University environments focused on learning and faculty-student engagement in educationally purposeful activities in and outside of class such as research opportunities, mentoring, service learning, community partnerships, writing, team projects, and discussions
- Shared responsibility for educational quality and undergraduate student success, including robust and strong webs of support and connections that foster a sense of belonging

These institutional success qualities are realized through more specific organizational features including culturally effective programming, robust orientation, campus traditions reflecting a commitment to student success, residential education, strong academic support and advising, success monitoring and intervention, capstone experiences, experiential education, rich curricula, and effective financial and personal support systems. (A more detailed listing of these features and associated best practices is in the Appendix)

Research documents that high impact educational practices encompassed by this complex of qualities and features benefit all undergraduate students and can benefit students of color more. They provide the pathway to improving undergraduate student success generally and to reducing success gaps.

The foregoing complex of institutional qualities and features reflect an organizational culture characterized by a guiding philosophy and a comprehensive and coordinated set of practices. It is the entire complex, as opposed to ad hoc initiatives, that has been shown to facilitate undergraduate student success.

Recommendation
The Leadership Council recommends the alignment and enhancement of existing structures and processes into a comprehensive, central organizational structure – an Undergraduate School – that is effective in ensuring undergraduate student success in the way that the Graduate School attends to graduate student success. This Undergraduate School should be parallel in scope, structure and authority to the Graduate School with a Dean providing leadership for an explicit university-wide focus on the success of all undergraduate students, including traditional first-year and transfer students. This school should
• Integrate or align existing functions that are essential to undergraduate student success. Although some additional resources may be needed, reorganization into one structure largely represents a redirection of existing resources.
• Foster coordination of efforts for synergy, efficiency, and cohesion between central, college, curricular, and co-curricular efforts.
• Ensure sustained commitment to and prioritization of undergraduate student success.
• Align curricular and co-curricular efforts around a common vision, goals, objectives and established best practices to pursue Oregon State University’s conception of undergraduate student success.
• Engage in comprehensive assessment of and continuous improvement in learning outcomes related to undergraduate student success. This includes responsibility and authority for overseeing undergraduate academic program reviews.
• Partner with and establish accountability measures for college leadership to ensure undergraduate student success is a shared responsibility. So that no one college or division is regarded as having sole responsibility for undergraduate student success, the school should be established as independent.
• Create alignment with enrollment planning efforts to support successful and sustainable growth and enhance financial aid strategies for recruitment and retention.
• Deliver optimal support and structure for a coherent first-year experience and a seamless transition for both traditional and transfer students.

The Leadership Council recommends that a task force be formed to shape the details of an Undergraduate School and to determine how it will interface with academic colleges and relevant units. The Council suggests that one funding strategy for the Undergraduate School is a one percent investment from each college and unit with undergraduate curricular and co-curricular programs.

Rationale
While each of these elements for student success might be present in a program or a single unit within an institution, it is clear from the research that successful institutions are those that create an ethos of commitment to student success, with all the intentionality that requires. This commitment must be shared throughout the institution and built into its commitment to excellence.

—Daryl G. Smith, Diversity’s Promise for Higher Education

The essence of Oregon State University’s mission is to improve the well-being of the people of Oregon, the nation and the world. To this end we strive to promote economic, social and environmental progress. We carry out our mission by producing graduates competitive in the global economy, generating new knowledge, and applying that knowledge for the betterment of society.

As part of realizing this mission and striving to attain top ten national standing among land grant universities, it is imperative that we open the doors of opportunity for higher education to people from all backgrounds and to foster their development as excellent and innovative leaders and productive members of society. To realize our aspirations, we must pursue equity in terms of the undergraduate students we enroll and the outcomes we produce; we must deliver excellent educational experiences and create welcoming and supportive environments that promote undergraduate student success; and we must ensure that a commitment to the success of all of our undergraduate students is regarded as central to our mission, shared throughout the university, and evident in our structures and practices. Our success in this regard will be reflected in retention of undergraduate students, excellent educational outcomes, and graduates with skills to be effective in an increasingly diverse, complex world.

We must act on this commitment with urgency. Our undergraduate student population is rapidly diversifying, and projections indicate that in a little more than a decade students of color will constitute
40% or more of entering undergraduate students. The diversity of our undergraduate student population is rapidly increasing in many respects beyond race and ethnicity. For example, one in thirty undergraduate students is a person with a disability, one in five undergraduate students is enrolled part-time, eight percent of undergraduates are international students, over seven percent of our Ecampus undergraduate students are veterans, and estimates suggest that approximately five percent of undergraduate students identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. These are just some examples of the diversity of the undergraduate student population, and growth is expected in many if not all of the categories, so we must quickly adapt to meet this reality.

To date, we have not been successful at creating the conditions that produce excellent and equitable outcomes for undergraduate students from all backgrounds. We lose over 20% of undergraduate students between the first and second year and approximately 10% of undergraduate students after the second year, we have gaps in our efforts to support the transition and success of transfer students, and we have significant disparities in academic success and graduation rates across racial and ethnic identity groups.

Oregon State University’s less-than-optimal success in graduating undergraduate students generally, and in equalizing success across racial and ethnic identity groups suggests that we are not effectively creating the conditions for undergraduate student success. We must reshape the educational experience to respond to the diversity of life circumstances, needs, and interests of learners. As we mold our environments to foster success, we must regard diversity as one of our greatest strengths, rather than a perceived deficit.

We must also recognize that the issue of student success is intertwined with the issue of workforce diversity. The diversity of life circumstances, needs, and interests of students is rapidly increasing, and we must adapt by increasing our capacity to respond. Further, we must adapt our curriculum, particularly the Baccalaureate Core, to prepare undergraduate students to be effective in a world that is increasingly diverse, global, and connected. Adaptation requires multiple and diverse perspectives in our workplace. Although our recommendations focus on undergraduate student success, we want to underscore the urgency with which the university must pursue the objective of diversifying our workforce.

While the organization of present efforts is accomplishing much, Oregon State University lacks an organizational structure with the scope of authority and level of resources to align a full range of functions that foster undergraduate student success. The current approach cannot achieve the necessary cohesion and coordination. It is not resourced to scale current initiatives to benefit all undergraduates, and in some instances there is no identifiable leadership for key functions.

The Leadership Council’s view is that the size and nature of the challenge require a deeper and widespread commitment by the institution. The challenge cannot be met with a series of ad hoc initiatives. We must organize our efforts so as to immediately create a deliberate, intense, and sustained focus on undergraduate student success. The range of strategies needed to address the myriad factors contributing to the challenge must be aligned, coordinated, and reflective of established effective practices. This conclusion has led the Leadership Council to make the stated recommendation to address the success of all undergraduate students.

References
A number of public and private institutions have undergraduate colleges or offices of undergraduate education that organize the primary components of undergraduate education into a unified structure:

- Appalachian State University ([http://universitycollege.appstate.edu/about/history](http://universitycollege.appstate.edu/about/history))
- Buffalo State University ([http://universitycollege.buffalostate.edu/](http://universitycollege.buffalostate.edu/))
- Duke University (http://undergraduatedean.duke.edu/)
- Illinois State University (http://universitycollege.illinoisstate.edu/about/)
- Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis (http://uc.iupui.edu/Home.aspx)
- Kennesaw State University (http://www.kennesaw.edu/uc/)
- Louisiana State University (http://uiswcmsweb.prod.lsu.edu/universitycollege/)
- Northern Arizona University (http://nau.edu/University-College/)
- Stanford University (https://undergrad.stanford.edu/)
- Texas State University (http://www.txstate.edu/ucollege/about/aboutuc.html)
- University of Iowa (http://www.registrar.uiowa.edu/registrar/catalog/universitycollege/)
- University of Maryland (http://www.ugst.umd.edu/)
- University of Texas Arlington (http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/about/)
- University of Oklahoma (http://www.ou.edu/univcoll/home.html)
- Virginia Commonwealth University (http://uc.vcu.edu/)

In addition, the AAC&U LEAP Initiative provides a solid foundation for an effective baccalaureate core for the 21st Century: http://www.aacu.org/leap/

Appendix

*Key Features and Practices for Undergraduate Student Success*

The following institutional qualities and features, individually and collectively, represent the necessary conditions for undergraduate student success. The best practices associated with each element are some, but not all, of the strategies that contribute to undergraduate student success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Qualities</th>
<th>Key Features</th>
<th>Best Practices</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diversity as a critical component of undergraduate student</td>
<td>Culturally effective programming</td>
<td>• Provide culturally appropriate support services to underrepresented undergraduate students to address particular needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>success</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Offer culturally-responsive advising</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Engage in specific efforts to address obstacles to participation in high-impact practices</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Embed support resources in culturally relevant settings</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Design culturally-responsive orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop learning communities that emphasize cultural border crossings</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Increase faculty of color and faculty who are able to mentor undergraduate students of color in culturally effective ways</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Foster classroom environments that are welcoming to all undergraduate students</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University environments focused on engagement and mattering, and creating a</th>
<th>Robust orientation</th>
<th>• Connect incoming undergraduate students to peers, faculty, and the university</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcoming environment that provides undergraduate students with a sense of belonging</td>
<td>Increase the multicultural awareness and competency of all undergraduate students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campus traditions</td>
<td>Create an environment that makes undergraduate students feel welcome and that they matter. Develop a culture that includes an ethos of cooperative learning, reflects inclusion versus homogeneity, and aligns mission and organizational structures with undergraduate student success.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residential education</td>
<td>Offer themed living-learning communities. Incorporate academic support. Create community connections.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clearly marked paths to success for all undergraduate students</td>
<td>Academic support and advising</td>
<td>Provide peer mentoring opportunities. Ensure every undergraduate student has a meaningful, quality connection with at least one professional staff or faculty member. Offer tutoring with an emphasis on low-success gateway course. Create opportunities for leadership development. Employ evidence-based remediation approaches that emphasize college-level credit and self-paced learning. Utilize intrusive advising tactics. Offer robust degree planning tools and maps. Employ consistent practices. Make frequent contact. Facilitate exploration and major changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success monitoring</td>
<td>Monitor undergraduate student progress using leading indicators and early warning systems. Intervene early and proactively. Ensure adequate capacity to respond.</td>
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<tr>
<td>University environments focused on learning and faculty-</td>
<td>Capstone experience</td>
<td>Offer meaningful courses/projects within majors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student engagement in educationally purposeful activities in and outside of class such as research opportunities, mentoring, service learning, community partnerships, writing, team projects, and discussions</td>
<td>• Ensure synthesis in the baccalaureate core</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| **Experiential education** | • Design opportunities for undergraduate research  
• Engage in service learning and community-based research  
• Offer internships  
• Provide opportunities for international education  
• Design resources and opportunities appropriate to meet undergraduate students’ personal and professional goals  
• Employ diverse and engaging pedagogical strategies |
| **Robust curricula** | • Provide first-year orientation courses  
• Create well-designed gateway courses that become attractive points of entry  
• Comprehensive and effective baccalaureate core with particular attention to Difference, Power, and Discrimination requirement  
• Equip faculty with support and development to implement curricular improvements  
• Embed coursework in real-world contexts  
• Implement evidence-based instructional practices that promote active learning |
| **Shared responsibility for educational quality and undergraduate student success, including robust and strong webs of support and connections that foster a sense of belonging** | **Financial support**  
• Connect undergraduate students to financial aid and scholarships and provide financial literacy education |
| **Personal support** | • Foster physically and psychologically |
| safe learning environments | • Provide appropriate resources and support for personal life situations  
• Facilitate access to safe living environments  
• Develop resources for healthy lifestyle development and maintenance  
• Engage families and extended networks in ways that are culturally relevant |
Appendix B: Current Delivery of Undergraduate Experience

Gaps:

- Mixed and varied consistency of programs across colleges
- Coordination across diversity support programs & services
- Planning and collaboration across campus for career development
- Central infrastructure for experiential learning
- Academic support available for most challenging courses (+ assessment and peer education best practices)
- Common set of standards and goals for FY orientation courses
- Central leadership for innovation and implementation of Bacc Core
Appendix C: Underrepresented Students at Oregon State University: Modeling Data From a Study of Student Success

In November 2008, Eduventures completed a custom research report on underrepresented students’ success at Oregon State University. The report is based on findings from a spring 2008 web-based survey inviting responses from 2,405 students of color. Of those, 688 (28.7%) completed the survey.

The survey address three questions, using level of student confidence in ability to graduate regardless of obstacles faced as a proxy for student success: what are the best predictors of success for underrepresented students at OSU, what are the risk factors for attrition, and what can Student Affairs do to help retain students of color and improve their chances of success.

A very important finding of the survey is that underrepresented students’ confidence in their ability to graduate appears to be unrelated to academic performance. There is no significant difference in the mean GPA of students who are very confident, somewhat confident, or not confident about graduating from OSU. The single best predictor of success is having a strong sense of belonging, and significant negative factors include lacking a strong sense of belonging, not holding a leadership position in a student club or organization, experiencing pressure from family to return home, and having negative experiences in the living environment.

Another important factor is whether a student had progressed to a freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior status. For this reason, classifications groups were analyzed separately, and specific predictive factors emerged:

1. **Freshman students** – a strong sense of belonging on campus was the best predictor of graduation confidence. Those who did not feel they belong at OSU and reported negative experiences in the living environment had the lowest level of graduation confidence.

2. **Sophomore students** – receiving a financial grant, scholarship, or fellowship was the best predictor of graduation confidence. Among those who received such funds, those who reported family pressure to return home or who did not have immediate family members in college were significantly less confident about graduating.

3. **Junior students** – the degree to which a student perceived the OSU experience as positive was the best predictor of graduation confidence. The second best predictor was whether the student had ever been an officer or held a leadership position in a student club or organization.

4. **Senior students** – the degree to which a student felt respected by faculty members was the best predictor of graduation confidence. Among those who did not feel respected by faculty members, women were more likely than men to be confident that they would graduate.

The study also identified the following themes:

- A majority of underrepresented students consider poor study habits to be an obstacle to their continued enrollment at OSU.
  - Three fourths of the students who were not convinced that they would graduate from OSU were concerned about their poor study habits.
Only 27% of those of the students had ever used the Academic Success Center. Of the students who had cited poor study habits as a major obstacle only 30% had visited the Academic Success Center.

**Proposed remedy:** Student Affairs should encourage underrepresented students to use the Academic Success Center and should work with colleagues in Academic Affairs to develop additional support services such as peer mentoring, workshops, and learning to learn courses and/or to organize student focus groups to understand why students are not using available academic support resources.

- Lack of positive interactions with faculty appeared to be a significant risk factor for attrition of underrepresented students.
  - Underrepresented students generally, and particularly those who are the first generation to attend college, might be intimidated by faculty and lack the confidence needed to develop relationships.

**Proposed remedy:** Student Affairs might want to coach underrepresented students on how to approach faculty, ask for help, share ideas and identify a mentor.

- Paying for college presented an obstacle to continued enrollment of underrepresented students surveyed in the spring of 2008, and could become a greater barrier if macro-economic conditions worsened.

**Proposed remedy:** Student Affairs might be able to provide support services to help students better manage their situation and stay focused on studies. Student Affairs could help alleviate student stress about finances by pointing students to counseling resources, could help students identify and apply for job opportunities, and could consider offering coaching sessions to help students manage personal finances.

- Managing time between work, social life, and academics was considered an obstacle to persistence by approximately 75% of the students surveyed, and by 83% of the students who were not confident about graduating from OSU.

**Proposed remedy:** Student Affairs could provide time-management training and tools.

- As previously noted, the degree to which a student felt a strong sense of belonging on the OSU campus was the single strongest indicator of confidence regarding graduation. Having a sense of belonging was more important to underrepresented student success than participation in any campus organizations or programs, obstacles faced, or demographic factors.

**Proposed remedy:** Student Affairs should focus efforts on identifying and addressing sources of why students feel alienated.
Appendix D: Assessing Underserved Students’ Engagement in High-Impact Practices

The 2013 Monograph is a report by George D. Kuh and Ken O’Donnell. It was published as part of the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ (AAC&U) centennial initiative, Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP), and is one of a series of publications on educational practices that successfully prepare today’s college students to meet twenty-first-century challenges. LEAP is a national initiative launched in 2005 involving hundreds of private and public colleges, universities, and community colleges; several consortia; and eight formal partnerships with state systems of higher education.


The identified high-impact educational practices (HIPs) include first year seminars and experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, undergraduate research, collaborative assignments and projects, diversity and global learning, service learning and community-based learning, internships, and capstone courses and projects.

Since publication of the 2008 work by Kuh much research on the effectiveness of HIPs has been conducted, including on the educational potential of learning communities (Lenning and Ebbers 1999; Mathews 1993; Smith et al. 2004; Tinto 1995), as well as the results of inquiries into service learning (Eyler 2009; Eyler and Giles 1999; Jacoby and Associates 2009). Other studies have shown positive links between high-impact practices, persistence, and learning gains (Blaich 2009).

The central feature of HIPs is that they are engaged learning experiences that promote learning through engagement with communities through service and community-based learning; with faculty through writing intensive work, seminars or research; with business through internships; with different perspectives through diversity and global learning; with others students through collaborative assignments and projects; and with learning itself through capstone projects.