RETENTION & EQUITY GAP PROJECT 2019-20

Executive Summary

OVERVIEW

Project Goal & Background

To reduce equity gaps and improve retention rates by improving (1) use of data and (2) institutional capacities to support students at risk of non-retention.

The project outlined here reflects the next phase of coordinated efforts undertaken during 2018-19 by the Vice President for Diversity & Inclusion and the Associate Vice Provost for Student Success to improve overall retention, with a focus on improving success and reducing equity gaps for historically underrepresented students.

Project Leads

➢ Willie McKether, Vice President for Diversity & Inclusion, and Vice Provost

➢ Denise Bartell, Associate Vice Provost for Student Success

PROJECT COMPONENTS

1. **Create University and College Retention Committees**

2. **Expand Use of Predictive Analytics Data**

3. **Enhance Advising Effectiveness Around Retention Efforts**

4. **Support Faculty Engagement in Retention and Equity Gap Efforts**

5. **Use Early Start and First Year Programs to Support Reduction of Equity Gaps and Improved Retention**

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Project Goal

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Project Background

❖ To reach our Strategic Plan goal of 80% by 2022, we need to improve overall first year retention for the Fall 2019 Cohort to **77.9%**, [an estimated increase of 1.1% over the Fall 2018 cohort rate].
   ○ For comparison, the retention rate for the most recent cohort available, Fall 2017, was 75.9%. (The Fall 2018 cohort rate will be available in late September.)
❖ To reach our Strategic Plan goal of halving equity gaps by 2022, we need to improve overall first year retention for URM students for the fall 2019 cohort to **67.2%** [an estimated increase of 1.3% over the Fall 2018 cohort rate].
   ○ For comparison, the Fall 2017 cohort retention rate for URM students was 64.7%. (The Fall 2018 cohort rate will be available in late September.)
❖ This activities proposed here reflect the next phase of coordinated efforts undertaken during 2018-19 by the Vice President for Diversity & Inclusion and the Associate Vice Provost for Student Success to improve overall retention, with a focus on improving success and reducing equity gaps for historically underrepresented students.
❖ It builds on the Rocket Retention Pilot undertaken by the VP for D&I in 2018-19, in which three colleges created Retention Committees and used data on their students to develop plans for intervening with potentially at-risk URM students in order to improve retention.

- ❖ It also builds upon efforts to improve access to retention-related predictive data for colleges undertaken by the AVP for SS in 2018-19, which includes the Retention Push pilot data files disseminated to all undergraduate colleges in spring 2019.
- ❖ The activities proposed here will expand our institutional capacity to improve retention and reduce equity gaps, by creating college and campus-level infrastructure to support sustained, high impact retention efforts, and by improving our use of data to identify and effectively intervene with students at risk of non-retention.

Key Needs to Advance Campus Equity & Retention Efforts

1) First, we need to create institutional structures to develop and support institutional and college-level retention and equity efforts. We propose creating standing College Retention Committees (CRC) for each college, along with a University Retention Committee (URC) that includes representatives from each CRC, and that provides information on national best practices to the colleges as well as an accountability structure to maximize college-level results.
2) Second, we need to improve the access to, and use of, data to inform retention and equity efforts. This will be accomplished during this phase by developing a regular series of "data pushes", which will include student-level data on key predictors for non-retention. And through expanding our use of data dashboards. Eventually, we intend to enhance use these data through a student success platform.
3) Third, we need to better support, through structures, processes, professional development and resources, those who will are the front line of work to improve retention and reduce equity gaps (e.g., advisors, faculty, those engaged in FYE initiatives).
4) Finally, we need to escalate the pace of change in order to meet our strategic plan goals, especially in terms of our efforts to reduce equity gaps. The model described below will allow us to utilize rapid improvement cycles, a key component of improvement science, to quickly and effectively develop, test and revise initiatives (see, for more info: https://shift-results.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/whats-your-theory-bennett-and-provost.pdf).

PROJECT COMPONENTS

1. **Create University and College Retention Committees**
   a. University Retention Committee (URC)
      i. Led by VP for D&I and AVP for SS
      ii. Works with CRC's (see below) to develop (1) College-specific retention and equity goals and benchmarks and (2) Action plans that will achieve these goals
      iii. Shares predictive analytic data and provides guidance on use to support retention and equity goals (see Component #2 below)
      iv. Provides vehicle for colleges to share on current practices and learn from each other
      v. Shares national best practices
      vi. Consults with programs and colleges to support practices that best meet the needs of their unique populations
      vii. Monitors and provides feedback on college progress towards meeting retention and equity goals
   b. College Retention Committees (CRC)
      i. Each college will convene a standing College Retention Committee, comprised of appropriate Associate Deans, Student Service Directors, Diversity Officers, program chairs, a representative from Academic Advisors, a Success Coach who works with students in that college (if relevant), and other representatives as relevant
      ii. Works to develop retention and equity goals and benchmarks for its College, and an action plan to: (1) improve overall retention and graduation rates, and (2) reduce equity gaps in retention and graduation. The URC will provide more support as needed to colleges with higher equity gaps and lower retention rates
      iii. Leads implementation of action plan at college-level
      iv. Assesses progress towards benchmarks and goals

2. **Expand Use of Predictive Analytics Data**
   a. Disseminate data predictive of non-retention to Colleges and other key stakeholders (e.g., MESP, Summer Scholars) at three points during the academic semester:
      i. Data Push #1 - Pre-term (mid-August) – will include data on risk factors from previous terms (e.g., GPA slide, academic probation status), and BCSSE data on incoming first year students
      ii. Data Push #2 – Week 4-5 – will include data on Starfish early alerts for attendance and academic behavior flags, unpaid financial balance due
      iii. Data Push #3 – Week 7-8 – will include data from midterm grade reports, registration holds, financial holds.
   b. Expand mid-term grade reporting in Banner into all 1000-2000 level courses, with automated reporting out to Advisors, Success Coaches, and other relevant stakeholders.
   c. Expand and enhance data dashboards so that colleges and other stakeholders have more direct access to data that can inform their retention and equity efforts.
   d. Develop instructional resources to effective use data dashboards.

3. **Enhance Advising Effectiveness Around Retention Efforts**
    a. Provide professional development, structures, and resources for Advisors to effectively engage with underrepresented students and work to improve equity gaps and overall retention rates.
    b. Add advisor assignments in Banner

4. **Support Faculty Engagement in Retention and Equity Gap Efforts**
    a. Collaborate with faculty development efforts to enhance use of best practices in the classroom that support improvements in retention and equity.

5. **Use Early Start and First Year Programs to Support Reduction of Equity Gaps and Improved Retention**
    a. Coordinate the work of early start (e.g., Summer Scholars, M.O.R.E), summer bridge (e.g., MESP) and first year initiatives (e.g., Learning Communities, FYE Courses) to increase intentional focus on underrepresented populations.
    b. Create a standing FYE Coordinating Committee as a vehicle for communication and coordination of existing first year efforts to improve equity and retention.