

**Final Report Work Group 6
Student Retention and Graduation Subcommittee**

Recommendations

November 2007

Charge: Develop strategies to create equity among students in academic achievement and campus life participation.

Members: Margaret Cassidy, Meghan Charlier, Susan Harrison, Larry Solberg, Bob Sutton, Jodi Thesing-Ritter, Michael Weil.

While diversity can be defined in a variety of ways, we have chosen to focus our recommendations on populations historically underrepresented in higher education: students of color and students from low income backgrounds. Along with proposing new initiatives, we recommend that existing initiatives whose purpose is to enhance the retention and graduation rates of students of color and low income students be continued.

Outcomes	Actions	Responsible
<p><u>Immediate</u> (begin by fall 2008):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Barriers to retention and graduation for students of color and students from low-income backgrounds will be identified. 2. A plan will be developed for a pilot cohort/learning community that includes mentoring and academic supports, as necessary. A plan for assessing the success of the initiative also will be developed. 3. Connections to the university will be enhanced and financial burden will be decreased for students of color and low income students. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compile existing data disaggregated by race/ethnicity and income level and analyze the data to identify barriers to retention and graduation (e.g. NSSE, baccalaureate assessment data, non-returning student survey). Identify additional data that can be gathered and disaggregated by race/ethnicity and income level. 2. Study existing learning communities that are part of the Commanding English and Collegiate Bridge programs and engagement initiatives that are part of the TRIO program to determine applicable practices for the cohort/learning community model. Review related literature dealing with best practices. 3. Identify employment opportunities across campus along with the process for obtaining such work. Ensure opportunities are communicated effectively (e.g. Science Outreach Awards, dorm front desk jobs, campus office work). 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standing committee with representatives from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and University Faculty (to be established) or current Retention Committee (if appropriate). 2. Ad hoc task force coordinated by Academic Affairs. 3. Ad hoc task force coordinated by Student Affairs.

Outcomes	Actions	Responsible
<p><u>Short-term</u> (1-2 years):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A plan to address barriers to retention and graduation of students of color and students from low-income backgrounds will be developed. 2. An assessment plan will be developed, including a feedback loop, to determine whether the plan to address barriers to retention and graduation is achieving the desired outcomes. 3. A pilot cohort/learning community that includes mentoring and academic supports, as necessary, will be implemented. 4. Students of color and low income students will be better connected to the university community and financial support will be provided as needed. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examine existing data and gather additional data to inform the action plan. 2. Identify criteria for determining program effectiveness; establish ongoing assessment process. 3. Use information from existing cohort/learning communities and review of the literature to formulate pilot cohort/learning community. 4. Continue identification and communication of campus employment opportunities. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standing committee (previously established) or current Retention Committee (if appropriate). 2. Standing committee (previously established) or current Retention Committee (if appropriate). 3. Ad hoc task force coordinated by Academic Affairs (previously established). 4. Ad hoc task force coordinated by Student Affairs (previously established).

Outcomes	Actions	Responsible
<p>Long-term (over 2 years):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retention and graduation rates of students of color and low income students will be improved and ultimately, equivalent to those of majority students. 2. Participation in cohort/learning communities by students of color and students from low-income backgrounds will increase. 3. Financial barriers will be minimized for students in need. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuous assessment of the effectiveness of actions will be completed and changes to programs/initiatives will be made based on those data. 2. Refine cohort/learning community models based on pilot project; make opportunity available to all students of color and low income students; promote participation in cohort/learning communities. 3. Develop new external funding sources and multi-year scholarships to support students in need throughout the college career (see McNair Program and Blugold Fellowship Program for possible models). <p>Continue identification and communication of campus employment opportunities.</p> <p>Seek salary enhancements to campus employment pay rates through matching funds.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Standing Committee (previously established) or current Retention Committee (if appropriate) 2. Coordinated by Academic Affairs. 3. Coordinated by Student Affairs; recommend working with University Foundation.