

Strategic Planning Progress Report
Western Illinois University

Plan: Retention Initiative Plan

Summary: The following updates the progress Western Illinois University has made toward implementing the University Retention Initiative Plan throughout Fall, 2021. Complete, on-going/support needed, and upcoming focuses are highlighted.

Completed:

Academic Experience

- Implement GPA recovery success course for students who are on academic probation for the first time or returning from academic suspension. *A pilot course, U275 will be offered in Spring 2022 for students who are on academic probation.* Action Item 26
- Create plan for implementing structured career readiness into student experience. *Pilot partnership between Communication Studies and the Center for Career Preparation and Employer Engagement aligns career spotlight resources with student experience. First Year Advising Team will be trained to incorporate career readiness into first year advising appointments.* Action Item 35

Affordability

- Review staffing pattern and options in Office of Financial Aid to provide additional opportunities for meaningful support for student financial assistance, counseling, and insight. *Director of Financial Aid and Executive Director of Financial Affairs have developed plan focused on office and student needs.* Action Item 41
- Require use of Handshake platform for all student employment positions to increase access and transparency and streamline opportunities. *Approved by Senior Leadership December 2021.* Action Item 44.
- Develop and implement student employment fair occurring early each semester. *Implemented fall 2021.* Action Item 45.

Campus Experience

- Implement, analyze, and present data gained from the annual 5-week survey completed by first-time, first-years, sophomores, and transfer students and provide strategies for improvement. Complete personalized outreach to students requesting follow up within the survey. *5th week survey implemented Fall 2021. The Office of Retention Initiatives developed direct outreach based off of insight shared.* Action Item 50
- Implement strategic marketing plan for academic support resources on campus. *Implemented and continued implementation semesterly.* Action Item 56
- Continued development of and investment in early warning intervention processes and Connections Mapping program. *Additional resources allocated via Teleconnectors in Office of Retention Initiatives to reach out to students identified as at risk of not retaining. Information shared broader across campus with additional groups and services. Office of Retention Initiatives conducted 24 unique outreach campaigns reaching out via phone, text, and/or email producing over 8,200 contacts .* Action Item 60
- Explore use of technology to engage student questions including chatbot features and “questions” accounts. *Launch of EdSights “Rocky” Bot to provide both reactive and proactive interventions and resource sharing resulting in 10 proactive campaigns, student level insights the Office of Retention Initiatives followed up directly on, and resource review.* Action Item 58
- Develop first-generation family-focused resources, including website, guide, and overviews. wiu.edu/firstgeneration developed and launched by the Office of Retention Initiatives. Action Item 71

On-going / Needing Support

Academic Experience

- Support work of Advising Review Team created in March 2021 to review advising structures found throughout the University, including a focus on reporting lines, training offerings, position responsibilities, and connection to student retention. *Advising Supervisor Group now meets every other week to focus on advising needs and best practices, registration holds related to academic advising reimplemented for Fall*

2022 registration, reporting of non-registered students formalized across all colleges and areas. Additional focus required to align advising responsibilities to retention efforts. Action Item 6.

- Review opportunities to allocate resources to develop a comprehensive general education tutoring system in specific curricular areas, like STEM disciplines and writing. *A team of individuals have begun meeting to collect current offerings, review costs associated with offerings, and recommend options for moving forward. Support in data collection and realignment needed.* Action Item 17
- Develop departmental-level Western Online orientation to ensure all students within departments understand how Western Online is being utilized. *Action Item Team produced four focuses collecting additional student insight, contractual needs, education, and visiting academic colleges.* Action Item 34
- Develop college-level retention-focused teams to ensure review each semester of initiatives, student needs, and future plans to enhance student retention and success. *College of Education and Human Services has implemented college-level retention focused team and establishing retention practices aligning with Retention Plan and best practices.* Action Item 1

Affordability

- Develop and implement formal recruitment and awareness campaigns relating to scholarship opportunities. *Action Item Team has been meeting to review current marketing offerings and trends in student application data to assess what kinds of marketing and awareness campaign(s) would be beneficial for students moving forward.* Action Item 43.

Sense of Belonging and Community

- Create and implement supplemental orientation and start of year activities for incoming students targeted to specific identities to foster additional awareness and provide access to resource and support. *Planning process for Leatherneck First Four, a focus on the first four days, four weeks, and four months has begun.* Action Item 89
- Develop team to review programming and event responsibilities found throughout the University. Identify expectations for student engagement via events. *An initial meeting occurred to discuss programmatic needs.* Action Item 77

Upcoming Focuses:

Academic Experience

- Determine high-demand courses that prevent students from advancing toward degree completion and develop a plan to decrease non-success. Action Item 18
- Review options for advising on Quad Cities Campus to ensure student access to meet with an advisor regardless of major. Action Item 7

Affordability

- Explore use of electronic resources, open resources, inclusive access options for student books. Action Item 48
- Review options for textbook payment. Explore the ability to charge textbooks to student accounts or develop textbook charge as a part of the student fee structure. Action Item 47

Campus Experience

- Implement on-going and direct proactive education on code of student conduct policies including student conduct process and academic integrity policy. Action Item 52
- Develop university-wide student-centered service policy focused on student response and support. Explore avenues for adoption and implementation. Action Item 55
- Review student access to mental and physical health services and resources. Expand marketing through strategic health and wellness campaigns. Action Item 61

Sense of Belonging and Community

- Create list of all common spaces on campus open for student use and identify type/function (private, semi-private, meeting, etc.), hours, and resources (computers, outlets, etc.). Develop appropriate marketing resources for students to find and reserve, if needed. Action Item 76
- Review space allocated to students on Quad Cities Campus and market appropriately. Action Item 73
- Explore revising required syllabus language with respect to support services and resources to include additional offerings and policies. Action Item 85