

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 Spring, 2022. Complete, on-going/support needed, and upcoming focuses are highlighted.

Completed:

Academic Experience

- Create a plan for implementing structured career readiness into student experience. *Developed Career Readiness worksheets for using career appointments and to share with Academic Advisors. Developed Career Readiness overview for distribution to departments/faculty with potential opportunity for workshops for those interested in learning more.* Action Item 35

Affordability

- 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. *Beginning Fall 2022 all students will be allowed to charge textbooks/supplies through the University Bookstore beginning early August/January through the 8th day of the semester.* Action Item 48
- Review staffing patterns and options in the Office of Financial Aid to provide additional opportunities for meaningful support for student financial assistance, counseling, and insight. *Partnership with Office of Retention Initiatives and Billing & Receivables for cross-training to ensure student contacts are productive, limiting the shuffle between offices. Assigned a point of contact within financial aid to each of the student focused departments (i.e. housing, Billing, Admissions, Retention, Veterans Resource Center, etc.). Continue to offer extended/mobile office hours during the semester to allow additional counseling with students where they are and on their time.* Action Item 41

Campus Experience

- Update and use technology as a hub of information. *Launch of EdSights "Rocky" Bot to provide direct answers to student questions 24/7. Implementation of website question response tools.* Action Item 62
- Continued investment in and development of Leatherneck Care Referral program, including strategic marketing and communication to expand campus knowledge of the program. *Leatherneck Care Referral form updated for easier submissions with additional planning between Student Development and Success Center and the Office of Retention Initiatives.* Action Item 57

Sense of Belonging and Community

- Invest in peer mentorship opportunities like Leatherneck Success Leader position working with incoming students in small groups from pre-orientation through the entire first-year experience. *Leatherneck Success Leader position currently funded via Governors Emergency Educational Relief (GEER) fund. Positions will be funded for FY23 the same way. Future funding past FY23 needed.* Action Item 82
- Establish a working group of campus and community partners to explore planning and scheduling of events. Team should meet monthly. Attention should be given to development of events that are appealing and welcoming to our student population. *Macomb Chamber, Park District, and Downtown Development are invited to attend bi-weekly programming meetings with staff with programmatic oversight on campus.* Action Item 90

On-going / Needing Support

Academic Experience

- 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 continue to meet and have been approved to have all tutoring offerings track student use on individual level.* Action Item 17

- Explore avenues to ensure early feedback is provided to students in courses with high non-success rates including early warning grades, attendance, and early assignments. *The Action Item Team began meeting in Spring 2022 to review current options for early feedback and develop working recommendations for interested faculty.* Action Item 29

Affordability

- Develop and implement formal recruitment and awareness campaigns relating to scholarship opportunities. *The 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.

Campus Experience

- Implement on-going and direct proactive education on code of student conduct policies including student conduct process and academic integrity policy. *Additional attendance at resource fairs to enhance student understanding Spring 2022. Focusing on print materials for upcoming Fall 2022.* Action Item 52
- Review student access to mental and physical health services and resources. Expand marketing through strategic health and wellness campaigns. *The Action Item Team has been actively developing a Foundations Course, reviewing current marketing, and will assist with additional resources added to residence hall rooms.* Action Item 61
- Move all tutors through a common training and reflective experience that emphasizes cultural competence and professionalism. *The Action Item team has sought and received approval from the Interim Provost and the Vice President of Enrollment Management to implement common training beginning fall 2022.* Action Item 67
- Conduct meaningful review of Living Learning Community (LLC) options, set-ups, and engagement, including development of a structure to support faculty investment in LLC. *Established Education LLC for fall 2022. UHDS provides meal cards to departments to encourage faculty interaction with LLCs. Future focus on LLC creation and support procedure review.* Action Item 68

Sense of Belonging and Community

- Create a 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. *RPTA course completed inventory of space. Develop marketing summer 2022 and implement fall 2022.* Action Item 76
- Develop structured plan/approach for meaningful support for leadership group/organizational advisors to encourage faculty and staff to serve as advisors to student organizations. *The Action Item Team has met to focus on topic and structured support at University level.* Action Item 84
- 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 resources 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

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 use and functionality of model degree plans. Advertise appropriately to enhance use. Action Item 23
- Significantly increase the number of degree programs with required experiential learning components (internships, micro/project-based internships, research, etc.) built into curriculum for some level of credit. Action Item 37

Affordability

- Create and enhance opportunities for alumni to employ current students as interns with possible employment upon graduation. Action Item 46

Campus Experience

- Develop meaningful proactive approaches to educating students on processes relating to course withdrawal, grade appeals, and billing. Review administrative policies and create easy to access and understand steps/guides from a student perspective. Action Item 51
- Develop university-wide student-centered service policy focused on student response and support. Explore avenues for adoption and implementation. Action Item 55

Sense of Belonging and Community

- Develop and implement a co-curricular transcript process to track and recognize student achievement, internships, and other engagement outside of the classroom utilizing functionality of Campus Labs / Purple Post. Action Item 79
- Explore revising required syllabus language with respect to support services and resources to include additional offerings and policies. Action Item 85

Previously 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 a 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 patterns and options in the Office of Financial Aid to provide additional opportunities for meaningful support for student financial assistance, counseling, and insight. *The Director of Financial Aid and the Executive Director of Financial Affairs have developed a 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