Retention Interventions Fall 2016
North Dakota State University

Strategic Plan

"Improve Retention and Graduation Rates for Undergraduates" is a key component in NDSU's Strategic Plan. The strategic plan lists ten strategies accompanied by tasks and metrics that support this strategic plan objective.

Listening to student input

NDSU gathers information from current and former students for the purposes of program and process improvement.

- SERU (Student Experience in the Research University). This is an annual consensus survey of all undergraduates and graduate students and includes questions on study habits, integration on campus, climate, and more. By gathering data on the student experience, we have qualitative and quantitative information on how to change what we do and to improve our students' experience.
- STEPS to Success – This is a social norming campaign based on institutional survey data, including SERU. Social norming is a research-based intervention that seeks to reinforce behaviors that lead to persistence and graduation. Early results at NDSU show an impact not just on awareness, but on behavior as well.
- Mattering to NDSU – students who felt like they mattered to NDSU were more likely to be retained fall-to-fall than those who did not, even after controlling for high school GPA.
- Survey of Non-Returning NDSU Undergraduates – Why do some undergraduate students leave NDSU before they graduate? How do non-returning undergraduates view NDSU? To answer these questions, the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis (OIRA) designed a telephone interview survey asking non-returning undergraduates why they left NDSU.

Empowering students to achieve academic success

NDSU has a variety of programs that support the academic success of students and empower them to develop their academic skills and well-being. We do not approach student success as a one-size-fits-all endeavor, but strive to provide a diversity of programs to meet the diversity of student needs.

- One Stop – This is a service center that provides information to students about student accounts, financial aid, scholarships, tuition, bill payments, registration and student records maintenance, all in one convenient, always open, online location and one on-campus location at the Memorial Union. Full-time professional staff are available to assist students in person, by phone, or by email. This office also runs proactive registration campaigns each semester to encourage students to register for the next semester and assists with questions about financial or other holds or barriers to registration.
- Student Success Programs - supports students and the University by providing programs and services aimed at broadening access and fostering holistic student success. This encompasses

several programs including Academic Collegiate Enhancement (ACE) tutoring services, TRIO Student Support Services, TRIO McNair Scholars Program, and college transition programs.

- International Student Orientation – College transition program for new international students to support the transition to college and to the United states, offered by the office of International Student and Study Abroad Services.
- Exploratory Area Majors - Also known as meta-majors, this is a new advisement approach to allow undeclared students and students unsure about their major selection to explore majors that align with their interests. Based on research and the experiences at other public institutions, this approach to 'undeclared' students has been shown to enhance retention and time to completion through purposeful advisement that will help students make the right major choice the first time.
- Learning Assistants –The College of Science and Mathematics Learning Assistants program partners talented undergraduates (learning assistants or LAs) with faculty teaching large-enrollment science and math courses to create learner-centered classrooms that are conceptually driven, cognitively challenging, and authentic to the discipline. LAs primary responsibilities include working with small teams of students, either within a large-lecture class meeting, in recitation, or in office hours. This pilot program will be expanded to other colleges.
- Living-Learning Program – A focus of Residence Life, this program works to boost student retention. Programs include learning community partnerships with five colleges, a faculty in residence education program, leadership opportunities, and a residential curriculum provided by professional and student staff members.
- Bison Bridge Program – A week long, pre-enrollment experience that assists multicultural, first-generation, first-year students bridge from high school to college, and assists in gettitheir NDSU career off to a positive start.
- Diversity Initiatives – Provide targeted programs and services to underserved populations, such as Roommate Ally matching, diversity courses, and special events.
- Cultural Diversity Scholars Academic Skills Course – Required course for cultural diversity tuition recipients that supports academic skills and success.
- Career Center Outreach – to underrepresented students to support career needs and planning.
- Reducing impact of Mental Health on Student Success – The Counseling Center seeks to reduce psychological symptoms and their impact on academic success through one-on-one and group counseling.
- Provide Access to the Learning Environment – through support for students with disabilities and appropriate accommodations.
- Gather and use data to improve programs and services – Assessment resources for the Division of Student Affairs.

Ensuring all students receive effective advising services

- Student Success Collaborative - North Dakota State University is committed to giving every student the opportunity to experience academic success and graduate on time. NDSU is partnering with the Education Advisory Board to launch Student Success Collaborative Campus, an advising platform that unites technology, predictive analytics and advising excellence to boost student retention and success. The platform also includes an early alert component to proactively intervene with students who are at-risk for falling behind. Advisors will be able to identify students for proactive and targeted outreach campaigns, share notes about student interactions

across the platform to provide a seamless advising experience as students change majors or advisors, and increase the ease of scheduling advising appointments

- Advising Resource Center – The center will be expanded and its mission enhanced through a restructure that implements August 1, 2016. The new mission of the ARC is to foster "student success by guiding academic exploration, providing supplemental advising services, and supporting university-wide advising". The staff of professional advisors will provide academic advising to exploratory major students, students changing majors, conditionally-admitted students and others.
- Outstanding Academic Advising Award - The Provost's Office has established two awards to highlight the importance of academic advising at NDSU by recognizing and rewarding outstanding advising of individual undergraduates by faculty and by professional advisors who are committed to assisting students to reach their full potential.

Improving Pedagogical Practices

- Office of Teaching and Learning - The Office of Teaching and Learning, formed in 2014, provides pedagogical assistance to individual faculty, training for graduate students, and best practice workshops on 21st century pedagogies. The mission of the office is to prepare instructors to use instructional methods that are based on best-practice research, thus contributing to student success in the classroom.
- Gateways-ND - NDSU has received funding from the National Science Foundation to change how science, technology, engineering and mathematics courses are taught at the university. The ultimate goal is to help more students succeed in challenging courses in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- Gateways to Completion - As a member of this program led by the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, NDSU has committed to examining and improving success rates in several foundational, high-failure rate undergraduate courses through a structured, evidence-based self-study process. The successful techniques developed in these courses will be extended to other courses.
- Math Emporium Learning Center – Based on successful models at other institutions, the Math Emporium is designed to accommodate all learning styles and give students personalized practice and feedback in College Algebra, Trigonometry, and Pre-Calculus courses.
- Strategic Enrollment Management - a "comprehensive process designed to help an institution achieve and maintain the optimum recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of students, where 'optimum' is defined within the academic context of the institution." (Dolence, 1993). Strategic enrollment management is an inclusive process which attempts to build upon the institution's strategic plan in terms of defining specific enrollment goals and priorities. Part of the charge of this effort is to conduct an environmental scan of enrollment and retention context and identify gaps that need to be addressed. Initial gaps have been identified as bottleneck courses, and enrollment management funds are being allocated to colleges to expand capacity of identified courses.

Looking to the Future

There are several initiatives that are in various stages of implementation.

- PAR – Predictive Analytics Research provides tools and data analysis to assess retention risk for groups of students. NDSU is schedule to have PAR available by September 2016. PAR will be incorporated with Student Success Campus to identify and intervene with students at risk.
- College Scheduler – This add-on to PeopleSoft provides a more student-friendly registration interface. NDSU is ready to implement once the add-on becomes available, with a goal of having the system available by fall registration.
- College Completion Grant – A group of faculty is planning to submit a proposal prior to fall 2016. If funding is secured, early planning would commence this fall. The grant provides funding for colleges to identify struggling students who are near completion — with an emphasis on low-income students and students of color — and develop the interventions necessary to keep them in college and on track to graduation. Part of the NDSU proposal is to establish a position for a graduation concierge.
- Ad Astra Optimizer – this would be a very helpful tool for the strategic enrollment management initiatives. We are ready to benefit from the tool as soon as access can be granted. We would like to be able to use Ad Astra Platinum Analytics to ensure the most efficient course scheduling possible to ensure students are able to register for all required courses in the best timeframe. It would be an ideal complement to College Scheduler and other strategic enrollment management initiatives.
- Rising Scholars – a two day, pre-enrollment program for new students at high risk of not graduating.
- Mindset Intervention – a one hour intervention based on an emerging national best practice that seeks to adjust each new student's mindset to one that increases willingness to put forth more effort and try new learning strategies.
- Welcome Week – a comprehensive review of Welcome Week outcomes and a gap analysis were conducted in an effort to provide more intentional and comprehensive support to students at the beginning of their NDSU career and improve long-term retention and graduation. Some changes will be made this fall, with full implementation scheduled for fall 2017.
- Student engagement and involvement software and mobile app – comprehensive engagement platform that supports students' involvement in programs, organizations, and activities, allows for searchable events and organizations and filtering for individual interests, and improves communication with students through web-based software and mobile app. Transition is planned for 2016-2017 with full implementation by fall of 2017.