

Academic Department Student Success Plan Update 2015-2018

Department: Economics

Department Chair: Conant

Department Mission: The goal of the Department of Economics is excellence in its courses, its programs, its research, and its professional service. To that end it is committed to providing outstanding service to its students, the University, the state, and the profession through superior teaching, scholarship, advising, mentoring, student recruitment, grant seeking, consulting, and other professional activities.

Department Freshmen (1st year) Retention¹ Goal(s):

The low numbers of students who declare Economics as a major in the first year make it impossible to pick a meaningful target. Our recent history is that we are successful (in terms of rates) and we will attempt to continue this success. We cannot increase retention rates from 85% unless we go to 100% because we are typically retaining 6 of 7 .

Moreover, the Economics Department is unique in that it has consistently high enrollments in courses (nearly 1000 in Fall 15) at all levels with relatively few majors (35). This renders an exercise in efforts to increase retention and graduation of majors far less important to the University strategic goal of Student Success than increasing our efforts to better serve students who are not our majors.

Action Steps (with dates & person(s) responsible):

Click here to enter text.

| <i>Retention Benchmarks²</i> | Fall 2012 cohort: | Fall 2013 cohort: | Fall 2014 cohort: |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| (by latest department) | 40.00% | 75.00% | 88.89% |
| | Fall 2015 target: | Fall 2016 target: | Fall 2017 target: |
| | 85 | 85 | 85 |

Other Freshmen Retention related benchmarks of focal interest to department³

¹ Departments w/o undergraduates can adapt the retention and persistence to completion sections to serve their graduate student success purposes or alternatively, integrate into the Other Goal(s), Action Steps, and Benchmarks of focal interest to department section at the end of the template.

² Department level current and historical retention and completion benchmark data to be integrated into the plan can be found through Blue Reports: <http://irt2.indstate.edu/cms/ir/blue-reports/>.

³ A retention and completion rate is an essential benchmark, but it is not necessarily the only benchmark of interest to a department. Others of interest to the department can be integrated as well.

The department's impact of first year retention is almost entirely related to our service courses (Econ 100, 101, 103, 200 and 201) and only tangentially related to our own majors. That is where our student success plans are and should be focused. Our strategies of increasing supplemental instruction in these courses, increasing the use of Blackboard in these courses, and recommending more selective enrollment in these courses have largely been implemented almost entirely. We have increased our SI usage. Blackboard usage is now 100%. Econ 101 has been removed from the regular offerings (owing to a higher DFWI rate than the alternative Fin 108), and working with the University College, we have limited enrollment in Econ 100 so that it doesn't populate with late registrants nearly as much as in the past. We will be using a similar recruiting technique to reduce or eliminate the gap in economics tutors in the Center for Student Success.

Any freed resources from reductions to Econ 100 will be re-deployed to UDIE courses with 3-hour or less in prerequisites. It is hoped and expected that this will remove one of the graduation bottlenecks of seniors.

Department Persistence to Completion Goal(s):

The data on department "persistence to completion" is both meaningless (given that we typically see most of our graduates enter, not as Freshmen, but after having had Econ 200 and/or 201) and, as measured, higher than rates for the remainder of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Action Steps (with dates & person(s) responsible):

Click here to enter text.

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| 4 year Graduation | Fall 2009 cohort: | Fall 2010 cohort: | Fall 2011 cohort: |
| (by latest department) | 0.00% | 20.00% | 25.00% |
| | | 5 person cohort | 8 person cohort |
| | Fall 2012 target: | Fall 2013 target: | Fall 2014N target: |
| | 28% | 29% | 30% |

Other Persistence to Completion related benchmarks of focal interest to department

Click here to enter text.

Other Goal(s), Action Steps, and Benchmarks of focal interest to department⁴:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Department Plan Elements

- 1) Reduce DWFY rates in 100/200 level courses
 - a. Strategies
 - i. Full Implementation of SIs
 1. Goal: Increase percentage of 100 & 200 level courses that have SIs.
 2. Nominations
 - a. Individual Faculty will endeavor to nominate all appropriate students to serve in the SI role.
 - b. Chairperson will gather the data on each 100/200 level course and make a list of those students receiving As and A-s in the relevant courses for faculty to utilize should their own nominees be unavailable.
 3. Follow-up
 - a. Chairperson will contact B. Byers to ensure that all next-semester sections have nominees who can work with willing instructors and will do so prior to the end of the semester.
 - b. Chairperson will contact B. Byers to ensure that all sections (with willing instructors) have SIs available to them by the end of the first week of classes
 4. All SIs rooms/times will be prominently displayed on Departmental Web page
 5. Training will be made available to SIs by department faculty
 - a. Training will be conducted by the faculty with whom the SIs will work when those faculty wish to conduct their own training and by Dr. Guell otherwise.
 6. Attendance data on SI sessions (collected by the SIs and submitted to the SSC) will be requested and monitored by the department chairperson.
 - 7.
 - ii. Blackboard Gradebook Usage
 1. All Foundational Studies 100 level sections (100, 101, and 103) will
 - a. use the Blackboard Gradebook for record keeping and grade display
 - b. post mid-term letter grades in Blackboard for all students (rather than just the “report all grades” students) at the same time university-level midterm grades are due.

⁴ Departments may have student success related goals, action steps, and benchmarks that do not fit neatly into the other categories. If so, feel free to place them here.

2. Faculty teaching 200&201 will be encouraged to use. Those faculty agreeing to use Blackboard's gradebook will be trained by Dr. Guell
 - 3.
 - iii. Analysis will be performed on 100 & 200 level economics courses to provide guidance to the University College Dean and advisors about appropriate placement into economics courses.
 - iv. Increase the Pool of Tutors for 100/200 level Economics Courses
 1. During the last week of each term, each faculty will reach out to those students performing very well in their courses to encourage them to apply for a tutoring position in the Center for Student Success.
 2. The Chairperson will provide to the department the pool of potential SI nominees described above and will devote a portion of the first meeting of each year to construct a list of department-endorsed tutors. The Chairperson will forward that list to the Center for Student Success.
- 2) Establish relevant measures of Retention and Graduation
- a. Have the Department and University College advisor report on the intention of students entering the major.
 - i. For each student academic advisors will maintain notes that indicate whether the intention is to
 1. Complete an undergraduate degree in economics only
 2. Complete an undergraduate degree in another major
 3. Complete a graduate degree in economics
 4. Transfer to another institution
 - ii. For students intending to complete an ISU degree in business, the economics advisor will advise the student according to the intention to remain on campus in their intended major.
 - b. Measurement of Relevant Retention Rate
 - i. For retention of majors to the department, the Freshman/Sophomore retention rate will be those that return divided by those that intended to return.
 - ii. For retention of majors to the university, the Freshman/Sophomore retention rate will be those that returned to the university divided by those that intended to return to the university.
 - c. Understand reasons behind exit from major
 - i. The department chairperson will develop and maintain a survey instrument that will enable the department to understand the reason behind a departure from the major.
 - ii.
- 3) Increase Seats for UDIEs

- a. Using resources made available from a reduction of Econ 100 seats and from an elimination of Econ 101 (QL) from the Fall and Spring schedules, more seats will be made available in UDIE courses for which the pre-requisite is 3 hours of economics or less. (Econ 302, 331, 353, Crim/Econ 355)
- 4) 90 Hour Degree Audit
- a. Departmental advisors will search data for advisees who have passed the 90 earned hours mark each semester and conduct a graduation plan audit to assure students are aware of their remaining graduation requirements.
- 5) Experiential Learning
- a. Continue to offer student research opportunities with faculty and to provide experiential learning activities in appropriate upper level courses to make the program more “career-ready”.