

Project: SEM Initiative 1: *To enhance what is done to better educate and prepare new students and their families prior to the student enrolling in the fall (pre-college).*

Strategy 1: Develop college preparation web content for the ISU website and to enhance early outreach.

Start Date: April 15, 2013 **Client:** Pre-college students and their families

Program Manager: Jill Blunk & Rich Toomey

Thesis Statement: The purpose of this SEM initiative is to increase the level of support and coaching provided by ISU to students and families prior to the beginning of the first semester at ISU. The goal is to better prepare students (and families) for their ISU college experience from day one such that they persist and graduate on time. Issues that hinder persistence and graduation fall into three basic categories:

1. **Financial Preparation**
2. **Academics**
3. **Social/Campus Life**

With a particular emphasis on first generation college students, this strategy will break down the three categories from a coaching perspective, using terminology that is easy to follow and consumable in small bites whereby eliminating the intimidation factor that often stops first generation students from fully understanding University expectations and meeting requirements.

Introduction/Background – What?: The foundation for this initiative was the recognition that there are pre-college factors that play a role in the degree to which students who matriculate at ISU are ultimately successful. Much of the retention literature points to these factors as being important ones for institutions to recognize and consider, some that can be overcome and others that are difficult or impossible to address in the limited time frame of a first or second semester when many postsecondary education's end with drop out or dismissal. If intervention and education about “college” can occur earlier in high school, perspective students and their families may ultimately be better prepared when they do matriculate in college.

Proposal/Purpose/Justification – Why?:

The goal of this project is to increase retention and graduation rates through earlier intervention, namely:

1. increasing the financial literacy of incoming freshmen such that they have a plan in place to pay for their education before arriving on the first day;
2. to prepare more students for the academic rigor of college coursework by better promoting the benefits of College Challenge dual credit opportunities within partner high schools through targeted messaging to first generation families, 21st Century Scholars, and minority populations;
3. to help future resident students understand and prepare for the realities of college life, what it is like to live on campus, have a roommate, manage their own schedule, take care of themselves on a day to day basis, take responsibility for their own success or failure, etc.
4. to help future commuter students understand and prepare for the realities and challenge associated with being a college student and NOT living on campus. Teaching them how to connect with other students, what supports are in place, how to balance a job and a college

education, managing their own schedule, assuming responsibility for their own success or failure even though they may still live with parents.

This project is important because working with students prior to their arrival on campus will help to head off potential problems before they have an opportunity to adversely affect the student and his or her experience at ISU. First generation college students are among those most likely to face challenges that they didn't anticipate prior to enrolling, and they often do not have experienced family members or mentors to help them navigate those challenges. Implementing this strategy will allow ISU to become the mentor/coach to help students and their parents understand what lies ahead, how to deal with various opportunities and challenges, and avoid pitfalls that we know cause students to fail, withdraw, or stop out.

To that end, components of Strategy 1 are as follows:

- **Create a plan for content for an early outreach/pre-college micro-site.** The site will be available to all students and families, but targeted specifically to the needs of first generation students and families. Site content will address the following common questions (and more):
 - What career options may be available to me if I go to ISU, and what majors are associated with those career options? (what majors are available, expected earnings for different degree fields, what can I do with my degree, etc.)
 - What is “foundational studies”- what does it mean and what is the value? Why am I required to take those courses if they are not in my major? (give examples of how FS learning applies to everyday life)
 - What is expected of a college student in the classroom? (Discuss students' responsibility for knowing and following the syllabus and course calendar, as well as the types of support that can be expected from faculty)
 - What is it like to live on campus? What should I consider if I have not decided whether I want to live on campus or commute?
 - How much does ISU cost and how does that compare to other colleges in Indiana?
 - FOR PARENTS: How do I determine how much to save for my child's education, and what are the best ways to do so?
 - What financial assistance is available for students of low-income families?
 - How do students qualify for scholarships, grants, and student loans, and what do these options mean for me/my student? (explain the difference between gift aid and loans, interest, repayment options, etc.)
 - What if I have trouble academically? Who can I go to for help?
 - What if I have trouble socially? What if I am unhappy with my roommate, I don't feel like I fit in here, etc?
 - What other types of support are available to students on campus and to commuters?
 - Besides working hard in class to make good grades, what can I do to ensure that I make the most of my college experience and get a job after graduation? (e.g. working with the career center, internships, externships, involvement in résumé building experiences available at ISU, volunteer experience, etc.)
 - What if I need to work while I go to school? Is it possible to work and still complete a degree in 4 years? Can I get a job on campus?

- **Create links to college preparation websites (e.g. College Board, ACT Student, Know How 2 Go) that would expand on the information provided in the pre-college micro-site.** There are many outside sources of assistance for students and families that can provide supplemental information that may be beneficial to pre-college micro-site users. A comprehensive list with links will be utilized throughout the micro-site to assist students and parents in accessing any additional information and support they may need.
- **Enhance and expand early outreach efforts and communication activities with schools and community organizations in the Indianapolis and Gary areas** (e.g. Boys and Girls Clubs, 21st Century Scholar groups, minority churches, community centers, etc). The communities of interest represent a critical mass of at risk students who matriculate to ISU, most of whom are first generation and African American. A specific focus on communicating earlier in these geographic areas will positively impact the preparedness of these new students. Promotion of the pre-college micro-site as a tool for use BEFORE the student enrolls, as well as general promotion of College Challenge program opportunities and educating on what is needed to be ready for college will increase the number of users and result in more prepared incoming freshmen. This will mean getting out in front of these community groups and organizations to promote the value of higher education and how ISU can help students and families prepare for a future that includes higher education. A distance-based graduate student or recent graduate in the Indianapolis and Gary areas respectively will be contracted to visit targeted sites for early outreach promotion and programming. These persons will report through the Admissions Office and work collaboratively with ISU admissions personnel in those regions.
- **Enhance ISU faculty outreach and interaction with students in College Challenge courses.** Current College Challenge classrooms provide a great opportunity for ISU faculty to connect with high school students. Not all students in these classes are taking advantage of the ISU dual credit opportunity, but all could benefit from interaction with faculty. Faculty from the related discipline will work with College Challenge high school teachers to arrange a visit to provide a lecture on a jointly determined topic, present information about the major and the academic department, and benefits of attending ISU. This is a chance for faculty to showcase their program, connect with students, and influence their enrollment decision. Faculty will earn a small stipend plus mileage for each guest lecture they complete at a College Challenge partner school.

Work Plan – Action Steps – Process – How?:

As a partnered component of Goal 1, Initiative 6, the following action elements are planned:

Spring/Summer 2013

1. Develop the micro-site - Collaborate with campus offices that have content/content expertise to populate the site. Work with Communications and Marketing web staff to build the site. Embed the external links.
2. Establish relationships with community groups for targeted outreach - Connect with community groups in greater Indianapolis and Gary where we can more effectively reach underserved populations not only for the purpose of expanding College Challenge enrollment but also as a means of educating about college going and preparation. Collaborate with the African American Cultural Center.

3. Communicate opportunity to ISU College Challenge departmental liaisons, program Chairs, and Deans for guest lecturers to visit College Challenge classrooms, for a small stipend plus mileage.
4. Share plan with College Challenge teachers at summer professional development program for ISU faculty guest lecturers to visit classrooms in academic year 2013-14.

Fall 2013

1. Launch micro-site - Launch the micro-site and promote it through College Challenge outreach efforts (existing and new) as well as through the in-field admissions counselors and Alumni Affairs activities.
2. Deploy a distance-based graduate student or recent graduate in the Indianapolis and Gary areas respectively to work in-field visiting community groups with early outreach programming and college promotion materials. Higher education African American doctoral students from those areas will be the primary source for these Outreach Corps persons. Six outreach programs per semester are planned focusing particularly on high school students and their families.
3. ISU faculty to complete 8 guest lecturer visits to College Challenge classrooms.

Spring 2014

1. Update/expand micro-site content - Update micro-site content with latest campus and in-field content that is salient to college preparation.
2. Deploy a distance-based graduate student or recent graduate in the Indianapolis and Gary areas respectively to work in-field visiting community groups with early outreach programming and college promotion materials. Six outreach programs planned focusing particularly on high school students and their families.
3. Assess early outreach efforts - Assess efforts and make refinements/changes to expand effectiveness.
4. ISU faculty to complete 8 guest lecturer visits to College Challenge classrooms.

Reporting and Deliverable Schedule – When?:

The following is the planned deliverable schedule for those efforts through June 2014:

Date	Action	Responsible Area
Spring-Summer 2013	Develop Micro-site	Extended Learning (Jill Blunk) & Web Services (Santhana Naidu)
Spring-Summer 2013	Establish relationships with community groups for targeted outreach	Admissions (Rich Toomey) & Graduate Student Outreach Corps
Fall 2013	Launch Micro-site	Extended Learning (Jill

		Blunk) & Web Services (Santhana Naidu)
Fall 2013	Deploy a distance-based grad student or recent graduate in Indianapolis and Gary	Admissions (Rich Toomey) & Graduate Student Outreach Corps
Fall 2013	Faculty guest lectures in CC classrooms	Extended Learning (Jill Blunk)
Spring 2014	Update/expand micro-site content	Extended Learning (Jill Blunk) & Web Services (Santhana Naidu)
Spring 2014	Assess early outreach efforts	Admissions (Rich Toomey)
Spring 2014	Faculty guest lectures in CC classrooms	Extended Learning (Jill Blunk)

Budget – How Much?:

The itemized and total cost for the budget period through June 30, 2014 is as follows:

Web-build work (Summer 2013) - \$5,000

Travel to meet with community groups in Indianapolis and Gary (Summer 2013) - \$500

Distance-based graduate student or recent grad - Indy (\$5,000; \$2,500/semester)

Distance-based graduate student or recent grad - Gary (\$5,000; \$2,500/semester)

Print materials for in-field visits - \$1,000

Guest Lecture stipend for faculty visits to College Challenge classrooms- (\$2,500; \$1,250/semester; rate= \$125+mileage per visit; anticipating 8 visits per semester)

Total: \$19,000

The itemized budget can be found in the attached budget sheet.

Stakeholders and Management Plan – Who?:

The persons with overall responsibility for the project are Jill Blunk and Rich Toomey.

Outcome Assessment & Future Testing – How Well?:

The benchmark assessments associated with this project can be found on the attached benchmark sheet.

The Pathway to Success

Goal #1 – Initiative #12A- Increase Early Outreach to Students in the Region

Client: Students from elementary school to sophomore year, parents, and high school partners

Initiative Chair(s): Jill Blunk

Project Statement: Implement a comprehensive plan for events and print materials that target early outreach to students in the region.

Introduction/Background (What?):

In fall 2007, 72.09% of the students who enrolled as freshmen at Indiana State University were between the ages of 17 and 19. It is safe to assume that a majority of these students enrolled at ISU almost immediately after completing their high school education and that many of them, especially those who are the first in their family to attend college, relied on school resources – special programs, teachers, counselors, administrators, etc. – for information about college. Influencing students early and often in their educational experiences would help to spark their interest in ISU as their college of choice.

While ISU already regularly communicates with area high school students it does not make a coordinated effort to reach younger students. Starting a relationship with students as early as elementary school would strengthen our ties to these students and their families and encourage them to consider ISU as a strong choice in their college planning.

In particular, high need families require a heightened level of support and assistance to see a future that includes a college education. From a financial aid perspective, high-need students are defined as students with limited access to funding sources, or a low Expected Family Contribution as indicated on the FAFSA. Such students make up 52% of the ISU undergraduate population and are the students most at risk of stop out or withdrawal before achieving the goal of a college degree. Additional supports are needed to help these students prepare BEFORE they arrive on campus in August. An earlier start in providing the information and guidance these families need, coupled with a progressive, coaching approach to information sharing, will increase their knowledge, comfort, and overall preparedness for college.

Connection to Strategic Priorities

This initiative relates most directly to:

Increase Enrollment and Student Success

Enhance Community Engagement

Expand and Diversify Revenues

Basic Elements and Brief Description (Proposal, Purpose, Justification-Why?)

The goal of an early outreach initiative is twofold:

-to connect early with students and their parents, to develop a college-going culture, particularly for students who might not otherwise see college as an option (first generation and/or low income students/families)

-to increase the rate of students in the region who matriculate to ISU and graduate within 4 to 6 years

Students (and their parents) need to start thinking about college as a possibility during childhood. The greatest obstacles to this are typically a belief that they cannot afford college and/or basic lack of information and exposure to college in general. By building on current early outreach efforts to create a targeted plan to address financial literacy and basic understanding of higher education opportunities, ISU will:

1. connect early and often with students and parents
2. prepare students for a future that includes a college education
3. develop a relationship with students and families such that Indiana State is at the top of the list as they near graduation and consider higher education options

Working with families that have little to no college experience often requires a concerted effort to remove any stigmas or perceived barriers before the student reaches high school, thus eliminating the intimidation factor that many associate with higher education. Early outreach efforts will bring down these barriers, creating a culture of support and a wealth of resources and information allowing student and parents to approach college enrollment prepared and confident. We have developed a plan that begins with the first connection in elementary school, and includes targeted programs and informational materials that span through middle school and the early high school years (freshman and sophomore years). As the needs of students and parents change over time, so do the methods and content of the early outreach initiative components.

This work plan includes components that focus on outreach targeted at elementary (grades K-5), middle school (grades 6-8) and early high school (grades 9-10). Basic elements of the plan are classified as follows:

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

Goal: A) Begin to connect with the students directly, making them aware of college as an means to attain a secure future, and specifically Indiana State University. Plant the seed with young children that college is an option for them; that it is fun; and that it will lead to a good job. B) Connect with parents of young children in a positive, supportive manner, providing them with information that is easy to understand and will give them some initial tools to begin talking with their kids about their educational future and preparing for the financial responsibility.

- A) Provide ISU coloring books for special school programs and events at targeted elementary schools. Coloring books would be comprised of pictures that follow Sycamore Sam through a day on campus (e.g. in a classroom, eating lunch in the Commons, attending a football or basketball game, with friends by the fountain, etc.)
- B) Create and distribute college planning and financial literacy print brochures targeted specifically to parents of elementary students who would be first generation college students. Content will be heavily focused on the proven results of a college education, and how to prepare for the financial responsibility. They will also include success stories of our own first generation college students who have graduated and gone on to successful careers. Brochures would be distributed through targeted elementary schools) and will be used in conjunction with in school parent meetings/groups such as PTO/PTA, Girl/Boy Scouts, etc.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

Goal: Get middle school students excited about college! Strengthen the connection with students and begin to expose them to college academics and campus life. Also, continue to the feed information and planning material to parents to build a relationship of support and encouragement that will help them help their children as they approach high school.

Create and distribute an ISU Flight magazine targeted at middle school students and parents, to be distributed to the middle schools that feed into our top feeder high schools, as well as middle schools that feed into College Challenge partner high schools. Content will include basics about academic programs as they relate to careers, college life, and financial literacy. The magazine will include an opportunity for parents to go online and provide their child's name and contact information for inclusion in the Admissions prospect database, allowing us to track the impact of the Flight magazine.

EARLY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Goal: Get high school freshmen, sophomores, and juniors to begin planning for college and strengthen their connection with ISU before the flood of college marketing materials begin to hit their mailbox in the junior year. Also, continue to feed information and

planning material to parents such that they see ISU as not only a valuable resource, but a partner.

Create a postcard to be mailed to the prospect database (currently 32,000 for 201505 and 2,300 for 201605) offering a free ISU t-shirt for responding online. The online form will gather student and parent email addresses, phone numbers, and interest details on the student respondents and move them through the admissions funnel from prospect to inquiry, triggering an e-mail communication plan for both students and parents. Create and send ISU t-shirts to each respondent. The purpose behind the mailing and t-shirt give-away is to get students to interact with us earlier, moving through the admission funnel from prospect (a purchased name from College Board or another provider) to inquiry (a student who has interacted/contacted ISU). Last year, Admissions had roughly 100,000 prospects, 60,000 of which become inquiries by responding to ISU in some way, or contacting ISU directly for information. Students who remain in the prospect pool do not apply, so it is important to get them to take that first step by interacting with ISU.

Purchase early outreach focused marketing materials for attendance at school programs (banner and tabletop display). These items will be used by Extended Learning, Admissions and Financial Aid for various early outreach events, on and off campus.

Work Plan- Action Steps- Process (How?)

Spring/Summer 2013

1. Print materials- Develop flight magazine for middle school students/parents, ISU coloring book for elementary students, college planning/financial literacy brochure for parents of elementary students, freshman/sophomore t-shirt postcard, and email communication plan for freshmen and sophomore inquiries and their parents. Design and order t-shirts.
2. Shirts- Design and order t-shirts for freshman/sophomore postcard respondents.
3. Early Outreach display materials- Order table banner and display board targeting the younger audience, as well as their parents. Include information that is pertinent to the age group.
4. Communicate with schools- Connect with key elementary and middle schools to share the ISU early outreach plan and begin conversations regarding best venues to connect with parents for information sharing and support beginning in the fall 2013.

Beginning Fall 2013 (and continued annually)

1. Attend elementary and middle school events to distribute print materials and educate parents on college and financial planning.

2. Distribute flight magazine to students at key middle schools.
3. Distribute coloring books at key elementary schools.
4. Postcard mailing to prospects and follow up t-shirt mailing.
5. Initiate e-mail campaigns to postcard respondents.

Reporting and Deliverable Schedule- (When?):

The timeline for the Early Outreach plan elements is as follows:

Date	Action	Responsible Area
March/April 2013	Create postcard for prospect mailing	Admissions
April 2013	Design and order t-shirts	Admissions
April to August 2013	Create Middle School Flight Magazine and order printing (based on previous flight mag)	Admissions
April to July 2013	Develop financial literacy/college planning brochure for elementary school parents.	Financial Aid
April 2013	Order early outreach table display/banner	Extended Learning
April to May 2013	Identify target middle schools for flight magazine.	Admissions
June to August 2013	Create ISU coloring book and order printing.	Extended Learning
September 2013	Reach out to key elementary schools to arrange for distribution of brochures, color books and parent event attendance.	Extended Learning
September 2013	Reach out to key middle schools to arrange for distribution of flight magazines, attendance and parent programs, speaking opportunities in careers classes.	Extended Learning

Budget- (How Much?):

A. Early Prospecting T-shirt Mailing:

201505 prospects	32,000				
201605 prospects	<u>2,300</u>				
total early prospects	34,300				
Postcard printing	35,000	@	0.0922	3,227	(Woodburn)
Postcard postage	35,000	@	0.2	<u>7,000</u>	(USPS)
subtotal				10,227	
T-shirt printing	2,000	@	2.5	5,000	bid
T-shirt envelopes	2,000	@	0.25	500	Staples
T-shirt postage	2,000	@	2.85	<u>5,700</u>	USPS
subtotal				11,200	
TOTAL PROJECT COST				\$21,427	

B. Middle School Flight Magazine:

Quantity: 7,500

Description: Full color, 24-page magazine with various articles and information targeting middle school students and their parents, to guide them in early preparation for college.

Cost: \$4,275

C. Coloring Book for Elementary Students:

Quantity: 7,500

Description: 20-page coloring book with full color cover and black only on text pages

Cost: \$3,525

D. Financial Literacy/College Planning Brochure:

Quantity: 10,000

Description: 3-panel, full color brochures

Cost: \$1,250

E. Early Outreach Tabletop Display and Retractable Banner:

Item: 20/24/3p Tabletop Display plus laminated, interchangeable pictures and text
Quantity: 1
Cost: \$550

Item: Retractable, full color banner display with stand and carrying case 33x85
Quantity: 1
Cost: \$360

TOTAL BUDGET REQUEST= \$31,387

Stakeholder and Management Plan- (Who?):

The Early Outreach work plan elements will be carried out as a joint effort between Admissions, Extended Learning and Financial Aid. See timeline table above under Reporting and Deliverables.

Outcome Assessment & Future Testing (How Well?):

While it can be challenging to assess the short term effectiveness of some aspects of an early outreach initiative, the increase in visibility and resulting ISU awareness and student preparation will impact our recruiting and retention efforts. Using Talisma, Admissions will be able to track students from initial contact (whether it be a flight magazine tear card or an online form submitted in response to the early high school postcard mailing) through to application and registration. As families submit the flight magazine tear card, and freshmen and sophomores complete the online form for a free ISU t-shirt, we will be able to compare the number of inquiries to previous years, and compare the conversion rate of prospects to inquiries. We intend to complete the early high school postcard mailing in April, and would have initial results on mailing response (in terms of the number of students who move through the Admissions funnel from prospect to inquiry) by June 1, 2013. Moving students through the funnel to inquiries is critical. If they don't interact with ISU they will not apply to ISU, and the earlier the interaction, the more time they have to prepare for enrollment.

All students who interact with ISU, regardless of their grade level, will be tracked in Talisma. As these students reach what would typically be the first semester in college, Admissions will be able to track back to the initial contact in order to verify effectiveness of the plan elements and determine the impact of our early outreach. Further, utilizing student and parent surveys, we can compare the effectiveness of early outreach efforts and their impact on incoming freshmen.