

Strategic Plan – Initiative Work Plan FY2015

Initiative Name: Increase retention and graduation of transfer students in COT May 14, 2014

Goal # 1 Goal Chairs: Cindy Otts and Ron Payne

Initiative # 2a Initiative Chair: Dr. Kara Harris

Thesis Statement: Increase the number of students from 2 year institutions and to improve student success for these students.

1. Introduction/Background

Indiana State University would like to maximize the potential for increasing the number of transfer students who are entering the university. Because of the nature of transfer students, increasing transfer yield has proven to be a time intensive and costly venture.

Although block transfer agreements are in place between ISU and many two year colleges, transfer students often have additional credit from their two-year colleges that transfers in, but not as direct credit. An academic advisor must then look through the remaining credit to examine if other credit can be applied in major-specific courses that are outside of the block credit agreement. In addition, many transfer students request this transcript evaluation be completed unofficially prior to enrolling in classes. After the evaluation is completed, some transfer students choose to enroll in the university, and many choose to pursue other options (attend a different 4-year institution, go into business/industry, etc.).

This situation is further complicated because of the timing of when transfer students often choose to transfer. The prime time for a student to decide that they would like to transfer their 2-year degree to a different institution is during the time most faculty advisors are less available (during summer months, after final examination week, etc.). So, many transfer students have difficulty obtaining these evaluations on their timelines.

Much work has been accomplished over the past few years that has greatly increased the number of transfer students and their success at the university. Many barriers have been diminished by Indiana State University creating formal and informal working relationships with key leadership in the Ivy Tech System. In addition, the creation of substantial transfer scholarships has assisted transfer students financially. Many transfer students have also benefited from the math prep and mentoring program that has been piloted in the College of Technology since fall 2012.

2. Proposal/Purpose/Justification

Indiana State University has been a frontrunner in transfer programs for many years, and has continued to improve upon efforts towards transfer retention. Now that retention of transfer students is on the rise, it is time to capitalize on positive past ventures, and expand recruitment and recruitment yield of transfer students from Indiana. We propose to increase the number of transfer students by the following means:

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Ivy Tech Programming

Work collaboratively with graduate students who are already on-site (state-wide) at Ivy Tech campuses to increase awareness of how to transfer their two-year degrees to ISU to complete either and B.S. or B.A.S. Initial contact has already been established at the Wabash Valley Ivy Tech, and should begin in fall of 2014.

Course-by Course Transfer Equivalency

Improve the accuracy of course-by-course transfers that are in the system between the College of Technology and key transfer colleges. This can be accomplished by running a report of the highest frequency of transfer colleges and then doing a course-by-course data base of how specific courses will transfer into the university. Since moving to a block transfer agreement, these equivalencies have not been updated on a regular basis. Not having these equivalencies causes a bottle-neck in the unofficial transfer, which can cause ISU to loose students.

Virtual Recruitment

Utilize teleconferencing technology to team with admissions counselors who visit two year campuses, in conjunction with other programming on campuses, off-peak virtual office hours for key personnel, etc. to increase the availability of ISU personnel to potential students. This will be done in addition to current methods of transfer recruitment.

Transfer Advisor

Having advisors that are cross-trained in working with transfer students will allow services to be increased greatly. It is proposed that one advisor be hired to champion the initial course-by-course transfer equivalencies and serve as the primary transfer advisor to incoming and returning transfer students. It is anticipated that this will have very high effect on the number of students matriculating into transfer-friendly programs and being retained in these programs. This person would work in conjunction with distance delivery and other entities on campus to ensure distance and on campus transfers are receiving services that are available to them.

3. Discussion of Past Years Results – Benchmark Successes?

This thesis will add to previous successful initiatives. Since past strategic initiatives regarding transfer student retention have proven successful, this will allow the university to build upon that work, and begin replicating positive impacts of previous initiatives and the proposed across campus. Past initiatives have been successful in increasing the number of transfer students, improving relationships with Ivy Tech, increasing scholarship availability for transfer students, and facilitating transfer for students in highly technical, professional career fields. This proposal is the next natural step in the progression to increasing transfer students at Indiana State University, and assisting them in their persistence to graduation.

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Summary

With the past initiatives outcomes proving positive, it is proposed that we begin moving forward on ways to increase the number of transfer students entering programs at Indiana State University. If proven successful, it will be replicated could replicated in multiple academic areas across campus.

4. Work Plan, Next Fiscal Year – Action Steps – Process – How?

It is estimated that the number of transfer students will rise, and students will continue making positive degree progression towards graduation.

Fall 2014

- A. Hire and train academic advisor to work with transfer students and begin working with academic units to create additional course-by-course transfer library for key transfer colleges.
- B. Develop continue with working relationships between key transfer colleges and begin creating programming that can be executed on site of the two year college. Programming will be focused on transferring two-year degrees to ISU (including transferability, scholarships, services, etc.).
- C. Develop schedule and system by which evening and weekend hours can be offered to prospective transfer students. Key personnel from ISU will make virtual hours (via skype, facetime, etc.) to communicate with students. These will begin in the fall semester.
- D. Report number of students who matriculate to the university from key two-year colleges, their degree progress, grade point average, and perceptions of their transfer experience. This will be done after grades are reported.
- E. Award transfer scholarships.

Spring 2015

- A. Continue working on course-by-course transfer library for key colleges and present courses to academic departments for approval.
- B. Continue with site visits and programming at key transfer colleges (including transferability, scholarships, services, etc.).
- C. Continue virtual office hours for key transfer schools.
- F. Report number of students who matriculate to the university from key two-year colleges, their degree progress, grade point average, and perceptions of their transfer experience.
- G. Award transfer scholarships.

5. Reporting and Deliverable Schedule – When?

Results will be tracked and reported at the close of each semester. A full report will be created annually outlining the success of the proposal.

6. Budget – How Much, a General Discussion of Funds Use?

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We request a baseline budget of \$123,000 to cover the cost of 1.5 staff persons who will lead the transfer database and assist in advising transfer students, scholarships for transfer students, and travel to key transfer locations.

7. Stakeholders and Management Plan – Who?

Dr. Robert English, Dr. Kara Harris and David Sivley. Because this proposal works closely with the on-going math prep and mentoring program, they two plans will be managed in unison and work together towards the same common goal of increasing and retaining transfer students.

8. Outcome Assessment & Future Testing (How will we know that we were successful?)

The outcomes of this proposal will be a higher number of transfer students coming to the university and graduating on time. This will be tracked by reporting the number of students who matriculate into the university each term. Students who are advised by the proposed advisor will be tracked for persistence, degree progress, grade point average, and perception of transfer experience.

It is anticipated that the proposed requests will become self-sustaining within two years with an increase in tuition from increase students and retention of those students.

9. Line Item Budget Discussion that tracks Budget Templates ...

(These sections also need to be as long as is necessary to articulate each of the budget line items.)

A. Academic Advisor--\$48,000 (including benefits)

The academic advisor is key to this request. The academic advisor will be the point person for student contact and creating the transfer library.

B. Support Staff—\$20,000 (no benefits)

The support staff position will be a part-time position (28 hours/week) and will provide support for the math prep and mentoring program, and creation of transfer library.

C. Scholarships--\$50,000

Scholarships will be used to assist transfer students in matriculating and remaining at ISU. This will assist in lowering the sticker shock to high achieving students. Students who receive these scholarships will also be reported on regarding degree progress and standing.

D. Travel--\$5,000

Travel will be used to support travel of key personnel to two-year college sites. Key personnel may include faculty, academic advisor, staff, etc. Travel will be used for the recruitment of students into ISU and programming.