

Strategic Plan – Initiative Work Plan FY2015

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

Goal # 1 Goal Chairs: Jennifer Schriver, John Beacon, Carmen Tillery

Initiative # 2B Initiative Chair: Dr. Robert English

Thesis Statement: Improve COT student success and retention through math intervention and mentors programs.

1. Introduction/Background – What?

The College of Technology has enjoyed increased enrollment, but found it difficult to retain students. One problem has been poor math skills which led to deficient grades, high dropout rates and unsatisfactory progress toward graduation. This has been especially troublesome for COT, whose tech classes demand a higher level of math ability. In addition, transfer students faced general problems which combined with the math deficiency to give unsatisfactory retention.

2. Proposal/Purpose/Justification – Why?

Both math preparation and mentor programs have worked very well. With the success of this initiative in improving grades, retention and graduation for transfer students, COT has been expanding Math Prep to strengthen our freshmen in tech classes and assist upper-class students toward graduation. Most recently, we added Math Prep within our 100-level ECT classes to strengthen the students and improve their ability to learn the class material. Professors report this has been a big help. The mentor program is also growing with the expanding number of COT transfer students. We need the increased departmental funding to make this an ongoing program. It easily pays for itself through increased retention, improved progress to completion and graduation.

3. Discussion of Past Years Results – Benchmark Successes?

RETENTION

The first 1-year retention results from this initiative were observed as the fall 2012 COT transfers returned to begin their 2nd year. Previously, this had been a persistently low rate with only 49% of our COT transfers continuing on for a second year at Indiana State. It was exciting to see 84% return to begin classes.

1-Year Retention Results	
Fall 2013-Goal	Fall 2013-Actual
50%	84%

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GRADES

Transfer students continue to make the grade with a cumulative 3.09 GPA through the end of Spring 2014. This is despite several new students who were not here for education. As these are culled, the remaining group looks to be a great addition to the COT student body.

Cohort	Cumulative GPA
Fall 2012	3.19
Spring 2013	3.13
Fall 2013	3.17
Spring 2014	2.85

Total	3.09

MATH PREP RESULTS

It was a huge year of expansion for Math Prep, reaching out to many more students utilizing a variety of methods. Beginning summer 2013 and continuing through spring 2014, a total of 476 students participated in math prep. The initial test results of 44.4% confirm the weak analytical skills of incoming students. And while their 80.6% final score is less than desired, the 36.2% gain in skills is transformational in the capability of our students.

STUDENTS IN MATH PREP			
# Students	Initial	Final	Gain
476	44.4%	80.6%	36.2%

Looking past the improvement in averages, it is also helpful to consider the number of students who were helped significantly or possibly saved from educational disaster. For reporting, we have set these levels of consideration at a 20% gain and 40% gain in basic math skills. A 20% gain will significantly help our students. A 40% gain may be enough to prevent a casualty.

STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS	
476	Total number who participated
370	Improved by at least 20%
181	Improved by at least 40%

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These results far exceed the modest metrics established for determining the program's success. The 370 students improving by at least 20% compares to a threshold of 50 for determining success. The 181 students improving by at least 20% compares to a threshold of 15 for success. These results are over 7 times and 12 times the mark of success. The point to take from this is simply that a lot of students were helped significantly to gain the analytical skills needed for their success.

GRADUATION

This is the first view of 2-year graduation results for this initiative. There is still time for some of these students to complete this summer, so the figure may increase. However, the graduation rates are already quite good, showing a jump of around 6% from the baseline!

GRADUATION RATES				
Fall Full-time Bachelor's Degree Seeking Transfers in COT				
Cohort	Fall 2009	Fall 2010	Fall 2011	Fall 2012
% Graduated	18.2%	14.7%	16.1%	22.0%

SUMMARY

All the pieces from this initiative are working together. Students are being supported through Math Prep and Mentor programs so they do better in their classes. They get better grades and are more satisfied with their education at Indiana State, so they sign up for another semester of classes. They go forward making better progress toward graduation and on-time completion.

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

The success of this initiative is now proven. It is ready to be made an ongoing program in COT. This program pays for itself through increased retention and improved graduation and on-time completion.

Math Prep will expand to reach more students in our 100-level classes. We will also consider the ongoing needs for refreshing and preparation for advanced tech classes. The Mentor program will need to flex in size to match the incoming transfer student count. If we get another large group of students this fall, we need to be ready to help them succeed. This is recognized as a vital help to their accomplishment.

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5. Reporting and Deliverable Schedule – When?

The first 2-year retention results will be available in the fall. Graduation rates will be available each May. Grades are reviewed in January and May. Math Prep results are monitored daily throughout the year.

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

We would like a baseline budget of \$111,705 for an ongoing program to provide math prep for 500 students per year and mentor support for 265 anticipated transfer students in COT.

7. Stakeholders and Management Plan – Who?

Dr. Robert English, Dr. Kara Harris and David Sivley

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

RETENTION

This program pays for itself with a gain of just 8 students per year (4 transfers and 4 freshmen). While we have experienced and expect much more, this is the significant criteria for continuation of the program.

GRADUATION

A gain of 3% in the 2-year graduation rate is quite significant. For COT transfers, this would move us to 19%, versus the prior average of 16%.

TESTED IMPROVEMENT IN BASIC MATH SKILLS

100 Number of students who improve by at least 20%

25 Number of students who improve by at least 40%

GRADES

We expect the most immediate impact of this program will be to help students complete their classes and make the grade.

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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.)

The proposed funding requested:

\$50,000	Salary for Mr. Sivley as a full-time visiting professor.
\$10,000	Benefits at 20% of salary
\$17,500	Licensing fee for the advanced learning platform being used for math preparation
\$11,205	Graduate assistant for international students in the mentor team
\$23,000	Student Mentor team for anticipated 180 summer/fall + 85 spring = 265 students

\$111,705	Total cost of program for school year and summer