



## Academic Department Student Success Plan Update: 2015-2018



### Context for Plan Updates

At the August 27, 2015 Board of Trustees meeting, the Board reinforced that their number one priority for Indiana State was the improvement of the graduation rate, a statistic that for at least 15 years has doggedly stayed at approximately 20% in four years and 40% in six years. These statistics have been true despite 1<sup>st</sup> year retention rates that have fluctuated approximately 16 percentage points, a freshmen enrollment that has fluctuated up and down by more than 1,200 students, and average SAT scores that have varied more than 40 points, factors that one might normally think would impact a graduation rate. Truthfully, however, attention to graduation has only been a recent phenomenon as the state and nation have shifted the conversation about college from one of access to one of both access and completion.

A graduation rate is among the most difficult metrics to impact; four and six years are simply a long time and changes take time to work through the system. With the launch of the ISU Strategic Plan, much has been put into place to impact student success. This fall, the fruits of that effort have shown promising evidence of payoff. Our 2014-15 four-year graduation rate rose 3.9% in one year to 23.3%, the largest one year increase and the highest this statistic has ever been as long as this metric has been measured. It is also an annual increase that few institutions nationally realize. Hence, we now know that intentional effort can result in a more efficient educational experience and that when linked to ensuring that it is a high quality one, students benefit enormously.

Focused efforts at the department level are an important part in continuing the momentum. Utilizing the tools of good planning as reflected in this plan template, academic departments are asked to formulate updated goals, action steps, and benchmarks in two areas, retention (freshmen) and persistence to completion (sophomores through seniors). Departments that do not teach undergraduates are welcome to adapt this template for their purposes working with graduate students.

Blue Reports on the Institutional Research website as well as resources and reports on the Office of Student Success and University College websites are rich sources of data and insight on what departments can do. A new ISU report that has been provided to all department chairs entitled, *Why Undergraduate Students Leave Indiana State University* summarizes much of the research on ISU students into five themes and provides a list of 10 action areas that research has shown departments can impact student success. The Board of Trustees also has a priority on career readiness and thus strengthening a partnership with the Career Center, as informed by data from the *First Destination Surveys*, also facilitates student success and should be embedded in plans.

Thank you for your efforts and commitment to this top institutional priority.

Sincerely,

Michael Licari  
Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs

Joshua Powers  
Associate Vice President for Student Success

# Academic Department Student Success Plan Update 2015-2018

**Department:** Aviation

**Department Chair:** Richard Baker

**Department Mission:** The mission of the Department of Aviation Technology is to prepare our students for a lifetime career in the dynamic and challenging world of aviation. Indiana State University's Department of Aviation Technology is internationally recognized for the excellence of its facilities, faculty, and graduates. We offer three degree programs in aviation.

## Department Freshmen (1<sup>st</sup> year) Retention<sup>1</sup> Goal(s):

Increase first year retention and career readiness of AVT Students by 2%.

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

1. Participation in New Student Orientation by talking with students/families in small groups about their chosen majors and answering academic content-related (and flight fees) questions for 25 minutes per NSO. Aviation Departmental Contact: John Spencer. This will resume again in June of 2016
2. Updating of COT Residential Housing Program to link themed housing to specific learning communities/courses during the freshmen year. Aviation Departmental Contacts: Melanie Able, Jason Brown, and Bruce Welsh. Proposal to Residential Life by October 10, 2015.
3. Participating in pilot program that focuses (with specific outcome-based objectives) on student success in COT female STEM students through academic and career center programming. Aviation Departmental Contacts: Melanie Able. First meeting date is October 27, 2015.

<i>Retention Benchmarks</i> <sup>2</sup> (by latest department)	<b>Fall 2012 Cohort:</b> 78.69%	<b>Fall 2013 Cohort:</b> 78.57%	<b>Fall 2014 Cohort:</b> 84.48%
	<b>Fall 2015 target:</b> 87%	<b>Fall 2016 target:</b> 89%	<b>Fall 2017 target:</b> 91%

*Other Freshmen Retention related benchmarks of focal interest to department*<sup>3</sup>

## Department Persistence to Completion Goal(s):

Increase the number of students who successfully continue to persist and complete undergraduate degrees in four and six years by 2%.

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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/>.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

1. Participating in pilot program that focuses on student success in COT female STEM students through academic and career center programming. Aviation Departmental Contacts: Melanie Able. First meeting date is October 27, 2015.
2. Participation in monthly retention/persistence events and programs in the COT. Each event has a specific theme for students (fall welcome, priority registration, career center services, last day to drop, It's on Blue, etc.), to assist students in gaining information that will assist them in persisting. Contact: Dick Baker, Kara Harris, and additional COT Faculty and staff 8/25/15, 9/30/15, 10/27/15, 11/16/15, 1/28/16, 2/29/16, 3/31/16, 4/22/16
3. Offer night and weekend advising sessions to assist students take advantage of priority registration. Contact: Dick Baker, William Clyburn, Cindy Crowder, Kara Harris, Andrew Payne, Randy Peters, and additional COT Faculty and staff 11/2/15, 11/7/15, dates for spring are TBD.
4. Contact students who are eligible to register, but have not. We have done this via email in the past, but plan to also contact them via telephone as well this year. Contact: Dick Baker, William Clyburn, Cindy Crowder, Kara Harris, Andrew Payne, Randy Peters, and additional COT Faculty and staff December 2015, May 2016.
5. Contact (email and letter to permanent address) sophomores, juniors, and seniors who show deficient on interim grade reports. Kara Harris October 2015, February 2016.
6. Assist in COT Academic Success Program for sophomores (and juniors upcoming). This program assists students who are at-risk as defined by faculty, university reporting (interim grades, attendance reporting, final grades, etc.), and intervenes with success programming. Dick Baker, William Clyburn, Cindy Crowder, Kara Harris, Andrew Payne, Randy Peters, and additional COT Faculty and staff. Dates for this program are on-going, as it is a program designed to assist at-risk sophomores in the COT.
7. Audit four-year plans and curriculum to ensure that unavoidable curricular barriers to programs are recognized, and a plan to assist students overcome barriers (without lowering academic rigor) is created. Dick Baker and Kara Harris, Spring 2016.
8. Continue with pre-graduation checks of all students who have applied for graduation so that deficient requirements can be identified (where applicable), and a plan to meet deficiencies can be made. COT Dean's Office, on-going.
9. Continue to work with an advising plan in the COT, to find ways to best serve students and the university in a systematic way. Dick Baker, William Clyburn, Cindy Crowder, Kara Harris, Andrew Payne, Randy Peters, and additional COT Faculty and staff, additional information regarding dates/timelines will be forthcoming when the advising taskforce findings are publicized.
10. Create "Tech Success" group in conjunction with other departments and the Dean's office. This will be an informal working group who will brainstorm short-term tactical solutions to barriers to persistence to graduation. Richard Baker, William Clyburn, Cindy Crowder, Robert English, Kara Harris, Andrew Payne, and Randy Peters, 11/6; 12/4; 1/8; 2/5; 3/4; 4/1; 5/6

<i>Completion Benchmarks</i> (by latest department)	<b>Fall 2009 Cohort:</b> 46.94%	<b>Fall 2010 Cohort:</b> 30.99%	<b>Fall 2011 Cohort:</b> 34.78%
	<b>Fall 2012 target:</b> 37%	<b>Fall 2013 target:</b> 39%	<b>Fall 2014 target:</b> 41%

*Other Persistence to Completion related benchmarks of focal interest to department*

#### **Other Goal(s), Action Steps, and Benchmarks of focal interest to department<sup>4</sup>:**

1. Promote participation and interest in the team and annual National Intercollegiate Flying Association (NIFA) competition to increase student awareness and team strength in the professional flight area. Teams grow and maintain knowledge and skill levels through annual tryouts for new members and team mentorships by senior

<sup>4</sup> 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.

class members. Team members who participate show a high level of success over their academic careers through morale, spirit, and involvement. Contact Jason Brown. Ongoing with planning and practices beginning in November and continuing until the annual Regional competition the following October.

2. Continue to generate female student pilot interest and participation in the Annual Air Race Classic for Women in Aviation annually. Senior team members mentor and assist in the growth of new members who compete for positions each year. Again, membership on the Air Race Classic team shows a direct correlation to successful students. Contact Melanie Abel. Ongoing with planning and coordination beginning in September and continuing until the competition the following June.
3. Generate interest and participation in the Design Build Fly teams and continued participation in the International Design Build Fly competition hosted annually by Cessna and Raytheon Missiles, Inc. Team membership is determined by interest, participation, and direct activity support of the competition. Contact Greg Betz. Ongoing with design, building, and test flying beginning in September and continuing through the competition the following April in either Tucson, AZ, or Wichita, KS.
4. Make readily available the flight fees required for students to conduct flight training at the ISU Flight Academy. Flight fees are often a direct impact on student success; and, parents and students alike need the information available with ease. Flight fees and flight requirements are available via handouts to parents and students at all potential student interviews, all New Student Orientation sessions, and on the ISU website on the Professional Aviation Flight Technology page ([link to PDF for download and printing](#)). Review and maintain the current fees on a monthly basis. Contact Dick Baker.
5. Conduct an annual Parent-Student Appreciation Day each September for all Aviation Technology students at the ISU Flight Academy to bring awareness and a sense of pride and belonging to students. The day consists of an open house to tour the facilities, view the aircraft, spend time with faculty members, and share in a cookout for lunch. Annual goal is to feed 200 or more students and parents, increase spirit, and create a desire to be part of the Sycamore Flyers of the future. Contact Harry Minniear.
6. Conduct an Aviation Alumni Appreciation Day in September of 2015 and 2017 for ISU alum from the Department of Aviation Technology at the ISU Flight Academy to create an awareness of our program and let them speak to students about careers and future opportunities. The goal is to bring alumni who will want to provide encouragement and possible internships or paths to careers to the students. September 19, 2015, has already brought 3 new internship companies with more in process. Contact Dick Baker.
7. Coach students on scholarship programs available through the Aviation Association of Indiana (AAI) and how to apply. AAI has several scholarships for aviation students in Indiana that are presented at their annual conference in October. ISU students have often been recognized and received these scholarships. Our goal is to ensure ISU students continue to compete and become recipients based on their abilities and scholarly activities. Contact Azhar Hussain. Ongoing with submission each September and awards in October.