

# Academic Department Student Success Plan

## Update: 2015-2018

**Department:** Communication

**Department Chair:** Mary L. Kahl

**Department Mission:** The Department of Communication takes a leading role in sustaining the strongly student-centered, broadly accessible educational mission and vision of Indiana State University. We do so through engaging students in experiential learning, fostering their development of skills, and promoting competences such as: a complex understanding of the communication process as the foundation of the ongoing human process of meaning-making and community-building; a profound respect for the diverse range of identities and ideologies within our local and global communities; a sophisticated grasp, as creator and user, of the wide range of information technologies that shape communication today and of those which will evolve to shape it differently in the future; and a lifelong commitment to presenting and interpreting communication in an ethical, responsible manner.

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

**To increase freshmen retention rate by two percentage points per year.**

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

- a. Institute a call campaign for all declared first-year Communication majors to check-in and answer any questions about the program. Timeline: Spring 2016 and each semester thereafter. Responsible Person: Kevin Ward.
- b. Bring guest speakers from various concentrations within the Communication major to visit Comm 101, Comm 202, and Comm 204 courses to better explain career opportunities for students with a Communication major. Timeline: Spring 2016 and each semester thereafter. Responsible Person: Comm 101 Director and Department Chair.
- c. Assess learning outcomes in Comm 202. Timeline: Conduct pilot assessment in Fall of 2016. Conduct comprehensive assessments each Fall semester thereafter. Responsible Persons: Department Assessment Committee and Comm 202 Instructor.
- d. Work with University College (primarily with advisors to Communication majors) to develop pre-entry academic profiles that identify any ongoing preparatory deficiencies. Timeline: Fall 2016 and each fall semester thereafter. Responsible Person: Department Chair.

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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.

<i>Retention Benchmarks<sup>2</sup></i>	<b>Fall 2012 Cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2013 Cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2014 Cohort:</b>
(by latest department)	80.2%	71.7%	66.7%
	<b>Fall 2015 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2016 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2017 target:</b>
	69%	71%	73%

### Department Persistence to Completion Goal(s):

**To increase 4-year and 6-year graduation rates by two percentage points per year.**

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

- Institute degree audits for all Junior Communication majors. Timeline: Fall of 2015 and beyond. Responsible persons: Academic advisors.
- Institute degree audits for all Senior Communication majors. Timeline: Fall of 2015 and beyond. Responsible persons: Academic advisors.
- Identify underperforming students (through the mechanism of Junior and Senior degree audits) and work to find the best academic placements for their individual abilities and talents. Fall 2015 and beyond. Responsible persons: Academic advisors.
- Further develop relationship with CAS liaison in the Career Center to build internship base. Spring 2016 and beyond. Responsible Person: Department Internship Coordinator(s).
- Develop monthly Communication Department newsletter with scholarship and internship opportunities, to be distributed via e-mail to all majors. Timeline: Spring 2016 and ongoing. Responsible Person: Department Internship Coordinator(s).
- Continue to coordinate at least one networking event per year. Timeline: Spring 2016 and ongoing. Responsible persons: Department Chair, PRSSA and LPH presidents.
- Engage in Course Transformation Academy (if application is accepted) to rethink two related core courses that are currently impediments to student success. Timeline: Spring 2016 and beyond. Responsible Persons: Michael Arrington and Haijing Tu (and perhaps others.)

<i>Four-Year</i>	<b>Fall 2009 Cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2010 Cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2011 Cohort:</b>
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<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/>. Default is "latest department"; change to "original department" if that is the desired benchmark data.

<i>Completion Benchmarks</i>	30.2%	24.4%	32.1%
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(by latest department)	<b>Fall 2012 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2013 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2014 target:</b>
	34%	36%	38%

<i>Six-Year Completion Benchmarks</i>	<b>Fall 2007 Cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2008 Cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2009 Cohort:</b>
	58%	54.3%	52.3%

(by latest department)	<b>Fall 2010 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2011 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2012 target:</b>
	55%	57%	59%

<i>Undergraduate Degrees Conferred:</i>	<b>2011-12:</b> 74	<b>2012-13:</b> 61	<b>2013-14:</b> 78
	<b>2014-15:</b> 75		

Achievements related to increasing department persistence to completion (from prior Student Success Plan implementation).

- a. Had all departmental advisors trained on MySam.
- b. To optimize departmental advising successes, we reassigned all major advisees who requested a change of advisor.
- c. Starting in Fall of 2015, we gave course releases to two dedicated advisors who see 50+ advisees every semester.
- d. Coordinated alumni guest speakers to offer students insight into and enthusiasm about their respective fields.
- e. Built large student base within student organizations (Lambda Pi Eta, Public Relations Student Society of America, Sycamore Video, Society of Professional Journalists, etc.)
- f. Adoption of new curriculum diminished the number of course substitutions that were necessary for student completion.
- g. New curriculum lifts the absolute need for a minor area of study, allowing students the freedom to choose a minor or not, as their budgets, time, and talents dictate.
- h. Removed GPA impediment to completion by lowering passing grade threshold in major coursework from a “C” to a “C-minus”—will become effective in Fall of 2016.
- i. Maintain social networking presence for current department students and alumni.

**Other Goal(s), Action Steps, and Benchmarks of focal interest to department<sup>3</sup>:**

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<sup>3</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.

## **To increase overall department enrollment.**

<i>Undergraduate enrollment trends:</i>	<b>Fall 2012:</b> 335 students	<b>Fall 2013:</b> 346 students	<b>Fall 2014:</b> 352 students
	<b>Fall 2015:</b> 390 students		

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

- a. Establish a more structured information system for prospective students. Create brochures that explain clear steps that students need to take in order to obtain degrees. Timetable: Fall 2016. Responsible Person: Department Chair
- b. Continue delivering College Challenge courses in Comm 101. We often gain majors because of their experiences in College Challenge on the high school level. We will continue to monitor changes in this course to maximize our enrollment gains. Timeline: Fall 2015 and each Fall semester thereafter. Responsible Persons: Comm 101 Director and Comm 101 Staff.
- c. Continue to circulate brochures at various recruiting occasions, including recruitment fairs at local high schools.

### **Achievements related to increasing department enrollment (from prior Student Success Plan implementation).**

- a. Enrollments have increased steadily over the last four years.
- b. Intensified recruiting efforts by conducting a campaign promoting the Communication program.
- c. Completed the Department's website updates to include our revised major requirements, informative links, and contact persons.
- d. Circulated brochures at various recruiting occasions, including recruitment fairs at local high schools.
- e. Expanded the number of high school teachers who offer Comm 101 to secondary school students through the College Challenge Program, thus bringing more first-year students into ISU as declared Communication majors.