

Academic Department Student Success Plan Update 2015-2018

Department: Earth & Environmental Systems

Department Chair: Amos Winter

Department Mission: The mission of the Department of Earth and Environmental Systems is to provide undergraduate and graduate education grounded in the geosciences, geography and anthropology in order to prepare students for environmentally oriented careers and/or graduate studies. The department is committed to interdisciplinary studies of the environment, the earth, and human adaptation and interaction with the environment with an emphasis on experiential learning and community engagement.

Department Freshmen (1st year) Retention¹ Goal(s):

- 1) Increase first year retention in the department (freshman to sophomore) by 4% biennially.

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

1. Arrange that each first-year major meet with volunteer faculty mentor in the department (other than their departmental advisor) to discuss their educational and career goals and interests to help them engage with the discipline and to have a faculty support network. Person Responsible: Undergraduate Program Coordinator and Departmental Faculty, Date to be Completed: Fall 2015 and each spring and fall semester thereafter.
2. Increase Environmental Science Club, Anthropology Club, and Gamma Theta Upsilon effectiveness and participation by majors. Person Responsible: Club Faculty Advisors, Date to be completed: Fall 2015 and continuing thereafter.
3. Offer tutoring for EES classes in the Science Tutoring Center for 10 hours per week. Explore the idea of requiring all ENVI110 students complete required tutoring sessions as part of their lab grade. Person Responsible: ENVI 110 Lab Coordinator, Date to be Completed: Starting Spring 2015 and continuing each semester thereafter.
4. At the start of each semester departmental advisors and the Undergraduate Program Coordinator will evaluate previous semester performance at the course level for majors in order to recommend or intervene regarding academic success. The intent of this review is to catch problems before they affect first-year retention. This meeting would be required of all majors and be *in addition* to meetings with the University College advisors. Persons Responsible: Academic Advisors in the Department, Undergraduate Program coordinator. Date to be Completed: By end of 2nd week of Fall and Spring semesters, annually.
5. Work with Residential Life to arrange a residential learning community with new majors. Person Responsible: Undergraduate Affairs Coordinator and Department Chairperson. Date to be Completed: to be put into effect for Fall 2016.
6. Department faculty will develop pedagogical experiences within, or through modification of, our current core curriculum which would serve to link department undergraduate majors with one another among and between class cohorts, and expose them to faculty interests across the

¹ 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.

range of environmental science approaches. Preliminary discussions indicate a consensus on the course that will be selected for this, but the decision must be put to a vote before formally approved. Persons Responsible: Undergraduate Affairs Committee, Department Chairperson, Department Faculty. Date to be Completed: By end of Spring 2016 semester.

<i>Retention Benchmarks²</i>	Fall 2012 cohort:	Fall 2013 cohort:	Fall 2014 cohort:
(by latest department)	62.50%	54.84%	62.50%
	Fall 2015 target:	Fall 2016 target:	Fall 2017 target:
	66.5%	68.5%	70.5%

Other Freshmen Retention related benchmarks of focal interest to department³

Performance on pre-core program assessment instrument.

Department Persistence to Completion Goal(s):

1. Increase 4-year degree-completion rate by 5% annually

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

1. Maintain 2-year class rotation as currently established, with annual adjustments for critical classes to maintain 4-year graduation possibility. Person Responsible: Department Chair, Date to be Completed: January-February, annually (achieved via department class scheduling).
2. Allow advisors sufficient flexibility to substitute or petition for substitute for required courses whose learning goals are met by alternative courses. This includes cognate classes where changes to pass/fail designations have significantly changed 4-year graduation rates. Person Responsible: Department Chair, Date to be Completed: January, annually.
3. Continue discussions with Departments of Math & Computer Science and Chemistry & Physics to address possible barriers to 4-year graduation due to recent changes in the requirements to advance in course sequencing in cognate courses required by our Earth & Environmental Sciences major. Person Responsible: Undergraduate Affairs Coordinator, Department Chair. Date to be Completed: December 2016.

² 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/>.

³ 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.

4. Maintain quality advising by following advising center guidelines and following up with students after the first week of classes regarding their schedules. Person Responsible: EES Advisors, Date to be Completed: End of 2nd week of classes, each semester.
5. Follow-up with majors who have been identified as “not attending” after 3-week attendance reporting, and/or achieved “deficient” interim grades via (at minimum) e-mail or an in-person meeting. Advise students on best course of action in cases where deficient midterm grades may jeopardize on-time degree completion. Person Responsible: Department Chair and Departmental Advisors, Date to be completed: Week after interim grading periods, each semester.

<i>Completion</i>	Fall 2009 cohort:	Fall 2010 cohort:	Fall 2011 cohort:
<i>Benchmarks</i>			
(by latest department)	45.00%	18.75%	8.70%
	Fall 2012 target:	Fall 2013 target:	Fall 2014 target:
	13.7%	18.7%	23.7%

Other Persistence to Completion related benchmarks of focal interest to department

- Score improvement between pre-core program assessment instrument and post-core program assessment instrument.

Other Goal(s), Action Steps, and Benchmarks of focal interest to department⁴:

⁴ 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.