

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

**Department:** Department of English

**Department Chair:** Robert Perrin

**Department Mission:** [Click here to enter text.](#)

The Department of English defines its mission as educating students and advancing knowledge in language, literature, and culture. The Department strives to achieve its mission through its curriculum, teaching, scholarly and creative activity, and service.

**CURRICULUM.** The Department must maintain and develop courses that empower students to think, write, and read critically. It must, in addition, work to retain and recruit tenure-track specialists in its writing, language, literature, and English education programs; agree on objectives and standards for courses within them; and establish teaching loads and class sizes within Association of Departments of English and National Council of Teachers of English guidelines that enable faculty to fulfill their professional responsibilities and commitments. Finally, the Department must, with careful deliberation, continue to review course offerings and programs to preserve the traditionally valuable while meeting students' practical and cultural needs and accommodating changing practices and perspectives in national and global culture.

**TEACHING.** Department members, individually and collectively, must commit themselves to achieving and maintaining excellence in teaching. To work toward this goal, the faculty should be active in the profession, innovative in developing pedagogy, and sensitive and responsible in the classroom. Professional activity should draw upon and contribute to teaching; pedagogical innovation should include flexibility in course design in light of scholarship; sensitivity and responsibility in the classroom should guarantee students, at the very least, a syllabus and series of assignments designed to meet departmentally established objectives for each course. Finally, the Department must devise methods for evaluating teaching and recognizing those who teach effectively.

**SCHOLARLY AND CREATIVE ACTIVITY.** The Department must challenge faculty to contribute knowledge in their areas of expertise and reward them for their contributions. No one activity should be demanded of all departmental members, but active professional involvement, exclusive of teaching, is expected of all. Department members, especially those on the graduate faculty, should publish and present scholarly and/or creative works. Other scholarly activities might also include editing professional journals, serving as referees for journals and publishing houses, or contributing to annual bibliographies. Procurement of grants and other financial support for professional involvement should also be a continuous function of the Department.

**SERVICE.** The Department must not only encourage but also appropriately reward its faculty for service. While it must recognize traditional forms of departmental service, such as committee work and sponsorship of student organizations, it should not limit its support to

them. Specifically, it should advocate faculty service to the College, the University, and the profession. Finally, it should encourage faculty to become active in the community through interaction with the public schools and service to community organizations.

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

**REVISED FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE.** To ensure that our majors – English Liberal Arts and English Teaching – have dynamic first-year opportunities to engage in the Department, we want to create a more structured set of experiences during their first two semesters.

At present, the enrollment of first-year students is totally dependent on course availability in the major. This sometimes creates problems because second-, third-, and fourth-year students often register for lower-division courses (ones that they have not completed because of previous scheduling problems) during the preceding spring semester's priority registration, leaving few seats for beginning students in the fall. (This unfortunate cycle has meant that few freshman students have been able to register for their entry-level English courses.)

Our goal is to select a set of entry-level major courses (to be determined by the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee) for students to enroll in during their first two semesters. We will then offer freshman-only sections of the selected courses (while duplicating the course offerings for a single year to accommodate students from previous years so that they can also take the courses).

This plan would immerse freshman majors in key courses early in their college careers and provide them with additional flexibility as they progress through the curriculum.

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

**FALL 2015.** *Select key courses.* We have discussed this generally at several Department meetings. The detail-oriented, strategic discussion will begin in the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (or perhaps a sub-committee, if the Committee so chooses). For the fall semester, the likely courses are English 230 (Literary Analysis), English 240 (American Literature I), and English 250 (British Literature I). For the spring semester, the likely courses are English 241 (American Literature II) and English 251 (British Literature II). However, the selection of courses will initially be the responsibility of the Committee.

**FALL 2015.** *Confirm the selections with the Department.* As we always do, we will then bring the plan for the proposed courses to the Department for approval.

**SPRING 2016.** *Add freshman-only sections to the schedule.* Once the Department approves the courses, the chairperson will add the courses to the fall schedule and code the courses so that only freshman can enroll.

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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.

**SPRING 2016.** *Reexamine the courses.* The instructors of the selected courses (those that freshman students will take simultaneously) will work collaboratively to ensure complementary experiences.

<i>Retention</i>	<b>Fall 2012 cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2013 cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2014 cohort:</b>
<i>Benchmarks<sup>2</sup></i>			
(by latest department)	68.97%	68.42%	88.00%
	<b>Fall 2015 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2016 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2017 target:</b>
	70.00%	71.00%	72.00%

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

Click here to enter text.

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

**UNIFIED ADVISING.** Before the creation of the University College, all freshman majors were advised by the Director of Undergraduate Studies, after which students worked with assigned faculty advisors (who were each responsible for 5–10 students). Since the creation of the University College, all freshman – including our majors – are advised by a set professional advisors; when they transition to the Department as sophomores, they are then advised by the Director of Undergraduate Studies for one year, after which they work with assigned faculty advisors during their junior and senior years.

As advising has gotten more complicated and as the pressure to usher students through the program has gotten more and more intense, this approach has proved less and less effective.

Our goal is establish what I’ve called a “unified advising” plan. At the sophomore level, students would still be advised by the Director of Undergraduate Studies; however, during their junior and senior years, all majors would be advised by a single departmental advisor (who would receive a one-course reassignment); if the enrollment numbers justify it, perhaps a second advisor would be added at a later date.

In addition to traditional advising responsibilities (consultation with students, work on schedules, and general advising), the junior–senior advisor would also be responsible for completing “degree audits” for students at the 60-hour and 90-hour benchmarks.

<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.

We know that this pattern is being used in a variety of departments with differing levels of success. We hope to attract a faculty member who is a skilled user of MySam, as well as a student-focused person. If we are successful in attracting such a person and can plan the “rollout,” we think having a junior–senior advisor create a more unified and successful advising experience for our majors.

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

**FALL 2015.** *Reexamine the advising process.* We have discussed this generally at several Department meetings. The detailed examination of the process will begin in the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (or perhaps a sub-committee, if the Committee so chooses). These are some topics of current concern: promotion of advising, scheduling advising sessions, managing four-year plans (and generally navigating MySam), and clarifying departmental goals. This review of processes – with the goal of improving it through centralization – should also include discussions with departments that use a centralized advising model (such as Art and Criminology and Criminal Justice).

**FALL 2015.** *Confirm the recommended process with the Department.* As we always do, we will then bring the plan for unified advising to the Department for approval.

**SPRING 2016.** *Recruiting a Department advisor.* Once the Department approves the revised process, the chairperson will prepare a job description for the advisor, circulate it, and solicit people who are potentially interested.

**SPRING 2016.** *Selecting the advisor and adjusting the schedule.* The chairperson will select the advisor in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Once the person is selected, the chairperson will identify a course to be reassigned.

<i>Completion Benchmarks</i>	<b>Fall 2009 cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2010 cohort:</b>	<b>Fall 2011 cohort:</b>
(by latest department)	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.	Click here to enter text.
	<b>Fall 2012 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2013 target:</b>	<b>Fall 2014 target:</b>
	23.00%	25.00%	27.00%

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

Click here to enter text.

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

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<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.