

Academic Department Student Success Plan Update 2015-2018

Department: Psychology

Department Chair: Virgil Sheets

Department Mission: The Department of Psychology assists students to achieve their personal and professional potential through training in scientific methods and discipline-specific knowledge, promoting a spirit of active inquiry and critical thought, and fostering a sense of social responsibility.

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

To increase retention by 2% per year (modified from 1% in initial plan).

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

Original action steps (status/accomplishments listed below):

1. Work with university college to set-up advising plans and smooth transition to departmental advisors (Dept. Chair; Fall 2014).
(Entire faculty met with UC advisors to assure understanding & scheduling of major requirements, but also ongoing)
2. Assess effectiveness of majors-only section of PSY 101 (Chairperson; Spring 2015).
(examination on-going; offered two sections this fall to assure maximum availability to students; must reevaluate)
3. Assess effect of living/learning community (Chairperson; Fall 2015)
(examination on-going; initial data from Spring 2014 suggests no improvement on retention; must continue to monitor)
4. Expand participation of students and faculty in first year event programming (Retention coordinator; Fall 2014)
(Residence hall programming currently discontinued to focus on other activities).

New Step:

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of technology add-ons required in PSY 101 to student success (Note: This not only impacts psychology majors, but since PSY 101 is a major general education offering, it also impacts overall retention to the university). (Student Success Committee; Spring 2016).
2. Review content expectations of PSY 101 to identify changes that might improve success (and retention). (PSY 101 instructors; Spring 2016).

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.

<i>Retention Benchmarks²</i>	Fall 2012 cohort:	Fall 2013 cohort:	Fall 2014 cohort:
(by latest department)	61.9%	58.9%	59.0%
	Fall 2015 target:	Fall 2016 target:	Fall 2017 target:
	61%	63%	65%

Other Freshmen Retention related benchmarks of focal interest to department³

1. Reduce DFW rates in PSY 101 by 1% per year.

Department Persistence to Completion Goal(s):

Our original plan focused on 6-year rather than 4-year graduation goals, but the target was a 1% increase in graduate rates per year; we have modified the goal for a 1% increase/yr in 4 yr-rates and 1.5%/yr in 6-yr rates.

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

Original action steps (status/accomplishments listed below):

1. Assess effectiveness of prerequisite change for statistics (PSY 375). (Dept Faculty & Chairperson, Fall 2014).
(Substantially reduced barrier of students getting into PSY 375; see New Actions, #1 below).
2. Evaluate appropriate sequencing of 2nd course in the major (PSY 201). (Retention Coordinator & Chairperson, Fall 2016).
(see New Actions, #2 below).
3. Increase size or sections of high demand undergraduate courses. (Chairperson; Spring 2015).
(Most sections are now maxed at room size; additional sections available online).
4. Expand on-line offerings in summer to enable students to continue coursework while at home. (Dept Faculty & Chair; Summer, 2015).
(Some achieved, but more will come on-line with advent of distance program).

New action steps:

1. Assess change in PSY 375 completion rates (e.g., while students are getting into PSY 375, has removal of prereq negatively impacted completion). (Student Success Committee: Spring 2016).
2. Discontinue requiring of PSY 201 toward major (course is redundant with other classes and a significant barrier to student completion, particularly transfer students who are often thrown a semester behind because of lack of seats and major sequencing).

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.

(Recommended by department; paperwork being developed).

3. Contact all departmental seniors to reach out about possibility of completing the degree (Director of Undergraduate Studies; spring 2016).
4. Creation of a series of "Next Step" seminars to support senior's post-graduate planning (which would, we hope, motivate degree completion). (Director of Undergraduate Studies, Fall 2015). *(initial series created and advertised to students for 2015-2016).*
5. Re-balancing of advising to reduce disparities and increase availability for students. (CAS Dean's Office, at request of Director of Undergraduate Studies, Fall 2015). *(accomplished).*
6. Develop method to evaluate departmental advising/advisor success. (Chairperson & Director of Undergraduate Studies, Fall 2016).
7. Develop and implement degree audit process (Student Success Committee, Spring 2016).

<i>Completion</i>	Fall 2009 cohort:	Fall 2010 cohort:	Fall 2011 cohort:
<i>Benchmarks</i>			
(4-yr; last department)	17.7%	22.9% (2010 cohort)	26.0% (2011 cohort)
	Fall 2012 target:	Fall 2013 target:	Fall 2014 target:
	27.0%	28.0%	29.0%

<i>Completion</i>	Fall 2009 cohort:	Fall 2010 cohort:	Fall 2011 cohort:
<i>Benchmarks</i>			
(6-yr; last department)	46.4%	44.3%	38.7%
	Fall 2012 target:	Fall 2013 target:	Fall 2014 target:
	40.2%	41.7%	43.2%

Other Persistence to Completion related benchmarks of focal interest to department

None

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.

Apparently, prior goals relating to enrollment and post-college success are not currently being examined. However, the department has undertaken and planned a number of activities in these areas:

1. We have created an ad-hoc student success committee, headed by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. We are examining whether it should be instantiated into Departmental bylaws.
2. We formally admitted the first cohort of “distance-only” students in Fall 2015.
3. We are exploring the addition of a course in Diversity & Ethics in response to surveys of alums and recommendations from members of the Department Advisory Board.
4. We are discussing an increase in credit hours of two of the department’s core courses to allow greater time for skill practice and development.
5. As mentioned above, creation of a series of senior “Next Step” seminars to better focus students on post-graduation preparation (We will also encourage completion of the career ready certificate through these).