

What Departments Can Do to Impact Retention and Completion

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Academic departments play a crucial role in the student success vision for ISU. Here are ten action step examples intended to spur ideas, although not prescribe, that previous research shows has positive student impact:

1. Do you examine D/F/drop rates of classes annually and talk collectively about how to improve them through high standards coupled with innovative teaching methods?
2. Have you recently, or ever, examined the effects of your curriculum on students who change their major to something else or who transfer into your major? Can pre-requisites be made more universal?
3. Do an audit of students when they reach 60 and 90 credit hours. Should they remain in your major? Are they making sufficient forward progress, and if not, what are the stumbling blocks?
4. Are you a partner in a residential learning community, or have linked classes in your curriculum for particular cohorts of students. If not, why not?
5. Who handles advising in your department and how is it handled? Is that the optimal way or simply an artifact of convenience or habit?
6. Where might your strongest students be deployed as wrap around support to those experiencing more struggle (e.g., embedded tutors or supplemental instructors)? Can they earn course credit for doing it if paying them is not an option?
7. How might the Career Center be better integrated into your major(s) and sequencing of courses to degree?
8. Have a conversation with the faculty in other departments who teach gateway courses for students in your program. Are your needs, and theirs, optimally integrated?
9. Have you examined your student learning outcomes lately and your assessment of them to know that they are being achieved to your satisfaction?
10. Do you know where to find examples of innovation in departments like yours at other colleges and universities and have you considered visiting them or inviting them to visit you?

Resources

The research referenced in this report, as well as others, can be found in the following website locations:

The Office of Student Success (Research Briefs):

<http://www2.indstate.edu/studentssuccess/researchbriefs.htm>

University College (MAP-Works Reports):

<http://www.indstate.edu/uc/map-works/map-works-reports>

Office of Institutional Research (NSSE/FSSE/BCSSE Reports):

<http://irt2.indstate.edu/cms/ir/surveys/nsse-fsse-and-bcsse-reports/>

Office of Institutional Research (Strategic Enrollment Management Reports):

<http://irt2.indstate.edu/ir/index.cfm/sem/index>

Data at the college and department levels can also easily be mined from Blue Reports:

<http://irt2.indstate.edu/cms/ir/blue-reports/>