EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Oklahoma State University
Undergraduate Retention Task Force
Academic Year 2011-2012

Proposed Goals from the Undergraduate Retention Task Force to assist in the effort to increase retention and promote student success.

1. Promote Quality Teaching as a Main Priority
2. Promote Strong, Comprehensive Academic Advising
3. Implement Specific College Measures for Retention
4. Promote Early Student Affiliation with Academic Unit and Intended Major
5. Support Student Success through the LASSO Center
6. Strengthen Orientation Courses
7. Develop Effective Communication Links to Academic Affairs
8. Gain a Better Understanding of the Practices Related to Retention
9. Enhance and Support the Transfer Student Experience
10. Develop a Student Services Website

IMPLEMENTATION:
An implementation group will be identified for each goal to ensure that the activities and actions required to fulfill the goal are met. Leadership Teams for all the goals are listed, along with possible group members.

TIMELINE:
Work on each goal will commence quickly after the goals are approved and identifiable progress toward each goal will be made by fall 2012.
Oklahoma State University  
Undergraduate Retention Task Force  
Academic Year 2011-2012

**Introduction**
The charge of the Undergraduate Retention Task Force at Oklahoma State University was to identify the practices and processes that will serve to increase the undergraduate retention rate, decrease time to graduation, and improve student success. The faculty, administrators, and staff, who are members of the task force, represent all of the colleges at OSU and various other administrative units (Appendix A).

As presented in *Student Success in College*, by George D. Kuh, et. al (2010) there are two key components that enhance student engagement and promote student success. The first component considers the students themselves, particularly the time and effort they devote to their studies and the activities they engage in. The second component considers the institution, and how resources and services are allocated to meet the needs of students. What the university offers in the form of services and activities for students is of primary importance given these are driven by the institution and can be proactively structured to promote student success. **The primary goal of the Retention Task Force was to identify what the university can do to most effectively promote and deliver services and activities that will benefit students and support their success through graduation.**

Currently there are a variety of effective processes in place at OSU to promote increased retention and greater student success. The divisions of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Institutional Diversity all have activities that engage and support students in their college experience. These activities are described in Appendix B.

**Summary of Task Force Activities**
The first meeting of the task force was a day retreat on July 27, 2011. The retreat began with introductions and advanced into exercises to promote group interaction. A study completed by the OSU Registrar that identified variables that affect first year retention for 2007, 2008, and 2009 cohorts was discussed (Appendix C). Studies completed by ACT that identified factors affecting retention at 4-year public institutions were also discussed. A handout comparing retention and graduation rates for Big 12 institutions was reviewed. Working groups to focus on specific areas affecting retention were considered.

The second meeting of the task force identified co-chairs and produced a more complete list of focus areas in which to develop an action plan to increase student success. The co-chairs, Dr.
Brenda Masters and Lynn Brown, suggested that members identify their areas of interest so that the task force could then be divided into Working Groups (Appendix D). The Working Groups invited members outside the task force, including students, to become involved.

By the third full meeting, the individual working groups had greater clarity of purpose and more distinct paths of action. Each group provided a statement of purpose and a list of actions that could be taken in their area to increase retention. The actions were considered in three ways. Are the actions currently underway? If not, what are the obstacles? Are the obstacles surmountable?

For the fourth meeting, the working groups identified actions that were possible to implement. The actionable items focused on what the university can do to increase the effectiveness and delivery of student services and activities. Based on stated goals, actionable items were identified by the working groups, and from the ensuing discussion, the following list was developed. Although the goals are numbered for ease of reference, the numeration is not meant to imply a ranking of importance.

For each goal, an Implementation Group will be established to include faculty, staff, students, and personnel from various units. The implementation groups will be guided and organized through the Office of Academic Affairs. A Leadership Team for each of the implementation groups is named and units from which members could be identified, or possible members, are listed. A suggested timeline for advancing the work is provided for each goal and associated actions.
Proposed Goals from the Undergraduate Retention Task Force
To Assist in the Effort to Increase Retention
And to Promote Student Success

Oklahoma State University
2011-2012

1. Promote Quality Teaching as a Main Priority
2. Promote Strong, Comprehensive Academic Advising
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GOALS and ACTIONABLE ITEMS

1. **Promote Quality Teaching as a Main Priority**

**ACTIONS:**

- Develop faculty lines that concentrate on teaching, mentoring, and scholarship related to teaching.
- Institute approaches to develop analytic intelligence, practical intelligence, creativity, and wisdom (Sternberg, 2010).
- Assign and reward the most talented faculty/instructors/TAs who teach general education courses.
- Strongly encourage general education instructors to complete an AA/ITLE sponsored series of workshops designed specifically for GE course needs, perhaps associated with a certificate series. The series could also be developed with the potential of providing a stipend upon completion.
- Require all TAs who provide classroom instruction to complete an AA/ITLE sponsored series of workshops and other teacher training.
- Provide classroom instruction to adjunct faculty with strong encouragement and possible financial incentive to participate.
- Provide a comprehensive orientation program for new faculty that includes acculturation to the OSU campus and professional development on quality teaching.
- Offer a required session for department heads and others who supervise teaching.
- Create a committee/process to assess TA/adjunct teaching across campus.
- Expand the opportunities to enhance understanding of diversity issues, perhaps through a certificate series, to faculty/instructors/TAs. The series would include an illustration of appropriate terminology and provide suggestions for instructors on developing environments that support and promote a culturally responsive institution. The certificate series could also be developed with the potential of providing a stipend upon completion.

**Implementation Group**

**Leadership Team:** Chris Ormsbee and an additional faculty member who is a recognized good teacher

**Liaison Support Group:** comprised of members from ITLE, Student Services, Instructional Council, Multicultural Affairs, Assessment (expect in effective teaching/student learning), Faculty Council (chair of Academic Standards & Policy Committee), and a department head.

**Timeline:** Discussions of faculty positions and planning for certificate series could commence during spring 2012 with a goal of having some training available by fall 2012. Further refinement of certificate series and evaluation of teaching processes could occur during the academic year of 2012-2013.
2. **Promote Strong, Comprehensive Academic Advising**

**ACTIONS:**

- Articulate a shared conceptual framework to guide advisement efforts at OSU-Stillwater and OSU-Tulsa.
- Administer a student survey at the time of enrollment each semester, or annually, with questions about the student’s most recent advising experiences. The STAR System software has the capacity to survey students at each advising session.
- Administer an exit survey, upon submission of a diploma application, with questions regarding the students’ advising experiences during their entire OSU undergraduate experience.
- Administer an annual advisor survey to understand 1) advisors’ perceptions, challenges, and ideas for improvement; 2) advisors’ referrals to campus resources; and 3) advisors’ follow up on student use of those resources.
- Elevate importance of advisement and status of advisors.
- Form stronger advising/mentoring partnerships among faculty, staff, alumni, and student peers as well as among offices on campus including, but not limited to, units; advisement services the Office of Multicultural Affairs, and the New Student Orientation.
- Clarify roles of advisors, whether faculty or professional staff.
- Determine goals for advisee loads for faculty and professional staff.
- Develop an advisor guide or protocol that reflects university and college specific principles and goals.
- Invest in professional development to ensure consistent and meaningful approaches to advisement.
  - This recommendation is especially important as it relates to the academic advisement of diverse students. For example, Clark and Kalionzes (2008) specifically suggest: 1) advise the whole student, 2) understand the student’s family background, 3) serve as a mentor, 4) build trust to make personal meaning, 5) understand identity development, 6) develop multicultural competencies, and 7) interact with students in their world including residence halls and campus events (page 212-214).
- Create a system of review, recognition, and rewards to promote advising excellence.
- Ensure that faculty advisors receive recognition and credit on annual appraisals.
- Examine salary structure of professional advisors and reward achievement.
- Articulate university expectations along with unit-specific expectations for the required and desired qualifications of OSU advisors.
- Implement The STAR System software in Fall 2012
  - The STAR System provides a unified, university-wide calendar management and advising appointment scheduling system; customizable searching and reporting of student data; secure online document storage and advisor sharing of student files; and a simplified, proactive Academic Alert System that tracks and records multi-way, branded communication amongst advisors, faculty, tutors, and students.
- Invest in iPad and other technology tools for advisors as appropriate.

**Implementation Group** will be the Academic Advising Task Force, chaired by Amy Martindale

**Timeline:** Time frame objectives should be identified by the Advisement Task Force.
3. **Implement Specific College Measures for Retention**

**ACTIONS:**

- Each college should be called upon to develop a specific plan, with assessable objectives and actions, which will be measured and used to improve retention in the college.
- The information about the college plan, along with assessment metrics, could be reported in an annual meeting with Academic Affairs.
- Special attention will be paid to underrepresented student groups in the college plans.

Activities, efforts, and resources of the colleges need to be focused on enhancing retention and student success that culminates in graduation in 6 years or less. Efforts at all levels of the institution are crucial for fundamental change in the engagement of students.

**Implementation Group** will be Instruction Council.

**Timeline:** Discussions could commence during Summer 2012, with Retention Improvement Plans due in Oct 2012.
4. Promote Early Student Affiliation with Academic Unit and Intended Major

ACTIONS:

- The academic units will be asked to describe the current and planned efforts that promote retention, and to explain how these factors may be strengthened. These retention efforts will be addressed in the Academic Program Reviews.
- Identify barriers to academic function and connectivity

Robust engagement activities are provided for students by the Divisions of Student Affairs, Institutional Diversity, and Multicultural Affairs, but processes to promote connectedness between students and their intended major and the associated academic unit need to be strengthened. Research indicates that the sooner a student becomes involved with a major, and affiliated with an academic area, the probability of retention increases and the time to graduation decreases. Academic units are a primary contact point for students within the institution and the opportunity to connect to students should be maximized. It is recommended that each academic unit begin new actions that promote undergraduate attachment to and involvement with the unit. Undergraduate students need to feel a degree of ownership in the academic unit in which they are a major. Greater engagement between students and the academic units have multiple benefits, in addition to greater academic success, including:
  - students get to know each other;
  - friendships and social networks within the majors are enhanced;
  - students, faculty, and staff within the unit function more as a common working group;
  - mentoring relationships are likely to evolve between faculty/staff and students.

Implementation Group

Leadership Team: Shiretta Ownbey and Steve Damron

Liaison Support Group: comprised of faculty from each college identified as Retention Champions, staff already involved in student engagement, student representatives. Possible members are Brenda Masters, Matt Brown, and Precious Elmore.

Timeline: Initial discussions summer 2012, with the goal of beginning a student engagement program in at least 3 additional units each fall.
5. Support Student Success through the LASSO Center

**ACTIONS:**

- Devote more effort and resources in the hiring, training, and utilization of facilitators and tutors in the LASSO Center.
- Systematically coordinate efforts among LASSO, Academic Advisement for Student Athletes, and college advising units.
- Provide a link from the LASSO website for faculty, staff, and students to provide input as to what services LASSO could provide and to gather assessment on current activities. This link would provide a conduit to hear what the entire academic community recommends with respect to processes for student success.
- Encourage faculty who teach large sections, from which numerous tutor requests are generated, to encourage strong students in the course to become a tutor. Faculty could also assist the students in contacting the LASSO Center to apply.
- Coordinate LASSO Center activities with the other student success centers and activities across campus

**Implementation Group**

**Leadership Team:** Cheryl Devuyst and a representative from DIRECTORS OF STUDENT ACADEMIC SERVICES

Liaison Support Group: comprised of representatives associated with Lasso activities or directors of other student academic support units. Possible members are Katy Perry, William Jaco, and Raye Tree.

**Timeline:** Discussions summer 2012 with 20% increase in facilitators and tutors by fall 2012 with quality improvement processes in place, followed by continual increases as needed.
6. **Strengthen Orientation Courses**

**ACTIONS:**
- Create new course name to replace ‘orientation course’ title.
- Articulate core goals of the orientation courses.
- Identify university information to incorporate in all orientation courses.
- Systematically assess the outcomes of the orientation courses.

Use information from students, staff, and faculty, to design an orientation plan with learning objectives and assessment guidelines for all first-year and new student orientation courses. The common guidelines would allow for college flexibility while providing a baseline set of common topics to which each college could add their own information. Initially, a general study is needed to address the following questions.

- What is the current content of the courses?
- Who teaches the orientation courses?
- Are the orientation courses required or optional?
- Do the courses transfer between colleges?
- How many credits are earned from taking the course?
- When are they taught?
- What training occurs for instructors?
- How are the courses assessed?
- What should the courses be called? If the name of the course is changed, then a course action form will need to be filed.

**Implementation Group**

**Leadership Team:** Bruce Crauder and Missy Wikle

**Liaison Support Group:** comprised of representatives from LASSO, ITLE, each college, the library, and the student body. Possible members are Lynn Brown, Shirettta Ownbey, Amy Martindale, Bob Davis, Steve Damron, and Matt Brown

7. **Develop Effective Communication Links to Academic Affairs**

**ACTION:**

Develop an Academic Hotline System.

- A single point of contact is needed for questions and concerns, which could provide a mode of communication directly to the concierge, or other well informed person, to direct students, parents, or other concerned parties to the appropriate office or person to resolve an issue. The goal of the hotline system is to better ensure effective communication among the identified entities in support of student success. The mode of communication could include telephone, email, or live chat.

**Implementation Group**

**Leadership Team:** Megan Horton and Debbie Stump

**Liaison Support Group:** comprised of representatives from Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Directors of Student Academic Services, Public Communication, the library, and the student body. Possible members are Amy Martindale, Brenda Masters, and Monisha Prabhu.

**Timeline:** A link to the Academic Hotline, at least for a telephone number and an email address, should be included in the initial roll out of the Student Services Website by fall 2012. Live chat capability would require more resources and organization and should only be implemented when it is possible to fully cover all stated hours of operation, ideally by spring 2013.
8. **Gain a Better Understanding of the Practices Related to Retention**

**ACTIONS:**

Conduct analyses of the following areas

- Effects of Scholarship and Financial Aid Practices on Student Retention
- The Definition of Entering Freshman
- Barriers to graduation
- Students who were predicted not to be retained, but who remain enrolled
- The Destination of OSU’s Departing Students

Create automated emails regarding enrollment holds

- Overnight after a hold is placed on a student’s account
- A summary of all holds sent to each student before enrollment opens for the next semester

The following questions concerning enrollment holds practices need to be addressed:

- What types of holds exist?
- On what criteria are the holds placed?
- How does the timing of the holds affect retention?
- What reasonable adjustments can be made to support the success of students?
- How are students informed of their enrollment holds?

The following questions concerning financial aid practices need to be addressed:

- What proportion of students lose eligibility for OSU scholarships, OHLAP, and federal aid?
- For students who lose aid eligibility, what is their retention rate?
- What can be done to help more students maintain eligibility for their aid?

Research supports the importance of continued aid eligibility to support continued enrollment (DesJardins et al., 2002; Henry et al., 2004; Herzog, 2005). Further research by Martindale & Hammons (in press, 2012) indicates that mandatory interventions for students at risk of losing their aid can greatly increase continued aid eligibility and student retention.

Procedures to annually remove students from the freshman cohort who enrolled at OSU, never attended OSU, but failed to cancel their enrollment prior to the census date need to be developed. During fall 2011 some of these procedures were implemented and proved successful in slightly increasing the freshman retention rate.

Identify and address the department, college, university, and Regents’ degree requirements that represent barriers to graduation. An example of this process has already been undertaken by the College of Arts & Sciences. The changes that resulted from their process is in Appendix F.

Gain insight into what helps students stay at OSU by surveying currently enrolled students who were retained from the 2009, 2010, and 2011 freshman cohort, but were predicted to not be retained in the OSU Freshman Retention Analysis Reports. An investigation of what helped students who were not expected to be retained, but who somehow beat the odds to return their sophomore year could provide insight to assist future students.
For students from the fall freshman cohort who are no longer enrolled at OSU the following fall, identify the institution of their enrollment during second fall term. It would be interesting to know, for example, what percent of students who are not retained are transferring to institutions which offer majors, or career training, that OSU does not provide.

Once the above analyses are complete, a report will be sent to the Directors of Student Academic Services to guide future efforts.

**Implementation Group**
**Leadership Team:** Celeste Campbell, Chad Blew, and Jeremy Penn

**Liaison Support Group:** comprised of representatives from Scholarships and Financial Aid, Bursar, Student Services for Athletes, Directors of Student Academic Services, and Institutional Research and Information Management. Possible members include Lee Tarrant and Amy Martindale. Once the work commences the implementation group may want to separate into two groups, one for financial aid and one for enrollment holds.

**Timeline:** Information gathering should commence in summer 2012 with analyses occurring in fall 2012, followed by a report to Directors of Student Academic Services by spring 2013.
9. **Enhance and Support the Transfer Student Experience**

**ACTIONS:**
- Define the OSU transfer population
- Form a task force to evaluate and improve the transfer student experience with participation from the OSU campus as well as those from key feeder institutions and OSU constituent campuses.
- Create a Transfer Student Focus Group comprised of recent and retained OSU transfer students to monitor the transfer student prospective.
- Establish early connections to students from primary feeder schools, including development of programming to create a true Gateway Program from NOC-STW to OSU-STW and from constituent campus to OSU-STW.
- Identify barriers to smooth transfer of student academic credit
- Identify barriers to smooth transition of transfer students to the OSU community
- Determine key skills related to success of transfer students and create programming to assist in the development of these skills.
- Re-establish transfer student resource connections, virtually through website and social networking, as well as a physical location in the student union.
- Develop a transfer student mentor program utilizing current transfer students and faculty/staff who were transfer students at one time.
- Develop welcome week and First 8 weeks programming to go along with freshman programming already established and planned.
- Liaison Position: Ideally this would be someone who would understand the academic issues of incoming transfer students and that who could be used for referrals when prospective transfers need to know how their credits transfer and what degree programs are the most reasonable.
- Consider accepting credits for transfer courses, rather than grades from transfer courses, to provide transfer students, their advisors, and other concern parties a more realistic perception of student success at OSU.

**Implementation Group** will be the Task Force for the Transfer Student Experience.

**Timeline**
- Establish Transfer Task Force in May 2012, including OSU campus and key feeder schools
- Fall 2012 - Continue Transfer Student focus groups for those retained from 11-12 school year to 12-13 school year.
- Expand programming for NOC-Stillwater including orientation for freshmen beginning each semester, presentations to orientation classes, and office hours

**Data Needed**
- Survey of current programming utilized by transfer students (tutoring, career services, etc.)
- Survey current transfers regarding their experiences, preparedness, choice of major, living situation, resources used, etc.
- Retention and Graduation rates of transfer students
  - Divide by college
  - Divide by major
  - Divide by feeder school
  - Divide by hours transferred in
  - Divide by type of transfer institution
  - Divide by # of institutions attended prior to OSU
10. Develop a Student Services Website

**ACTIONS:**

- Create a single website that provides links to academic functions and student support systems.

In an effort to centralize information and deliver content in a manner that most effectively meets the needs of students, the OSU Retention Task Force proposes the creation of a centralized student services website that is oriented to the specific needs of students. The ultimate goal is to construct a platform, which has customizable sections, that provides information in an organized, one-stop-shop design, where students can quickly find what they are looking for. Information could include mentoring and advising partnerships across campus.

The student services website would be a single point of access for students where they can enter a space that is uniquely designed to meet their needs and provide critical information in a format that contributes to their success in college. Students need access to information that is presented in a manner that reduces confusion and promotes student retention through the effective display and availability of resources. Details regarding the proposal for a Student Services Website are provided in Appendix E.

**Implementation Group**

**Leadership Team:** Brenda Masters and Lynn Brown

**Liaison Support Group:** comprised of members from OSU Communications, Information Technology, Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Registrar’s Office, SGA Representative, ITLE, LASSO, and initially a student computer assistant. Eventually, a full time position for a website monitor/developer for this student website, and other websites associated with Academic Affairs should be considered. Possible members are: Megan Horton, Tina Meier, Christine Crenshaw, Darlene Hightower, Jeffrey Hartman, Celeste Campbell, Doug Reed, Lee Bird, Matt Brown, Flint Holbrook, Krishna Chaitanya Yarlagadda, and Monisha Prabhu.

**Timeline:** Construction of Phase I should commence immediately with the goal of having the initial site in place by fall 2012. Update and further development of the site will be a perpetual responsibility of the institution.
Appendix A
Undergraduate Retention Task Force
Oklahoma State University
Summer 2011 Retreat Participants

Faculty/Instruction Council/Dean
A&S  Bruce Crauder
SSB  Mark Weiser
HES  Shiretta Ownbey
ENGR Lynn Brown (representing David Thompson)
CASNR Cheryl Devuyst
Vet Med  Chris Ross

Academic Affairs – Pamela Fry
Faculty Council Rep – Steve Damron
Staff Council Rep – Debbie Stump
ITLE – Hong Lin
Registrar – Celeste Campbell
Library – Karen Neurohr
IRIM – Christie Hawkins
UASC Director or Designee – Chris Campbell
Student Affairs – Matt Brown
Multicultural Affairs – Precious Elmore
DSAS – Amy Martindale
Academic Services for Athletes – Marilyn Middlebrook
Career Services – Pam Ehlers
New Student Orientation – Missy Wikle
Admissions Rep – Christine Crenshaw
HLC Accreditation – Brenda Masters
OSU/Tulsa – Susan Johnson
Teaching & Curriculum Leadership – Chris Ormsbee
Psychology – Melanie Page
Entomology & Plant Pathology – Jeanmarie Verchot Lubicz
University Assessment & Testing – Jeremy Penn
IRIM – Lee Tarrant

Student Reps (early/advanced) TBA

Sub-committees:
Student Tracking System Chair:
First-year Experience Chair:
New Student Orientation Chair:
Orientation Courses Chair:
Faculty Development Chair:
Appendix B
Current Activities that Support Retention in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Institutional Diversity

The Division of Academic Affairs has various support activities and resources available to drive and improve student success. Academic support systems include extensive use of D2L for course management; the Learning and Student Success Opportunities Center (LASSO) provides mentoring, advising, and tutoring; the Academic Alert System provides expedient information to advisors and students regarding student progress; and the Institute of Teaching and Learning Excellence (ITLE) provides training in instruction and professional leadership. More specifically, the facilitator program in LASSO pairs students in need with someone trained to identify challenges that the student may be facing and help the student resolve these issues. Tutors from LASSO can be appropriately identified for the student during the facilitator process, or students can register online for tutoring. ITLE supports student learning by helping faculty, instructors, and teaching assistants employ the most up-to-date instructional approaches and technology in their courses. This is accomplished through ongoing workshops delivered by faculty known for their quality teaching, classroom observations and consultations provided by staff with expertise in instructional design, and the facilitation of specific events in partnership with campus units responsible for student success. The library, which has a vital role in the academic life of students, offers instructional sessions, academic resources, research assistance, and educational exhibits and programs to enhance learning.

The Division of Student Affairs at Oklahoma State University provides opportunities for students to engage in a number of co-curricular activities that foster personal development, enhance their academic experience, and promote meaningful connections with the institution. The division has implemented a number of programs that encourage student engagement through enriching educational experiences within a supportive and inclusive campus environment. The division programming model prioritizes six key areas: Academic Excellence, Leadership, Service and Civic Engagement, Finding Your Purpose, Broadening Your Horizons and Wellness. Student Affairs actively engages students by providing academic enrichment programs such as Living-Learning Communities and Faculty Associate programming in the residence halls. The Office of Campus Life provides a broad range of leadership and self-governance opportunities including the Presidents Leadership Council, the McKnight Leader Scholar program, Greek Life and Student Government Association. Career Services engages students through career fairs and provides individual career counseling and employment skill development. Campus Recreation engages students through fitness classes, intramurals and outdoor adventure programs that promote teamwork, leadership and wellness. The Service Learning and Volunteer Center provides students with opportunities to volunteer in the community and participate in service projects. International
Students and Scholars enhances the diversity of the campus, providing meaningful cultural experiences for students. Retention also is enhanced through programs such as Welcome Week and Camp Cowboy which help students make the transition to college.

The Division of Institutional Diversity strives to develop and support environments where all members of the community are engaged in broadening their perspectives about differences, while actively seeking to know individuals. To achieve this mission, seminars, workshops, courses, and other activities are offered that provide opportunities for students to broaden their perspectives regarding differences and notions of inclusion. Through the retention efforts outlined below, Institutional Diversity rewards students for academic excellence, assists them in building meaningful connections with the University while supporting their cultural backgrounds and promoting a culture of inclusion at OSU.

The Retention Initiative for Student Excellence (RISE) program is designed to assist first year students in their transition from high school to the university. Primarily focused on addressing academic issues that might challenge students, the RISE program is also attentive to the variety of social and financial challenges that students face. The RISE program also provides students with connections to mentors, scheduled study group sessions, one-on-one tutoring, opportunities to serve in leadership roles, and social activities. The goal for all RISE students is to achieve a minimum grade point average of 3.0 by the end of their first year at OSU.

The Retention Initiative for Student Excellence (RISE) Jumpstart Program is a four-week summer residential experience designed to provide opportunities to first year students that will help them to achieve a smooth transition to college life. Life skills seminars and familiarity with the current academic support networks available on campus are intertwined throughout the program’s schedule.

Student Support Services (SSS) is a federally funded TRiO program that allows selected educational institutions to provide fundamental support to students at the college level. Students involved in SSS receive free on-campus services, ranging from academic advising to personal mentoring. SSS students meet with their designated coordinator/advisor several times throughout the semester. Coordinators assist students with academic coursework, financial aid, career goals, and with their overall transition to college life. Students may also take advantage of free tutoring, workshops, and opportunities to attend cultural events. Through access to the SSS Success Center, SSS provides supplemental instruction in math, laboratory science, composition, literature, foreign language, study skills, critical thinking and computer literacy as well as education and resources on topics ranging from financial counseling and aid application assistance, career exploration, and monthly workshops.

The Inclusion Leadership Program (ILP) is a year-long leadership program designed to equip OSU students with the skills and knowledge they will need to become effective leaders in a more
diversely inclusive society. The students in the ILP program share their understandings of leadership with teams of students from Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Stillwater. By becoming mentors to high school students, the OSU students will pass on what they have learned to high school students, while guiding them to become leaders themselves. In essence, leaders will be developing leaders. In summary, the Inclusion Leadership Program involves a series of connected activities that help students from local high schools to: (1) broaden perspectives about themselves and others; (2) develop inclusive leadership skills; and (3) increase their knowledge regarding global networking.

The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) is a place for students of different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences to come together to learn more about each other and about themselves. OMA takes a holistic approach to empower Oklahoma State University students to think and act in ways that will embrace and promote a more inclusive world. The Office of Multicultural Affairs aims to assist students in achieving academic excellence and developing their personal and professional character, while engaging in the campus and greater community.

OMA offers scholarships, leadership development programs, cultural education opportunities and mentorship programs. The mentorship programs serve to promote the successful transition of incoming first year, sophomore, and transfer students to the OSU community. OMA programs promote mentorship, leadership and a sense of community for all students. Academic seminars, cultural experiences, service opportunities and social programs are also available to assist students in achieving their academic and personal goals. Some of the mentorship programs include the African American Mentor Program, Retention Initiative for Asian American Student (RIAAS), Hispanic And Latino Student Success Initiative (HALSSI), Native American Resiliency through Education and Leadership Program (NARELP), Leaders Advising, Mentoring, and Building Diversity Allies (LAMBDA), and Women’s Mentorship Program (WMP).

On the college level, several colleges have programs in place that support the academic life of students. For example, the College of Agriculture and Natural Sciences has Student Assistant Mentors (SAM). The SAM program provides both social and academic mentoring to freshman students through successful upper classmen. The College of Human Sciences has a similar program, the Ambassador Mentor Program; that aligns student mentors with students in the freshman experience courses. This program provides advisement mentoring, as well as general academic and social mentoring.

In May 2010, a survey was conducted for undergraduate student initiatives across the various colleges. At that time, all of the colleges reported having a student success center facility, with the exception of Spears School of Business, which had plans in place for development of such a facility. All colleges reported peer advising and mentoring, with the exception of Arts & Sciences and Spears School of Business, which had plans in place. All colleges reported extensive communication with freshman who were at risk of dropping out and with students who were on probation or academic notice, had not declared a major, had not enrolled for the following semester, had enrollment holds, or had poor grades.
Appendix C

Oklahoma State University Fall 2009 Freshman Retention Analysis Report
K. Celeste Campbell, Ph.D., University Registrar, Oklahoma State University
November 2010

Bulleted Summary

Results from the Fall 2009 Freshman Cohort

- The one-year retention rate at Oklahoma State University for the Fall 2009 freshman cohort was 78.3%, a slight decrease from the 2008 cohort (78.7%). During the past 10 years the highest freshman retention rate was 81.7% (2000 cohort), and the lowest freshman retention rate was 77.1% (2007 cohort).
- In this study, retention status for the 2009 freshman cohort was predicted moderately well (81.6% accuracy) from a set of academic, financial, and demographic variables. This is a 63% improvement over chance classification as retained or departed one year after beginning college.
- The most important variables that predicted retention status were the college GPA, the number of credit hours dropped during the first semester, an unpaid OSU balance at the end of the first semester (nonpayment hold), and the high school GPA. Students who were not retained:
  - had significantly lower college GPAs;
  - withdrew from significantly more credit hours of coursework during the first semester;
  - were significantly more likely to have an unpaid OSU bill at the end of the first semester; and
  - had significantly lower high school GPAs.
- Other variables that made a relatively small contribution to the prediction of retention were: the amount of unmet financial need during the first semester (departed students had a larger gap between the cost of education and their expected family contribution plus their total financial assistance); ACT score (departed students had lower scores); amount of scholarships, grants, and tuition waivers (departed students had less assistance that did not require repayment); first generation college status (departed students were more likely to have parents who did not attend college); gender (male students were more likely to depart); and race (departed students were less likely to be Caucasian).
- A group of students has been identified who were predicted as retained but who in fact have left OSU. These students, who resemble retained students on most of the variables examined in this study, are of particular interest. Further research is needed to understand why these students left and whether OSU could have taken steps to retain them.

Consistency between the Freshman Cohorts of Fall 2007, Fall 2008, and Fall 2009

- Retention status was predicted with similar levels of accuracy for the 2007, 2008, and 2009 cohorts (correct classification 82.4%, 81.3%, and 81.6%, respectively; improvement over chance classification 65%, 63%, and 63%, respectively).
- The most important common predictors of retention for all three cohorts were:
  - the graduation/retention GPA;
  - the nonpayment hold indicating an unpaid account balance;
  - the number of credit hours dropped during the first semester; and
  - the high school GPA.
  An additional measure that surfaced as an important predictor in the 2008 cohort is the number of credit hours earned during the first semester.
- The minor differences in methodology and results between the three studies are described in Appendix A.

Narrative Summary
Over the past 10 years, the freshman retention rate at Oklahoma State University has ranged from 77.1% for the 2007 cohort to 81.7% for the 2000 cohort (OSU Student Profile, 2010). Freshman retention is defined as the percent of full-time freshman students enrolled during a fall semester who return for the following fall semester. The purpose of this study was to identify factors that were potential predictors of freshman retention, to evaluate the relative predictive importance of these factors, and to use them to describe how the retained students differ from those who departed. Records were examined from 2,977 freshmen who were enrolled in at least 12 credit hours at OSU during the Fall 2009 semester. After one year, during the Fall 2010 semester, 2,330 of these students were still enrolled at OSU and 647 were not enrolled. This constitutes a 78.3% freshman retention rate.

Using an initial set of 23 variables, preliminary univariate and subsequent multivariate discriminant analyses resulted in a set of 11 variables that were moderately successful in predicting whether or not students were retained (81.6% accuracy; 63% improvement over chance as measured by the proportional reduction in error). The initial set of variables represented pre-college skills and abilities, college academic performance, academic and social integration, financial resources, family and community background, and personal attributes. The most important discriminating variables were the college cumulative graduation/retention GPA, the number of credit hours dropped during the first semester, an unpaid OSU balance at the end of the first semester (nonpayment hold), and the high school GPA. Students who were not retained had significantly lower graduation/retention GPAs, withdrew from significantly more credit hours of coursework during the first semester, were significantly more likely to have a nonpayment hold at the end of the first semester, and had significantly lower high school GPAs.

The set of predictor variables was quite successful predicting students who were retained (86.5% accuracy). However, 36.3% of the students who departed were predicted to be retained. That is, approximately one-third of the freshmen who did not enroll at OSU for a second year appeared to be successful academically and did not appear to have severe financial difficulties. Additional analyses were performed to compare these students with those who were retained and with the other students who were not retained, and the results suggest that the students in this group are generally very similar to the retained group on the academic and financial variables used in this analysis.

Although the data examined in this study assist with understanding retention, they do not provide a complete explanation for the departure of OSU freshmen. Further research is needed—particularly to explore reasons for the departure of the students who were predicted to be retained. Telephone surveys conducted with students who left OSU between 2005 and 2007 identified the following factors as most important in their departure decision: financial problems, academic difficulty, personal problems, and the location of OSU (OSU First-Semester Retention, 2007; Retention, 2007). A similar survey, targeting a sample of the 2008 freshmen who departed but were predicted as retained, was conducted by graduate student Kathryn Weinland during spring 2010. From her interviews, she found that these students left for financial reasons, because their career goals changed, or for personal reasons. All 20 of the students who were interviewed indicated that they were still pursuing their education at institutions that were a better fit for them.
Methodology and Results

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

Freshman retention is a key measure of student and institutional success. It is defined as the percent of full-time freshman students enrolled during a fall semester who return for the following fall semester. Over the past 10 years, the freshman retention rate at Oklahoma State University has ranged from 77.1% for the 2007 cohort to 81.7% for the 2000 cohort (OSU Student Profile, 2010). For the most recent freshman cohort, those students beginning college in 2009, the freshman retention rate was 78.3%.

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that were potential predictors of retention, to evaluate the relative predictive importance of these factors, and to use them to describe how the retained students differ from those who departed.

Subjects

The subjects for this study are the students in the Fall 2009 Oklahoma State University freshman cohort: 2,977 students who were enrolled in at least 12 credit hours as new freshmen during the Fall 2009 semester.

Cohort Enrollment Status

The enrollment status of the Fall 2009 freshman cohort is shown in Figure 1. Spring 2010 enrollment showed a loss of 269 of the original students (9.0%). One year after initial enrollment, the Fall 2010 enrollment showed a loss of 647 of the original cohort students (21.7%). This constitutes a freshman retention rate of 78.3%. In Summer 2010, 437 of the cohort students (14.7%) were enrolled. A total of 21 students withdrew from all courses before completing the Fall 2009 semester. None of these students returned for Spring, Summer, or Fall 2010. Figures 2 and 3 provide one-year retention information by the College of initial enrollment.

---

Figure 1. Fall 2009 Freshman Cohort Enrollment

![Figure 1. Fall 2009 Freshman Cohort Enrollment](image)

Figure 2. Cohort Enrollment Status after One Year by College of Initial Enrollment

![Figure 2. Cohort Enrollment Status after One Year by College of Initial Enrollment](image)
Definitions of Predictor Variables

For this study, an initial set of 23 variables was examined to identify factors that were potential predictors of student retention status after one year—factors that would be able to predict whether students were still enrolled at OSU (members of the retained group) or were not enrolled (members of the departed group). Table 1 provides a listing of the initial predictor variables, along with their descriptions and the corresponding category from Tinto’s model of student departure (1993, chap. 4).
Table 1. Initial Predictor Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Definition/Explanation</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Highest composite ACT score</td>
<td>Precollege skills and abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Class Rank</td>
<td>High school class rank as a percentage, where first in class = 100%</td>
<td>Precollege skills and abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS GPA</td>
<td>High school cumulative GPA</td>
<td>Precollege skills and abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Hours of W</td>
<td>Number of credit hours with grades of W during Fall 09 (courses dropped between week 2 and week 12)</td>
<td>College academic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Earned Hours</td>
<td>Number of credit hours earned Fall 09 (excludes courses dropped, courses with grades of F or I, and remedial courses)</td>
<td>College academic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP Fin Aid Status 104</td>
<td>Satisfactory academic progress for financial aid purposes assessed at the end of the Freshman year (Summer 2010); based on good academic standing and successful completion of at least 75% of total cumulative hours attempted; Cleared, probation, suspended.</td>
<td>College academic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Academic Standing</td>
<td>Binary variable indicating academic standing, where good academic standing is a 1.7 grad/ret GPA with 30 earned hours or less and a 2.0 grad/ret GPA with more than 30 earned hours</td>
<td>College academic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad/Ret GPA</td>
<td>Cumulative graduation/retention GPA, including courses from other institutions. Zero GPAs that resulted from withdrawal from all courses were replaced with “missing.”</td>
<td>College academic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional GPA</td>
<td>GPA calculated from all OSU courses</td>
<td>College academic performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Attempted Hours</td>
<td>Number of credit hours attempted Fall 09</td>
<td>Academic integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked Courses</td>
<td>Binary variable indicating whether or not student enrolled in at least two linked courses during Fall 09.</td>
<td>Academic/social integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 College</td>
<td>College of initial enrollment: AG, AS, BU, ED, EN, GU, HES</td>
<td>Academic/social integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Life Fall 09</td>
<td>Binary variable indicating whether or not student lived in on-campus housing during Fall 09</td>
<td>Social integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK Resident</td>
<td>Binary variable indicating whether or not student is classified as an Oklahoma resident</td>
<td>Family and community background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation College</td>
<td>Binary variable indicating whether or not student is a first generation college student (neither parent attended a college or university)</td>
<td>Family and community background</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Binary variable indicating student’s gender</td>
<td>Personal attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>Binary variable indicating whether or not student is Caucasian</td>
<td>Personal attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Age in 2009</td>
<td>Personal attributes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Assistance No Repayment</td>
<td>Total dollar amount of Fall 09 scholarships, grants, and tuition waivers</td>
<td>Financial resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Need to Borrow</td>
<td>Fall 09 cost of education minus expected family contribution and all “free” assistance (scholarships, grants, and tuition waivers). Need to borrow was given a zero value if student did not file FAFSA.</td>
<td>Financial resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Unmet Need</td>
<td>Fall 09 cost of education minus expected family contribution and all assistance (scholarships, tuition waivers, grants, student loans, and parent loans). Unmet need was given a zero value if student did not file FAFSA.</td>
<td>Financial resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted Gross Income</td>
<td>Family adjusted gross income; available for students who filed</td>
<td>Financial resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonpayment Hold Fall 09</td>
<td>Binary variable indicating whether or not student had a nonpayment hold at the end of the first semester (December 11, 2009). Generally a nonpayment hold is placed on a student’s record if there is an overdue balance of at least $100.</td>
<td>Financial resources</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[1\] One new predictor variable was examined with the Fall 2009 cohort: first-generation college status.
Univariate Analysis

Preliminary screening analyses (independent samples t-tests) were performed to help understand significant univariate differences between the students who were retained and those who departed and to determine a more parsimonious set of viable discriminating variables. The variables demonstrating significant group differences are designated with asterisks in Table 2. The variables in the table are arranged by decreasing effect size. The larger the effect size (in absolute value), the more different the two groups are on the particular variable.

Table 2. Comparisons by Retention Group for Continuous Variables Arranged by Decreasing Effect Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Departed</th>
<th>Retained</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
<th>Cohen's d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large effect size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad/Ret GPA*</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>2330</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional GPA*</td>
<td>626</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>2330</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Earned Hours*</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>8.69</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>2330</td>
<td>13.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium effect size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Hours of W*</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>2330</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS GPA*</td>
<td>645</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>2330</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS Class Rank*</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>65.89</td>
<td>21.82</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>76.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small effect size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Need to Borrow*</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>2522</td>
<td>3171</td>
<td>2324</td>
<td>1536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT*</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>23.57</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>2323</td>
<td>24.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Unmet Need*</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>1315</td>
<td>2390</td>
<td>2324</td>
<td>1586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Assistance No Repayment*</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>2889</td>
<td>2638</td>
<td>2330</td>
<td>3509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No significant relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with retention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>18.55</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>2330</td>
<td>18.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted Gross Income</td>
<td>471</td>
<td>85607</td>
<td>88297</td>
<td>1621</td>
<td>93154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Attempted Hours</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>14.59</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>2330</td>
<td>14.55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Variables indicated a significant relationship with the retention group at \( \alpha = .01 \).

1 The effect size, Cohen’s d, provides a standardized measure of the magnitude of the difference between the means of the two groups. Cohen (1988) characterized effect size as small (d = 0.2), medium (d = 0.5), and large (d = 0.8).

Each categorical variable was examined for group differences using a Pearson chi-square (\( \chi^2 \)) test for independence. Table 3 identifies with asterisks the variables that exhibited a significant relationship with the retention group variable.
Table 3. Comparisons by Retention Group for Categorical Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Departed</th>
<th>Retained</th>
<th>$\chi^2$</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 College*</td>
<td>N = 647</td>
<td>N = 2330</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AG (N = 349)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS (N = 789)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BU (N = 440)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ED (N = 248)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EN (N = 580)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GU (N = 308)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HES (N = 263)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Academic Standing*</td>
<td>N = 647</td>
<td>N = 2330</td>
<td>997.7</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not in good acad standing (N = 356)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good acad standing (N = 2621)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonpayment Hold Fall 09*</td>
<td>N = 647</td>
<td>N = 2330</td>
<td>274.0</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no bursar hold (N = 2760)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bursar hold (N = 217)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP Financial Aid 104*</td>
<td>N = 497</td>
<td>N = 1666</td>
<td>748.5</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended (N = 142)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation (N = 278)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleared (N = 1743)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender*</td>
<td>N = 647</td>
<td>N = 2330</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male (N = 1439)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female (N = 1538)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race*</td>
<td>N = 607</td>
<td>N = 2165</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian (N = 2253)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All others (N = 519)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation College*</td>
<td>N = 541</td>
<td>N = 2008</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>&lt; .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First generation (N = 440)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not first generation (N = 2109)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK Resident</td>
<td>N = 647</td>
<td>N = 2330</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OK resident (N = 2178)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-resident (N = 799)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential Life Fall 09</td>
<td>N = 647</td>
<td>N = 2330</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived in residence halls (N = 2360)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not live in residence halls (N = 617)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linked Courses</td>
<td>N = 647</td>
<td>N = 2330</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in linked courses (N = 906)</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>78.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No linked courses (N = 2071)</td>
<td>21.9%</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Variables indicated a significant relationship with the retention group at $\alpha = .01$. 


Multivariate Analysis

Univariate analyses are limited in that they consider only one variable at a time to explore that variable’s relationship with the retention group. Student retention is a complex topic, with many related factors that may contribute to the retention outcome. Such complex phenomena are more thoroughly and realistically examined using multivariate techniques, such as predictive discriminant analysis, that consider the effects of several variables simultaneously. The analyses described in the previous section identified several variables that exhibited a significant univariate relationship with the retention group. Diagnostics were examined to prevent redundancy and multicollinearity and to further refine the set of predictor variables for the discriminant analysis. Diagnostics included bivariate correlations and multiple regression for each independent variable on all of the other independent variables. Table 8 in Appendix B shows the bivariate correlations for the predictor variables that were used in the discriminant analysis. As a result of this refining process, the original set of 23 variables (listed in Table 1) was reduced to the 11 variables listed in Table 4.

Table 4. Predictor Variables Used in the Discriminant Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuous Variables</th>
<th>Categorical Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School GPA</td>
<td>Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad/Ret GPA</td>
<td>First Generation College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Hours of W</td>
<td>Nonpayment Hold Fall 09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Assistance No Repayment</td>
<td>Fall 09 College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Unmet Need</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The discriminant analysis produced a statistically significant discriminant function ($R_c = .58$; Wilk’s lambda $= .66$; $\chi^2 = 966.54$; df $= 10$; $p < .01$). The set of variables predicted the retention group moderately well, classifying 81.6% of the students into the correct group, which is a 63% improvement over assignment by chance as measured by the proportional reduction in error. Classification results are provided in Table 5.

Table 5. Classification Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>% correct</th>
<th>Departed</th>
<th>Retained</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Departed</td>
<td>63.7%</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retained</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>2330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
<td>726</td>
<td>2251</td>
<td>N = 2977</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because the Fall 09 College variable had seven levels, it was represented by six vectors using effect coding. Unique treatment of this variable was necessary to enable interpretation of the contribution of the vectors as a set toward the overall analysis. The discriminant analysis was initially performed using 10 of the variables—omitting College. A subsequent discriminant analysis was performed using the set of vectors representing the College variable in addition to the other 10 variables. The addition of the College vectors did not meaningfully enhance the accuracy of the prediction (increasing the accuracy from 81.6% to 81.7%), so the results provided in this section focus on the initial discriminant analysis using all of the variables listed in Table 4 except for Fall 09 College.
The discriminant function structure coefficients and standardized canonical coefficients are provided in Table 9 in Appendix B. The variable that is most highly correlated with the discriminant function is the Graduation/Retention GPA. Other variables with loadings larger than .33 are the Fall 09 Hours of W, the Fall 09 Nonpayment Hold, and the High School GPA. These four variables are most prominent in the discriminant function. The discriminant function may be interpreted as a combination of academic and financial indicators: the college GPA, the number of credit hours dropped during the first semester, the first-semester nonpayment hold, and the high school GPA. Students who were not retained had significantly lower college GPAs, withdrew from significantly more credit hours of coursework during the first semester, were significantly more likely to have a nonpayment hold at the end of the first semester, and had significantly lower high school GPAs. Table 6 summarizes these results.

Table 6. Comparisons of the Most Important Predictor Variables by Retention Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuous Predictors</th>
<th>Departed Group Mean</th>
<th>Retained Group Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grad/Ret GPA</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>3.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Hours of W</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School GPA</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>3.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorical Predictor</th>
<th>Percent within Departed Group</th>
<th>Percent within Retained Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonpayment Hold (N = 217)</td>
<td>22.3% (N = 144)</td>
<td>3.1% (N = 73)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Nonpayment Hold (N = 2760)</td>
<td>77.7% (N = 503)</td>
<td>96.9% (N = 2257)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The group centroids, the means of the discriminant function scores for the groups, were –1.36 for the departed group and 0.37 for the retained group.

Additional Analysis Focusing on Students Who Were Not Retained but Have Retention Characteristics

The classification was more successful predicting students who were retained than those who departed. The group of students who departed but were predicted to be retained is of particular interest. This group, which comprises 36.3% of the departed students, was more similar to the retained group on the variables used in this analysis. To further explore how the student groups differ, predicted group membership was used to divide the departed group into two subgroups, thus creating three student groups (See Figure 4):

1. Retained—Students who were retained (N = 2,330)
2. Departed with retained characteristics (DRC)—Students who departed but were classified in the retained group (N = 235)
3. Departed with departed characteristics (DDC)—Students who departed and were classified as departed (N = 412).

Figures 5, 6, and 7 provide information about the three retention groups by the College of initial enrollment.
Figure 4. Departed Students Characterized by Predicted Retention Status

Figure 5. Cohort Enrollment Status after One Year by College of Initial Enrollment
A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted for each of the continuous and binary predictor variables to assess differences in the means of each variable across the three retention groups. The multiple levels of the categorical Fall 09 College variable rendered it inappropriate for this analysis. Results are shown in Table 7. The results of post hoc analyses (Tukey) are shown in the table using two symbols to identify the significantly different means, † and ‡. The post hocs are used to help distinguish between the three groups. For example, the DRC group was similar to the retained group and different from the DDC group on the following variables: HS GPA, grad/ret GPA, Fall 09 hours of W, Fall 09 unmet need, gender, race, first generation college, and nonpayment hold. That is, the DRC and retained groups were similar to each other and significantly different from the DDC group in the following ways: the DRC and retained groups had
higher high school GPAs and grad/ret GPAs, they withdrew from fewer credit hours during the first semester, they had less unmet need during the first semester, they were more likely to be female and Caucasian, they were less likely to be first generation college students, and they had very few nonpayment holds at the end of their first semester. On the ACT variable, the DRC group was similar to the DDC group and both were different from the retained group. The retained group ACT score was significantly higher than both the other departed groups. On the Fall 09 assistance no repayment variable, the DDC group was different from the retained group, but neither group was significantly different from the DRC group. That is, the retained group received significantly more scholarship and grant aid than the DDC group, and the DRC group fell between these two groups in such a way that it was not significantly different from either. Group differences are further illustrated in Appendix C.

These results suggest that the 235 students in the DRC group are generally very similar to the retained group on the academic and financial variables used for this analysis. Further research is needed to determine reasons for the departure of these students.

Table 7. Comparisons by Three Retention Groups for Predictor Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Departed w departed characteristics (DDC)</th>
<th>Departed w retained characteristics (DRC)</th>
<th>Retained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT*</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>23.33</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS GPA*</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>3.24*</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad/Ret GPA*</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>1.11*</td>
<td>.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Hours of W*</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>3.37*</td>
<td>4.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Assistance No Repayment*</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>2720*</td>
<td>489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Unmet Need*</td>
<td>411</td>
<td>1552*</td>
<td>2585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1 = F; 0 = M)*</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>.40*</td>
<td>.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (1 = Caucasian; 0 = Not Caucasian)*</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>.72*</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation College (1 = first generation; 0 = not first generation)*</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonpayment Hold Fall (1 = hold; 0 = no hold) *</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>.33*</td>
<td>.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Variables indicated a significant relationship with the retention group at α = .01.
1 The * and †† symbols indicate significantly different means as identified by the post hoc analyses.

Conclusions

The set of variables used in this study was moderately successful in predicting whether or not Fall 2009 OSU freshmen were retained after one year (81.6% accuracy; 63% improvement over chance as measured by the proportional reduction in error). The most important predictor variables represented a combination of measures of college academic performance, financial resources, and high school academic performance. Students who were not retained had significantly lower graduation/retention GPAs, withdrew from
significantly more credit hours of coursework during the first semester, were significantly more likely to have a nonpayment hold at the end of the first semester, and had significantly lower high school GPAs.

Although the factors examined in this study predicted freshman retention moderately well, they do not account for all of the differences between students who continued to enroll at OSU and those who left. More than one third (36.3%) of the students who departed were predicted to be in the retained group. These students resembled the retained students on many of the predictor variables. When compared with the rest of the departed group, significant differences were detected: they had higher high school GPAs and grad/ret GPAs; they withdrew from fewer credit hours during the first semester; they had less unmet financial need during the first semester; they were more likely to be female and Caucasian; they were less likely to be first generation college students; and very few had nonpayment holds at the end of the first semester. Further research is needed to determine reasons for the departure of these students.

Further Research

Telephone surveys conducted with students who left OSU between 2005 and 2007 identified the following factors as most important in their departure decision: financial problems, academic difficulty, personal problems, and the location of OSU (OSU First-Semester Retention, 2007; Retention, 2007). A similar survey, targeting a sample of the 2008 freshmen who departed but were predicted as retained, was conducted by graduate student Kathryn Weinland during spring 2010. From her interviews, she found that these students left for financial reasons, because their career goals changed, or for personal reasons. All 20 of the students who were interviewed indicated that they were still pursuing their education at institutions that were a better fit for them. Additional research is needed to understand the reasons for student departure and whether OSU could have done anything to prevent it.

Acknowledgments

Thank you to Dr. Dale Fuqua for his contribution to this study with the 2007 and 2008 cohorts and to the staff of Institutional Research and Information Management and Scholarships and Financial Aid for providing the raw data.

References


Appendix A

Comparison of Results from 2007, 2008, and 2009 Freshman Cohorts
Consistency between the Freshman Cohorts of Fall 2007, Fall 2008, and Fall 2009

- Retention status was predicted with similar levels of accuracy for the 2007, 2008, and 2009 cohorts (correct classification 82.4%, 81.3%, and 81.6%, respectively; improvement over chance classification 65%, 63%, and 63%, respectively).
- The most important common predictors of retention for all three cohorts were:
  - the graduation/retention GPA;
  - the nonpayment hold indicating an unpaid account balance;
  - the number of credit hours dropped during the first semester; and
  - the high school GPA.
  
  An additional measure that surfaced as an important predictor in the 2008 cohort is the number of credit hours earned during the first semester.

Differences in the Analyses and Results for the Freshman Cohorts of Fall 2007, Fall 2008, and Fall 2009

- The freshman retention rates for the 2007, 2008, and 2009 cohorts were 77.1%, 78.7%, and 78.3%, respectively.
- The percentage of freshmen who filed a FAFSA increased each year: 65% in 2007; 68.5% in 2008; and 72.1% in 2009.
- The analysis for the 2008 and 2009 cohorts included two additional predictor variables that were not examined for the 2007 cohort: age and participation in linked courses during the first semester. The analyses suggested that age and linked course predictors are not significantly related to first-year retention. One additional predictor variable was examined for the 2009 cohort: first-generation college status. This predictor was significantly related to retention on a univariate level, but was not a strong component in the multivariate analysis.
- The variable that measures nonpayment of the bursar bill captured this data at the end of the first semester for the 2008 and 2009 cohorts. For the 2007 cohort, the nonpayment hold was captured one year after beginning college.
- Two predictor variables from the 2007 cohort were omitted from the study of the 2008 and 2009 cohorts. Total percent of attempted credit hours completed at OSU was omitted because accurate data could not be obtained, and high school core GPA was omitted because of its redundancy with high school GPA.
Appendix B

Supplementary Tables

Table 8. Pearson Correlations for Predictor Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>ACT</th>
<th>HSGPA</th>
<th>Grad Ret GPA</th>
<th>Fall 09 Hours of W</th>
<th>Fall 09 Assistance No Repayment</th>
<th>Fall 09 Unmet Need</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>First Generation College</th>
<th>Nonpayment Hold Fall 09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td>.329</td>
<td>-.117</td>
<td>.227</td>
<td>-.162</td>
<td>-.115</td>
<td>.152</td>
<td>-.136</td>
<td>-.116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSGPA</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.183</td>
<td>.216</td>
<td>-.111</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>-.147</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad Ret GPA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Hours of W</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.417</td>
<td></td>
<td>.167</td>
<td>-.190</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>-.138</td>
<td>-.375</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Unmet Need</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td>-.101</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>-.088</td>
<td>-.083</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>.220</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation College</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nonpayment Hold Fall 09</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 9. Discriminant Function Structure Coefficients and Standardized Canonical Coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Structure coefficient</th>
<th>Standardized coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grad/Ret GPA</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Hours of W</td>
<td>-.48</td>
<td>-.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonpayment Hold Fall 09</td>
<td>-.43</td>
<td>-.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS GPA</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>-.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Unmet Need</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Assistance No Repayment</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation College</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Differences between Retained, DRC, and DDC Groups: Effect Size and Illustrations

Table 10. Comparisons of Three Retention Groups Arranged by Decreasing Effect Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictor</th>
<th>Departed with Departed Characteristics (DDC)</th>
<th>Departed with Retained Characteristics (DRC)</th>
<th>Retained</th>
<th>Cohen's d¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large effect size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grad/Ret GPA</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS GPA</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.53</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>0.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Hours of W</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>-0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonpayment Hold Fall 09 (1 = hold; 0 = no hold)</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium to small effect size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>23.33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24.85</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Unmet Need</td>
<td>1552</td>
<td>901</td>
<td>753</td>
<td>-0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Generation College (1 = first generation; 0 = not first generation)</td>
<td>0.28</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small effect size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1 = F; 0 = M)</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 09 Assistance No Repayment</td>
<td>2720</td>
<td>3185</td>
<td>3509</td>
<td>0.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race (1 = Caucasian; 0 = not Caucasian)</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ The effect size, Cohen’s d, provides a standardized measure of the magnitude of the difference between the means of two groups. The Cohen’s d values provided in this table were derived using the maximum and minimum group means. Cohen (1988) characterized effect size as small (d = 0.2), medium (d = 0.5), and large (d = 0.8).

Figure 8. Graduate/Retention GPA by Group
Figure 9. High School GPA by Group

Figure 10. Fall 09 Hours of W by Group

Figure 11. Nonpayment Hold Fall 09 by Group (1 = Hold; 0 = No Hold)
Appendix D  
Undergraduate Retention Task Force  
Fall 2011

Working Groups:

1. First Year Experience and Beyond  
Missy Wikle, leader, NSO&E Director  
Susan Johnson, Director, Academic Support Services  
Debbie Stump, Staff Advisory Council  
Mason Meyer, Coordinator, Residential Life Marketing

2. Faculty Development  
Chris Ormsbee, leader, Interim Director, ITLE  
Hong Lin, Manager of Faculty Development, ITLE  
David Thompson, Associate Dean, Academics and Outreach, CEAT  
Jeanmarie Verchot  
Melanie Page, Professor, Psychology, Director, Institute for Creativity & Innovation  
John Hathcoat, PhD Student, REMS

3. Orientation Courses  
Cheryl DeVuyst, leader, Assistant Provost & Director, LASSO Center  
Mark Weiser, Associate Dean, SSB  
Karen Neurohr, Associate Professor; Librarian, Assessment, New Student & Community Outreach  
Jeremy Bennett, MS Student  
Crea Goff, BS Student

4. Academic Advisement  
Amy Martindale, leader, Director, Student Academic Services, A&S  
Mark Weiser, Associate Dean, SSB  
Jennifer Hicks, Academic Advisor, OSU-Tulsa

5. Mentoring of Students across Faculty, Staff, and Peers  
Bruce Crauder, leader, Associate Dean, A&S  
Matthew Brown, Director, Housing and Residential Life  
Melanie Page, Professor, Psychology & Director, Institute for Creativity & Innovation

6. LASSO Center Activities  
Chris Campbell, leader, Assistant Director, LASSO  
Pam Ehlers, Director, Career Services  
Cheryl DeVuyst, Assistant Provost & Director, LASSO Center  
Abbey Bollinger, BS Student
7. Branding and Public Communication about Retention to Constituency Groups
Christine Crenshaw, leader, Director, University Admissions
Brenda Masters, Director, University Reaccreditation
Gary Shutt, invited member
Aubrey Raupe, BS Student

8. Data Gathering, Assessment, and Analysis
Celeste Campbell, leader, University Registrar
Lee Tarrant, Programming Analyst, IRIM
Brenda Masters, Director, University Reaccreditation
Jeremy Penn, Director, University Assessment and Testing
John Hathcoat, Statistical Analyst, IRIM & PhD Student REMS
Krista Schumacher, PhD Student, REMS
Lena Kavaliauskas, MS Student, Higher Education Student Development

9. Coordination of Campus Units
Shiretta Ownbey, leader, Associate Dean, Academic Programs and Services, COHS
Chris Ormsbee, Interim Director, ITLE

10. Exploration of What Other Universities Do and Bright Ideas
Lynn Brown, leader, Graduate Certification Specialist, CEAT
Chris Ross, Associate Dean, CVS
Steve Damron, Interim Associate Dean, Academic Programs, CASNR
Christie Hawkins, Director, IRIM
Brian Lackman, Student, Education Leadership/Higher Education Administration

11. Procedural Barriers and What Can Be Done
Marilyn Middlebrook, leader, Associate Athletics Director, Academic Affairs
Amy Martindale, Director, Student Academic Services, A&S
Rita Peaster, Associate Registrar

12. Diversity
Precious Elmore, leader, Director, Office of Multicultural Affairs
Steve Damron, Interim Associate Dean, Academic Programs, CASNR
Shelia Kennison, Professor, Psychology
Jeanmarie Verchot
Appendix E
A Vision for a Student Services Website
Oklahoma State University

In an effort to centralize information and deliver content in a manner that most effectively meets the needs of students, the OSU Retention Task Force proposes the creation of a centralized services website that is oriented to the specific needs of students. The ultimate goal is to construct a platform that provides information in an organized, one-stop-shop design, where students can quickly find what they are looking for.

The student services website will be a single point of access for students; that is uniquely designed to meet their needs, while providing critical information in a format that contributes to their success in college. Students need access to information that is presented in a manner that reduces confusion and promotes student retention through the effective presentation and availability of resources.

The initial vision for the student website arose from discussions regarding the current level of decentralization of services that exists on campus. Many resources are available that are likely underutilized since students do not know where these services are located and/or how to find them. For example, mentoring, tutoring, and partnership opportunities exist across campus, but where they are located, who participates, and how to become involved are not clear, especially to beginning students. Identification of these various connections and promoting them so that students are aware and attracted to them is essential for their effectiveness. Once the opportunities are identified, the Student Services Website will be useful to promote information and involvement. The website will provide

- a single place for students to gather mentoring, tutoring and advising information
- a list of programs available, with contact information, and mechanisms for sign-up
- links to units that serve as inputs for mentoring, tutoring, and other programs and whose work directly contributes to student success (such as LASSO Center, Career Services, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs)
- a place to obtain feedback and/or evaluations about mentoring and other programs to determine the impact of the programs and to identify areas for improvement
- information about effective practices and other helpful resources in mentoring and other services that will guide and support participants

Following many discussions, the Retention Task Force agrees that a centralized website will deliver of information to students in the most effective, user-friendly, manner. A student website will help students succeed as they discover and increase their use of the resources and information that is available to them.

The goal for the website is to provide a single place where a visitor can quickly find what they are looking for with very little effort. The proposed website has four parts. A description of each of these parts follows, along with a visual representation of the site. A student can

My Online Services is the O-Key security protected segment of the site. Once a student logs-in by clicking on any link in this segment, and providing their O-key information, a secure web browser window will pop up while the initial window remains intact. In this secure window, students will be able to view their academic record or transcripts, identify their required placement into specific courses,
pursue an OnCourse Degree Audit, check the status of their financial aid, register for classes, activate their D2L sites, complete faculty evaluations, check their email, and update their personal information. Currently, there are three separate systems that each require a login to access many of these features. To reduce the number of log-ins, a mechanism will be put in place for the new website that will exchange credentials between these services. This exchange will keep the services’ data and authentication security rules intact, while simplifying and improving access for students. The ultimate goal is for a single login to allow students to enter all these various systems.

- **My Resources** is a segment of the website that will provide links to resources and support services that are available to students and will serve to increase their academic success. A student will be able to schedule an appointment with an advisor, locate a tutor or mentor, check the final exam schedule, find financial aid forms, search for a book or article at the library, discover internships, learn about campus life activities, and find a multitude of other helpful, but currently scattered, links related to academic processes and student life. This portion of the website would not be O-Key protected so students considering applying, parents, and the public could have full access to this information.

- **Center Billboard** is proposed for the midsection of the website design. Students can quickly view critical information on this portion of the website about daily updates of campus and local events, important dates, reminders, and special announcements. Survey results have indicated that students do not open and read the OSU Headline News, delivered via email, so this area will be used to push headlines and announcements that are relevant and interesting to students. The content of this portion of the site will be generated from a process so that various offices can submit reminders and events.

- **Customizable Section** is proposed to enhance the student connectivity to the site. In this area, students can add links to external sites that they visit frequently, such as: Facebook, Yahoo, Google, Twitter, news, and weather information.
Proposed visual representation of the Student Services Website:

**My Online Services**
- My Academic Record
- Transcripts
- Placement
- OnCourse Degree Audit
- Financial Aid/Services
- Registration/Enrollment

**Customizable Section**
*Students can add links to their favorite websites and departments that they use most.*
*For example: Facebook, Stillwater Weather, the OSU Events Calendar, Twitter, OSU Athletics, etc.)*

**Reminders...**
- Special Announcements...
- Today’s Happenings...
- Important (Upcoming) Dates

**My Resources**
- Information Plus +
  - Academic
    - Academic Calendar
    - Academic Regulations
    - University Catalog
  - Advising
  - Mentoring
  - Tutoring
  - Counseling
  - Internships
  - Admissions
  - Registrar
  - Bursar
  - Colleges/Departments
  - Library
  - Career Services/Employment
  - University Health Services
  - Financial Info/Forms
  - Campus Life
  - Graduate Student Information
  - Faculty/Staff/Student Directory
  - Administration Organizational Chart
  - President’s Hotline
Date: December 16, 2011
To: A&S Departments
From: Thomas Wikle, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Academic Programs
Amy Martindale, Ed.D., Director of Student Academic Services
Re: Changes to College-Specific Undergraduate Degree Requirements

The Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee has reviewed the proposed changes to A&S undergraduate degree requirements. They also considered the feedback provided by departments via email and the open forum. Below are the changes they approved to be effective on all 2012-2013 undergraduate degree sheets for the College of Arts & Sciences.

Interdisciplinary programs (AMST, GWST, LBST, REL, and AMIS in the future) are independent programs. They are not considered to be part of a department, even if some administrative functions and instruction are performed by the employees of a department.

We are aware that some departments wish to apply these changes retroactively to any currently-active degree sheet. We are working with the Registrar’s Office and Academic Affairs to determine the possibility and procedures for departments to allow students on earlier degree plans to take advantage of these requirement changes.

Departments may wish to change departmental requirements in response to the new college requirements below. If you have questions about changing your departmental requirements, please feel free to contact Amy Martindale (amy.martindale@okstate.edu or 744-5658).

Thank you for your input and patience through the process of reviewing and updating some of our college-wide undergraduate degree requirements. It is our hope that these changes will remove some barriers to graduation, while maintaining the integrity of our degrees.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Current Requirement</strong></th>
<th><strong>New Requirement Effective 2012-2013</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hours in One Prefix:</strong> Hours in one prefix in excess of 48 will be added to the minimum total of 120 required for graduation.</td>
<td><strong>Hours in One Department:</strong> Hours in one department in excess of 54 will be added to the minimum total of 120 required for graduation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courses used to satisfy the English composition, American history and government will not count toward the 48 hour maximum allowed under one prefix.</td>
<td>Courses used to satisfy the English composition, required U.S. History, required American Government, and one required MATH course will not count toward the 54 hour maximum allowed from one department.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Upper-Division Gen Ed:</strong> 6 hours outside major prefix.</td>
<td><strong>Upper-Division Gen Ed:</strong> 6 hours outside major department.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Courses in the major prefix may not be used to satisfy the College requirement for six hours upper-division General Education.</td>
<td>Courses in the major department may not be used to satisfy the College requirement for six hours upper-division General Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No more than two courses (or eight hours) from the same course prefix may be used to meet General Education Analytical and Quantitative Thought (A) and Natural Sciences (N) combined with College and Departmental Natural and Mathematical Sciences.</td>
<td>No more than two courses (or eight hours) from the major department may be used to meet General Education and College and Departmental Requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>No more than two courses (or six hours) from the same course prefix may be used to meet General Education Humanities (H) combined with College and Departmental Arts and Humanities.</td>
<td>The General Education Controlled Elective, required English Composition, required U.S. History, required American Government, and one required MATH course do not count against the two-course maximum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The General Education Controlled Elective and one required MATH course do not count against the two-course maximum.</td>
<td>Arts and Humanities are defined as any course carrying an (H) designation or courses from ART, MUSI, PHIL (except 1313 and 3003), REL, TH, creative writing, foreign languages (second year and above), linguistics and literature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Humanities are defined as any course carrying an (H) designation or courses from ART, MUSI, PHIL (except 1313 and 3003), REL, TH, creative writing, foreign languages (second year and above), linguistics and literature. No more than six hours may be music or theatre performance or art studio.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Upper-Division Credit:</strong> Total hours must include at least 48 hours in courses numbered 3000 or above.</td>
<td><strong>Upper-Division Credit:</strong> Total hours must include at least 40 hours in courses numbered 3000 or above.</td>
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