Diversity Council
Subcommittee Report
Undergraduate Retention

Fedearia Nicholson, M.P.A., Director, Office of Multicultural Development and Co-Chair
Julie Yuhua Zhao, Ph.D., Director of The IDEAS Program, College of Engineering
Nancy Roadruck, M.A., Director, Academic Advisement
Sukanya Kemp, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Associate Studies
Michael Long, M.A., Associate, Institutional Research
Stephanie Myers, M.A., Coordinator, Residence Life & Housing
Marquitta Minniefield, Graduate Assistant, Office of Multicultural Development
Target Audience defined as:

- Students with a 2.5 GPA or below
- 16 or below in the ACT
- Members of historically underrepresented groups
- First generation college students

*Other risk factors including: low socioeconomic status and geographic location

1. MAP Works Survey

Recommendation: Map Works administered to all first year students

Originally developed by Ball State in 1988

- Piloted through University College for 2009-2010 academic year to 1000 students as Early Warning System for $11K

- Selected Students consisted of the following: residential, commuter, non-traditional students, students of color, University College, direct admits and Student Success Seminar courses

- MAP Works Direct Connects: (1) University College Dean’s Office and Academic Advising, (2) Student Success Seminar Instructors, (3) Commuter Central & Adult Focus, (4) Office of Multicultural Development and (5) Residence Life and Housing

Goals: To create earlier interventions for first year students, to educate students about themselves, to gather systematic information regarding students and to collaborate across campus to provide student interventions and support.
Focus of Map Works:

- **Retention**
  - Minimize percentage of capable students who drop out due to issues that could have been addressed by self-awareness or timely intervention by professional staff

- **Academic & Socio-Emotional Success**
  - Improve students’ ability to succeed academically by realigning behavior with grade expectations and focusing on elements of academic success
  - Address socio-emotional transition issues

- **Supporting Student Success**
  - Map Works allows institutions to quickly identify students who are experiencing transition issues and/or who desire to be involved in student activities or leadership opportunities
  - After identifying students, you can communicate with them regarding their experience and link them to campus resources

Information Collected:

- ✔ Profile Information
- ✔ Academic Integration
- ✔ Self Assessment
- ✔ Social Integration

- Selected information sent to Campus Direct Connects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Costs for 5,000 students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$45,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$55,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. **Enrollment and New Student Orientation**

**Recommendation:** Enrollment and New Student Orientation Deadline **required** for all FTIC students; Multicultural students with a minimum GPA of 2.5 or below required to register for ADVANCE Orientation through the Office of Multicultural Development

- Accepted Multicultural Students, Provisional Admits and Non-Traditional Adult Learners receive information on programs and services upon admission to The University of Akron.

3. **Learning Communities**

**Recommendation:** Students in target audience **required** to participate in a semester or year-long learning community

The **Learning Community Program** serves entering students that span the spectrum by providing both major specific programs and those targeting specialized groups. For fall 2009, there were approximately 50 learning communities that ranged from disciplines such as Nursing, Business, Criminal Justice, Statistics, Engineering, etc. Other special interest Learning Communities included Multicultural Development, Adult Learners, Commuters, International, Developmental Education, Honors, Exploratory for students undecided regarding their majors and Living Learning Communities.

**Desired Outcomes of Learning Communities at The University of Akron:**

1. To enhance the quality of undergraduate education
2. To foster a climate of innovation
3. To engage with the civic and local community to enable transformation
4. **To improve first-year students’ retention**
5. **To improve first-year students’ overall GPAs**
6. **To increase first-year students’ credit hour production**
7. To promote a climate of assessment of student learning

*Source: FYE Assessment Template*
## FIRST YEAR RETENTION RATES - COMPARISONS BY GROUP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2003</th>
<th>Fall 2004</th>
<th>Fall 2005</th>
<th>Fall 2006</th>
<th>Fall 2007</th>
<th>5 Yr Inc / Dec</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All FTICs</td>
<td>64.3%</td>
<td>64.1%</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Communities</td>
<td>71.5%</td>
<td>63.3%</td>
<td>74.7%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>75.7%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## FIRST YEAR RETENTION RATES FOR FALL 2008

### FTICs STUDENT GROUPS

*The University of Akron 10/29/2009*

### FIRST YEAR RETENTION RATES FOR FALL 2008 FTICs STUDENT GROUPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th># Began</th>
<th>% Retained</th>
<th>% Attrit</th>
<th>Difference from Overall FTICs (67.8%)</th>
<th># Began</th>
<th>% Retained</th>
<th>% Attrit</th>
<th>Difference from Overall FTICs (67.8%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HONORS Ethnicity: NR Alien</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
<td>-6.2%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>69.3%</td>
<td>-30.7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC HON LC LIBERAL ARTS LC EMRG LDRS</td>
<td>27 76</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>-24.8%</td>
<td>8 16</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>-31.2%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 56</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>-31.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akron Campus - 4 Year Programs</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>94.8%</td>
<td>-5.2%</td>
<td>27.0%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>-30.7%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC POLI SCI 4 YEAR PROGRAMS</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>-24.8%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>-31.2%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>-31.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>-31.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL FTICs</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>67.8%</td>
<td>-32.2%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADMIT STATUS: Direct</td>
<td>1,040</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
<td>-16.6%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>-32.3%</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC EXPL</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
<td>-16.6%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>67.7%</td>
<td>-32.3%</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC EDUC</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
<td>-19.4%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>67.3%</td>
<td>-32.7%</td>
<td>-0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC PASSAGE</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>80.3%</td>
<td>-19.7%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>-33.3%</td>
<td>-1.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC INTL</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>77.0%</td>
<td>-23.0%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>65.4%</td>
<td>-34.6%</td>
<td>-2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC BUS</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
<td>-26.2%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>60.7%</td>
<td>-39.3%</td>
<td>-7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC ALL</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>73.0%</td>
<td>-27.0%</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>60.1%</td>
<td>-39.9%</td>
<td>-7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC ALLIED HEALTH</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>-27.3%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>56.3%</td>
<td>-43.7%</td>
<td>-11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC COMM</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>-27.8%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>-44.4%</td>
<td>-12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON OHIO RESIDENT</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>-28.1%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>-45.6%</td>
<td>-13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethn: Afric Amer</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>-28.1%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>-45.9%</td>
<td>-13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALL FTIC UA HOUSING</td>
<td>2.045</td>
<td>71.2%</td>
<td>-28.8%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>50.5%</td>
<td>-49.5%</td>
<td>-17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity: White</td>
<td>3.256</td>
<td>70.7%</td>
<td>-29.3%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>-50.0%</td>
<td>-17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity: Asian Pac Isl</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>70.5%</td>
<td>-29.5%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>-51.6%</td>
<td>-19.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Institutional Research Retention Database; LC Student Group Identifier;
Core Components of Learning Communities in the Office of Multicultural Development

✓ Intrusive Academic Advising
✓ Peer Mentoring
✓ Lap Top Loan Program
✓ Service Learning
✓ Leadership Development

Passage

- Comprised of two structured learning community experiences that promote the academic and social integration of students of color into The University of Akron. PASSAGE helps students develop a strong affiliation with the academic culture, promotes student learning and enhances retention through collaborative and cooperative learning experiences.

Two cohorts: Passage I and II

- PASSAGE I targets social science and liberal arts majors (Psychology, Sociology, Business, Education, Political Science or Undecided)

- PASSAGE II targets natural sciences, Engineering or Nursing

  - Fall 2007, students of color who participated in the Passage Learning Community were retained at 68.2% compared to the overall retention rate of 56.8% for all minority {FTIC} students and 56.3% for {FTIC} African American students

  - Fall 2008, students of color who participated in the PASSAGE Learning Community were retained at 67.3% compared to 56.3% for all minority {FTIC} students and 54.1% for all {FTIC} African American students

INTERACT

- Developmental Learning Community
- Geared mainly towards students that are seeking to strengthen their academic foundations and make connections on campus
- Student take two to three courses together as a cohort
Fall 2009, students who participated in INTERACT were retained at 64.7% compared to 56.3% for all minority (FTIC) students and 54.1% for all (FTIC) African American students.

**African American Male Learning Community**

- Piloted Fall 2009 to aid in the retention and graduation
- Students take three courses together as a cohort

4. **Summer Bridge Programs**

**Recommendation:** To implement Summer Bridge Programs for targeted population and to increase the number and awareness of Inclusive Excellence Scholarships to recruit and retain more outstanding high school graduates from the historically underrepresented groups with tuition and room and board provided.

**Objective:** To help students to make a smooth transition from high school to college. Students will prepare for the required mathematic courses, learn study and time management skills, prepare for the compass placement tests, gain access to student support programs and services, and become acclimated to campus life prior to fall semester.

**Target Population:** Students who do not meet direct admission criteria could apply for this program or otherwise could be invited to participate in the program. Strong consideration would be given to students who meet one of the following criteria:

- First-generation college students defined as the first in their family to graduate from a four-year college or university.
- Students who are members of historically underrepresented groups in higher education.
- Students with demonstrated financial need as determined by Student Financial Aid

**Structure:** A five-week (or eight-week) intensive academic residential program. Participants are enrolled in one Mathematics or math workshop and one seminar with free tuition. In addition, students may benefit from the free housing, free tutoring services, academic advising and social activities.
• **Option 1**: promote the math and academic major awareness to get ready for college, particularly in the fields of STEM.

• **Option 2**: promote the math and study skills to get ready for college, especially for students who had lack of preparation.

• **Option 3**: prepare for the Compass Tests and develop study skills for adult learners and students graduated/transfered from community colleges.

The math courses are regular University offerings and grades earned during the program are a part of the official transcript and count toward one's grade point average.

**Funding:** Initially pilot program should be encouraged and supported with campus wide implementation to follow

**Diversity Scholarships**

**Target Population:** High school graduates who are members of historically underrepresented groups and with demonstrated financial need

**Administration of scholarships:** Office of Multicultural Development responsible for marketing, selection and scholarship award

**Rationales:**

- Recruiting more well-prepared students will improve the retention
- More role models will help improve the academic expectation
- Success stories will bring more outstanding students in the future

**Funding:** Foundation or corporate donors

**Practical References:** OSU Young Scholarship, OSU Morrill Scholarship

5. **Increasing Diversity in the STEMM Majors**

**Recommendation:** Departments/Divisions with STEMM majors implement a program similar to the IDEAS Program in the College of Engineering to increase the recruitment and retention of historically underrepresented students

The IDEAS program established in 1990, by the College of Engineering.
Mission:

- To increase diversity and inclusive excellence in the fields of engineering.
- To improve the enrollment, retention and graduation of all students, and particularly students from historically underrepresented groups in the fields of engineering.

Eligibility:

- Students who are majored in any field of engineering and from underrepresented groups, such as African-American, Hispanic, Native American and Asian-Pacific.
- Recently include students who are from low-income families and first-generation college students.

Statistics:

Since 1990, the program graduated 163 students with engineering degrees from UA, 71 students with other degrees from UA and about 13 students from other universities. Among all graduates from the program, about 43 students have received or are currently pursuing advanced degrees

- 5 students are currently enrolled in medical schools
- 2 students are pursuing PhD. Degrees
- 3 students are pursuing law degrees
- 33 students received or are pursuing Master’s degrees in engineering, mathematics, business and education.
- 90% of all minority engineering students in the College of Engineering are participants in the IDEAs program.
- In the fall semester of 2009, totally 131 students are participating in the IDEAs program.
- Most students in the program are standard and provisional admitted. The graduation rate of the program is shown below.
IDEAs program accomplishes its mission through retention, graduation, outreach and recruitment activities.

- **Incentive Scholarship**: In addition to private support for scholarships, the College supports The IDEAs Incentive Scholarship offered to IDEAs participants only.
- **Intrusive Advising**: the program director provides the intrusive advising.
- **Tutoring/Mentoring**: IDEAs juniors, senior and graduate engineering students are employed through the IDEAs program to offer individual assistance. Free tutoring services are also available to high school and middle school students.
- **IDEAS Tutorial Study Center**: This center is furnished with tables, chairs, a whiteboard, a blackboard, lockers, and kitchen supplies. It is also equipped with a library of class-binders from past-year students, computers and the access to the interment.
- **Minority Engineering Seminar and Peer Group Discussion**: This class is designed for freshman and/or sophomore students in the IDEAs program. It emphasizes three components: academic development, engineering professional development and personal development.
- **Undergraduate Research**: Presently IDEAs junior and seniors are offered the opportunities to participate in undergraduate research, including theoretical analysis, simulation, designing, and testing. The research topics might be chosen based on students’ own interest, by the sponsored organizations or by research mentors. Students may publish papers with research advisors or mentors in peer-reviewed journals and present research results at all levels of conferences/meetings.

---

1 Graduation: by considering students graduated with all degrees. It may make take more than 7 years for students to finish engineering degrees.
• **Panels, Workshops and Field Trips**: Two or three panels/workshops are provided every semester and include presentations from professional engineers who can offer students insights and motivations with topics that range from personal finance management to career planning to advantage of advance degrees in the work place. Field trips allow students to meet practicing engineers, to learn technologies and applications, and to consider possible co-op and employment opportunities.

• **Engineering Preview Day**: this is a 2-day program to target local high school students who have an interest in pursuing science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) degrees. The College of Engineering faculty, staff and students will conduct the program. The program offers the following: classroom visit, engineering laboratory tour, panel on college life, lunch with engineering students, and campus tour.

![College of Engineering Undergraduate Students 4, 5 & 6 Year Graduation Rates](image-url)
6. **Peer Mentoring**

**Recommendation:** Students in target audience required to participate in a structured and comprehensive peer mentoring program

**Structured Mentoring Programs at The University of Akron:**

**Office of Multicultural Development (OMD) Peer Mentoring Program**

Peer Mentoring Services functions as one of the many programs offered by the Office of Multicultural Development which strives to provide students of color with an inclusive, supportive and welcoming environment. The program focuses primarily on enhancing students’ academic achievement, providing important tools for academic success.

Mentees participating in OMD Learning Communities, the Four Phase Advising System or any first year student who requests a mentor will be paired with a mentor, who is a trained and dedicated upper-class student willing to share his/her time, knowledge and talents with entering first year students.

Through regularly scheduled meetings and activities, the mentor/mentee relations places great value in the social integration of students with campus life. Peer mentors serve as support system to incoming first-year students of color during their transition to college life at The University of Akron. Peer Mentors also help students identify different resources, programs, and activities that could contribute to their experience both in and out of the classroom.

**Core Components**

- 20 Peer Mentors who mentor approximately 150 FTIC students
- Mentors conduct workshops in Student Success Seminar Courses, English Composition I courses and Project Grad Akron on “The Low Down: High School vs. College”
- 2008 retention rate for multicultural students who participated in the OMD Peer Mentoring Program is 68% compared to 56.3% for all FTIC multicultural students

**Living Learning Community Residence Life and Housing**

The Peer Mentor works closely with the Graduate Assistant, the Resident Assistant, the Faculty Advisor and the Residence Life Coordinator/Graduate Resident Director to develop a community
conducive to student success by encouraging positive behaviors and addressing behaviors that are detrimental to the individual and/or community.

- Other Peer Mentoring Programs for first year students include Adult Focus and Commuter Central

7. Faculty Development

Recommendation: To provide multicultural training and development for University of Akron faculty by partnering with departments such as the Institute for Teaching and Learning and the Office of Inclusion & Equity through the following:

Faculty plays a significance role in increasing the retention of students. Professional Development opportunities should be provided through the following:

1. Multicultural Awareness
2. Assistance in addressing pedagogical limitations
3. Assistance in providing readings, reflections and culturally relevant material
4. Identify faculty leaders to model positive, multicultural teaching practices

In addition, other methods for increasing support for faculty consist of the following:

- **Grants for Faculty Development**
  1. Provides support for faculty to attend national conferences, workshops and symposiums to assist with curriculum and pedagogical challenges and methods of engaging multicultural students in predominately white classrooms with the expectation that they will share their knowledge and experiences with colleagues in their department and throughout the institution.

- **Incentives and Rewards**
  1. For faculty who use culturally relevant teaching methods, implement forms of incentives and rewards.
  2. According to Quaye et al., “One way to change faculty culture is to reward those who create an enriching and supportive learning environment for racial/ethnic minority students.”
  3. Senior level administrators should recognize and award faculty in a meaningful manner that are consistent in embracing diverse learning practices and are viewed by students as creating an environment that are inclusive and culturally relevant.
4. This increase the likelihood that other faculty will be willing to implement diverse learning approaches into their classroom practices.


8. **Academic Advising**

**Recommendation:**

I. To increase the number of academic advisors in strategic areas on campus such as Summit College Advising Services, University College Academic Advising Center, Adult Focus and the Office of Multicultural Development

II. A comprehensive plan created to coordinate all advising at The University of Akron

III. The hiring of a coordinator reporting to the Senior Vice President and Provost

The University of Akron has experienced tremendous enrollment growth over the last five years. Total enrollment for fall 2009 is 27,911, which represents an increase of 7.6% over the previous fall semester. In addition, student credit hours have increased by 8.4% over the previous fall semester. Moreover, Adult enrollment at the undergraduate level has risen by 8.7% and minority enrollment up 13.3%. These increases have resulted in offices responsible for advising, namely Summit College and University College experiencing a surfeit in advisor case loads.

**Source:** Institutional Research Database

Effective, intrusive advising has been recognized as a major contributor to student success at colleges at colleges and universities. As noted by the NACADA Visitation Team in the October 2009 Audit report, The University of Akron must “continue to explore new options for resources (i.e., advising fees, fund-raising, etc) to support the academic advising program to add additional professional advising staff in identified areas.” Although, in the NACADA Task Force for the Study of Academic Advisement, the recommended student to advisor caseload is 300:1, while UA’s Summit College Advising caseload is currently 850/900:1 and the University College Academic Advisement Center, 550:1.

If The University of Akron continues to experience similar enrollment growth, without increasing the number of advisors to vital areas on campus, the issue of providing quality service to students may be a factor that may adversely impact the retention of students.