

Executive Summary

University College was created on July 1, 1996 at the recommendation of the University College Planning Committee with the overall goal to improve the coordination of all academic services provided to students from the time of admission through their early years of study at Illinois State University. One of the goals was to address gaps as well as duplication in services and programming.

For the first several years after the founding of University College in 1996, there was little understanding among the units as to why the units were placed together in University College. Since the development and implementation of comprehensive assessment plans in 2006, University College has made great strides in remedying this lack of direction. While there have been attempts in the past to develop long-range vision for University College, those previous attempts were undertaken in an environment that was not conducive to the execution of the plans.

This document represents several years of planning and development that led to the ability to create a strategic plan for University College that is comprehensive in scope, while specific enough to acknowledge the unique contributions made by the individual units, programs and services of University College.

Mission of University College

The mission of University College is to provide effective programs and services that assist students to make successful transitions into Illinois State University, achieve their educational goals, and realize their academic potential in the first year and beyond. Guided by the University-wide strategic plan, *Educating Illinois*, University College will be recognized and sought out for innovative and exemplary student services promoting success and retention.

Goals 2010-2015

Goal 1: University College will be the campus expert in the transition and retention of students and will provide excellent transition and retention programs for students.

Goal 2: University College will provide excellent instructional programs to advance student success and transition.

Goal 3: University College will provide comprehensive academic support programs and services to advance student success with a particular emphasis on the first year in college.

Goal 4: University College will be the academic home for all programs and services pertaining to undeclared and undecided students,

Goal 5: University College will be the campus leader in academic support and programming for targeted populations of students (e.g. students-athletes, returning veterans, at-risk students, first generation, low SES, adult learners).

Organizational Description

The recommendation to create University College in 1995 stated that the intention was to "...improve the effectiveness and efficiency of academic support services provided to undergraduates and to provide an academic home for new students and those without declared majors." This charge gave University College a distinct place within the University community. Significant efforts are being made to ensure that University College achieves the original goals set out for it. Much work has been done to make each of the individual units in University College more a part of a larger, cohesive unit with an intentional direction and set of goals. Part of those continuing efforts is the development of this Strategic Plan for University College.

In September 2006, University College submitted a final response to the Academic Planning Committee of the Academic Senate. A portion of that response stated:

"The various units in University College have never been asked to advance a long-range vision for University College as a whole. Since its inception in 1996, the individual units of University College have functioned well, but they have functioned separately. It is the intention within the next few years to engage in intentional strategic planning that will allow University College to continue to develop goals and objectives that will develop a common set of goals and that are relevant to all units in University College."

Recent reorganization within University College, including the creation of the Julia N. Visor Academic Center in 2009, has allowed University College to more fully address the intentions set out for the unit at its creation in 1995. The new programs, services and staff allow for more intentional focus on retention issues. These recent additions complement the already existing services within University College which have focused on student success.

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Vision Statements

- University College will be the campus-wide recognized expert in the retention of students, particularly those at-risk and special populations.
- University College will be the campus-wide recognized leader in providing accurate and comprehensive support services to students in transition, including advisement, orientation, and academic support.

- University College will be the campus-wide recognized leader in providing effective and accurate services to first year students.
- University College will be the campus-wide recognized leader in assisting students in finding their major of choice.

Values Statements of University College

- University College values student success and persistence.
- University College values highly qualified and well-trained staff and emphasizes the importance for staff professional growth and development.
- University College values diversity and the important place it has in the University culture.
- University College values a student body made up of a diverse population of learners.
- University College values educating students so that they can make informed decisions.
- University College values the importance of an effective transition for students entering the University.
- University College values partnerships and collaboration between academic and student affairs units that enhance learning experiences for students.

Goals, Strategies, and Actions

Goal 1: University College will be the campus expert in the transition and retention of students and will provide excellent transition and retention programs for students.

Strategy 1: The Visor Center will be recognized as the central campus authority on retention and retention support services.

Actions:

- Provide resources on website including student testimonials
- Campus liaisons prepare and conduct workshops for faculty/staff
- Collect journals/books/resources on the topic of student retention
- Broadly promote resources, mission and services
- In conjunction with Enrollment Management and Academic Services, collect, analyze and disseminate data on student retention and non-reenrollment

Strategy 2: Provide programs that address and facilitate the needs of students transitioning into the University, with an increased emphasis on transfer students.

Actions:

- Create an online orientation module for transfer students
- Offer online Academic Information Session for transfer students who are not able to attend a formal Transfer Day Program
- Place blocks on classes/sections specifically reserved for transfer students
- Expand programming, services, and opportunities for the Transfer Day Program
- Develop a transfer student advising model
- Organize off campus efforts to build more organized working relationship with advisement staff at Heartland Community College and at Lincoln College
- Improve means of delivering advisement information to students during Passages program
- Coordinate advisement efforts for International Students prior to their arrival on campus in order to secure appropriate and meaningful courses
- Enhance readmit registration communication

Strategy 4: Provide enhanced services for transfer students.

Actions:

- Offer online appointments utilizing Skype, especially targeted at students who are not able to physically be on campus
- Create specific workshop series and/or programs for transfer students in their first year

Strategy 5: Comprehensively assess student performance and propose programs and services to address the campus-wide issues impacting that performance.

Actions:

- Track performance in order to identify problem areas
- University College advising and academic support staff will utilize BSCCE information for identified students as a means of early intervention and provide referral(s) for support
- Make intentional connections with other campus activities and programs related to academic success

Accountability Measures for Goal 1:

- Refer to University College Assessment Plans for details pertaining to ongoing comprehensive assessment of University College programs and services

- Provide upper administration with Annual Report regarding status of retention programs and services and their impact on the academic success of students at the University
- Evaluate effectiveness of orientation programming by: 1) assessing student satisfaction and perceived usefulness of services, 2) assessing campus participants' satisfaction and effective use of their resources
- Utilize a tracking mechanism for all University College units to “visualize” a network of support and usage trends

Goal 2: University College will provide excellent instructional programs to advance student success and transition.

Strategy 1: Encourage the collaboration between academic and student affairs units to enhance the development of instructional programs.

Actions:

- Work with departments and school and faculty in connected/linked courses for Success 101
- Collaborate with the math department on suggested course content to provide successful transition from Developmental Math courses to college level courses
- Develop MAT 102.01, a section of MAT 102 designed to prepare students for success in MAT 130.
- Continue the development of the curricula of existing courses (LinC, Success 101 and Transfer Student Seminar) to continually address the current needs of students and issues facing the campus community

Strategy 2: Recruit, select, hire, and train highly qualified faculty and staff who are keenly sensitive to the developmental needs of students in transition.

Actions:

- Broadly advertise open positions in appropriate arenas including Student Affairs and other professional associations to recruit highly qualified applicants
- Add to the list of preferred skills: attended or worked at a community college
- Ongoing professional development opportunities
- Provide standardized training programs for new University College staff
- Support attendance at appropriate conferences and workshops

Strategy 3: Identify, target, and promote instructional programs to targeted populations of students who would benefit from the various instructional programs within University College.

Actions:

- Develop online seminar for veterans

Strategy 4: Research curricular best practices that meet the needs of the targeted populations of students and develop content based on the research.

Actions:

- Conduct periodic review of best practices in Developmental math, LinC, and Success 101 topics and propose modifications based on that research
- Review national trends of intervention programs and compare to our trends. For example, Success 101, Project Success

Accountability Measures for Goal 2:

- Refer to University College Assessment Plans for details on existing assessment of University College programs and services

Goal 3: University College will provide comprehensive academic support programs and services to advance student success with a particular emphasis on the first year in college.

Strategy 1: Offer comprehensive advising services to first-year and undeclared students that will include intrusive advising, education on available resources, and referral to additional services as needed.

Actions:

- Develop special services to students who are not able to attend Preview, Transfer Day, and other orientation programs
- Provide targeted contact and intervention for students in violation of and approaching 75 hour policy
- Deliver career and major exploration services so that students can find their “best fit” for academic programs/majors
- Continue direct collaboration with and referral to Career Center
- Expand advising to locations outside of Fell
- Creation of referral services card for student use

- Track information requested and services offered at Mobile University College – implement a referral card and see how many come back

Strategy 2: Work collaboratively to identify, determine, and predict course needs and availability relevant to the first year (General Education).

Actions:

- Download data from recent freshman cohorts to identify course transfer and AP credit trends to aid in predicting future course needs
- Regularly communicate with the Director of General Education regarding course enrollment options
- Manage waitlist requests for high-demand courses to ensure students with the greatest need obtain appropriate courses
- Coordinate a strategic release of high demand courses throughout registration periods and orientation programs
- Provide query data to appropriate departments/schools when planning future course options

Strategy 3: Provide centralized/essential resources for tutoring and academic skills workshops.

Actions:

- Develop on-line, web-based, and video tutoring options
- Utilize the study table model in Julia N. Visor Academic Center as well as in other University College programs
- Re-implement Supplemental Instruction for targeted courses

Strategy 4: Provide easily accessible resources to first year students as they transition to and within the University.

Actions:

- Work closely with yearOne initiatives
- Mobile University College
- Web-based resources
- Outreach Advisor
- Pre-admission services

Accountability Measures for Goal 3:

- Refer to University College Assessment Plans for details on already ongoing comprehensive assessment of University College programs and services
- Students at the end of their first year of advising with University College will demonstrate knowledge of academic programs, requirements, and resources as recommended by the advising syllabus
- University College will investigate or develop a tracking system for student referrals and subsequent results of those referrals to other campus resources
- Utilize Oasis to keep track of student referrals and actions from department/schools
- Use “Apply to My Program” as an advisement tracking tool to ensure students have applied to majors in appropriate timeline, and that department/schools have reviewed applications

Goal 4: University College will be the academic home for all programs and services pertaining to undeclared and undecided students

Strategy 1: Coordinate transitional advising services available to any student in the University who might be considering changes to their academic plans and educate all campus advisors as to how to utilize those services.

Actions:

- Provide transitional tools and processes to campus advisors
- Offer ongoing professional development opportunities on the exploration process
- Highlight best practices of services delivered on a frequent basis

Strategy 2: Provide tools and services early in the major exploration process.

Actions:

- Continue the development and updating of the Find Your Major website
- Refine services and coordination with Career Services to address utilize the career-development specific tools in conjunction with advisement-specific tools
- Continue the development and refinement of the Advisement wiki with the goal of promoting its widespread use by campus advisors
- Utilize Academic Peer Advisors to guide students through major exploration activities

Strategy 3: Develop intrusive and directive methods of advising undeclared students with high credit hours toward realistic academic goals.

Actions:

- Develop advisor skills necessary to guide students toward realistic major options, including use of all available resources such as StrengthsQuest and Hypothetical Plan of Study
- Discuss the importance of GPA during meetings and provide realistic options for students based on skills, goals and academic records
- Continue direct collaboration with and referral to Career Center. Example: present in Career Choice, participate in online referral system, and make connections between curricular options and careers

Accountability Measures for Goal 4:

- Refer to University College Assessment Plans for details existing assessment of University College programs and services
- Reduce the number of native students required to complete the 75 Hour Appeal
- Reduce the number of Undeclared and Unassigned students with a goal of zero

Goal 5: University College will be the campus leader in academic support and programming for targeted populations of students (e.g. students-athletes, returning veterans, at-risk students, first generation, low SES, adult learners).

Strategy 1: Develop specialized programs to meet the needs of specific populations of students.

Actions:

- Tailor some transition programs to address the needs of specific populations of students
- Identify the academic issues of each targeted population of students (compare persistence and graduation rates of targeted populations to those of the general student population)
- Track the degree of utilization of current University College academic support programs and services by the targeted student populations

- Implement special outreach efforts to the targeted student populations to increase their awareness and to encourage their utilization of available academic support programs and services
- Explore options for grant funding for targeted populations of students (Veteran TRiO program, Summer Bridge Program)
- Collaborate with multiple campus units (i.e. Admissions Office) for specialty programs
- Develop workshops series for targeted populations
- Develop mentoring programs for targeted populations

Strategy 2: Dedicate specialized advisors and staff to address the unique needs of specific populations of students.

Actions:

- Coordinate advisement efforts for International Students prior to their arrival on campus in order to secure appropriate and meaningful courses
- Create ongoing training and professional development University College staff to keep them abreast of current trends and issues affecting the targeted student populations
- Create new advisor designations (“e.g Outreach Advisor/Specialist, Transfer Advisor/Specialist, Veterans Advisor/Specialist) to work with specific populations

Strategy 3: Assess student performance of targeted populations and propose programs and services to address the specific issues impacting that performance.

Actions:

- Compare GPAs and grades in specific General Education courses of targeted populations with their peers to look for academic deficiencies and propose services for improvement
- Work with other campus units, particularly Student Affairs, to address minority student transitional issues of racial identity, campus and community climate
- Provide early intervention programs for at risk students

Strategy 4: Assess and address targeted student retention issues; develop or improve programs, and services; propose policies to address the needs of those students.

Actions:

- Become involved in identifying and predicting course needs for continuing and new students so that course availability does not become a barrier to retention
- Provide additional resources to new undeclared transfer students and Undeclared New Start students who need to gain access to a major before they are required to file a 75 Hour Appeal
- Work with colleges/schools/departments to assist general students with transitioning into the department of their choice
- Explore the possibility that colleges/schools/departments conditionally admit qualified transfer students
- Manage waitlist requests for high-demand courses to ensure students with the greatest need obtain appropriate courses
- Use focus groups of underrepresented student not participating in an existing University College program to determine areas of improvement, success, and reason for lack of participation
- Deliver, manage, populate, and execute curriculum specific (COE) developmental math course to promote the success of students in specific major disciplines (MAT 102.01)
- Create specific workshop series and programs for targeted student populations as needed
- Visor Center staff will develop relationships with selected RSO's to establish the center as a place for academic support

Accountability Measures for Goal 5:

- Refer to University College Assessment Plans for details on existing assessment of University College programs and services
- Provide upper administration with annual report regarding programs and services for specialized populations of students within the University and the academic success of those students
- Promote to the University community data/trends for retention for University College programs and services (e.g. Project Success, Success 101, Trio/SSS, and Athletes)