Undergraduate Retention Initiatives

College of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources

Office of the Provost

Texas Tech University

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Introduction
Successful retention programs encompass virtually everything an institution does to improve the quality of student life and learning. Quality can be defined as that set of attributes of an educational program or service that consistently exceeds student expectations within specifically defined institutional-determined standards and/or criteria of performance. Practically speaking, the evidence of effective programs is clear, namely that the route to successful retention lies in those programs that ensure from the very onset of student contact with the institution; that entering students are integrated with teaching/learning processes of the college; and that students acquire the skills and knowledge needed to become successful learners in that community.

To better understand each college’s approaches to supporting student success, the Provost issued a request for the inventory of college-based retention and success initiatives. In conjunction with the larger institution-wide report, this extract reports only the information submitted provided by the College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources.

Current Structure/Approach
The college generally provides retention services and activities through its Bill Bennett Student Success Center. Students receive a booklet of programs and projects from the center. Specific retention programs include:
- Ag Pals: a mentoring program for current students and entering freshmen
- Ag Fest: an event held at the first week of the fall semester to welcome new and current students
- Residential Learning Communities
- Red Raider Orientation
- undecided academic advisement
- early alert program
- e-newsletter
- tutoring
- Popcorn Pop-Ins: an event of the success center to draw students in
- engagement survey: survey designed to measure factors that influence student success

Initiatives
- adding a spring retention event “CASNR Raider Welcome”
- identifying early at-risk students, such as those are on probation, and require mandatory advising meetings
- developing a “Corrective Action Contract” that complements the engagement survey
Support Needed

- Support for the ongoing reclassification and restructuring of staff duties in the Bill Bennett Student Success Center to enhance retention efforts. Staff reorganization or additional staff will be needed to establish a lower staff member to student ratio and facilitate more effective meetings with at-risk students.

- Funding may be needed to renovate facilities in the Student Success Center and accommodate modest increases in staffing.