Undergraduate Retention Initiatives

College of Arts & Sciences

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 Arts & Sciences.

Current Structure/Approach
Advising/retention are both centralized and decentralized within the College. Academic advising takes place in the departments, while progress towards degree is monitored by the Dean’s Office. Retention efforts are discussed and implemented at all levels – among Associate Deans, Chairs, and Advisors.

- Retention begins with good recruiting & outreach. To this end, the college has increased efforts to reach out to and recruit in the local schools (for example: LISD, Cooper, Frenship).
- One specific initiative was undertaken to augment the advising in Physics – this was done strategically to assist in preserving the department and also to support students. This effort has had great success, with over 20 new Physics majors recruited in 2013. Similar outreach efforts are taking place in POLS/Global Studies, English, and HESS.
- Several academic departments offer tutoring for high challenge courses: Chemistry, Math, English, and Foreign Language Courses.
- Students who have a 2.00-2.25 GPA are enrolled in TTU PADR classes (*Programs for Academic Development and Retention*).
Initiatives
The college has already begun to examine the issue of retention and persistence. The college will begin to
develop a blueprint by which it can support the retention efforts taking place within the academic
departments.
- The college would like to implement intervention specialist in all 16 of its academic units (this is
  contingent upon funding).

The Deans and Chairs will review the process of reducing underperformance in courses with high DFW
rates.
- *Increased faculty involvement* in student intervention and student support efforts will be crucial
to their success.
- Additional departments may be able to offer tutoring for high challenge courses.

Support Needed
- Accurate data & reports need to be available to all Colleges.
- Encourage increased faculty involvement.
- Funding for Intervention specialists in A&S departments.