Undergraduate Retention Initiatives

College of Education

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 Education.

Current Structure/Approach
As a professional unit, the college primarily serves graduate students. In order to effectively address the retention in this college, the current approach includes a special focus on its graduate students. Its structure and approach are seen in the following items:

− The college recently implemented a graduate student survey which offered several findings:
  - academic advising is generally regarded as poor
  - research courses were generally regarded as poor
  - students feel poorly prepared upon graduation

− The college formed, what the Dean referred to as a “super committee” this committee examined specifically:
  - advising issues, preparation and professional development
  - new services and workshops for graduate student development
  - identification of additional web-based resources

− The college continues to reach out to school districts\employers and ask these stakeholders plainly, “What do employers want from their teachers?”

− Additional graduate student service coordinator positions were created.
**Initiatives**

With the focus at the time being on graduate students, the college intends to undertake the following:

- enhanced consideration and sequencing of courses to ensure efficient matriculation to graduation
- P1 – P2 – P3 approached teacher training and development
- realignment of teacher training and internship placement
- re-examine the technical and “soft” advising responsibilities of faculty members

The current freshman class has doubled in the college. Thus, at the undergraduate level the college is examining:

- increased site coordinators to reduce ratio to 20 – 30
- exploration of learning communities
- enhanced in the residence halls engagement with freshman in their first and second years
- reintroduction of a “teacher’s ambassadors” program....

**Support Needed**

- assistance with additional staff, specifically site coordinators for undergraduate majors
- additional support staff to improve close monitoring of students
- identification of effective third and fourth year engagement programs
- additional resources to move content online
- additional resources for marketing