Undergraduate Retention Initiatives

College of Visual & Performing Arts

Office of the Provost
Texas Tech University

January 30, 2014
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 Visual & Performing Arts.

Current Structure/Approach
The college initiated a fall 2013 meeting of its entire administrative leadership to focus on the issue of retention. Topics of that meeting included:
- examination of academic suspension procedures
- consideration of the impact of summer enrollment and “getting back to campus” as an important aspect of retention in the specific college
- considering the different retention services for undergraduate versus graduate students
- consider the development of “enticement scholarships” that would incentivize students to return to complete their education
- possible development of recovery scholarships

Initiatives
An important issue is the cost of TTU summer courses versus community colleges. TTU-VPA is not a competitive value for students, versus community colleges. Students pursue their education at a community college based on cost. Often these students do not return to TTU. Accordingly,
- the college is examining long-range plans for summer enrollment,
- the college intends to better market its courses and the value of persisting at TTU, and
- the college is considering how to develop specialized courses that would be of unique interest in the summer, and which community colleges could not offer,, i.e. accelerated for we courses that are highly creative and nimble

Support Needed
- additional professional development for academic advisors
- assistance with international students
- additional training for faculty and instructors to early identify those students at risk of departing the University prematurely