



Retention Assessment
Southern Illinois
University



Executive Summary
Teresa Farnum & Associates, Inc.
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INTRODUCTION

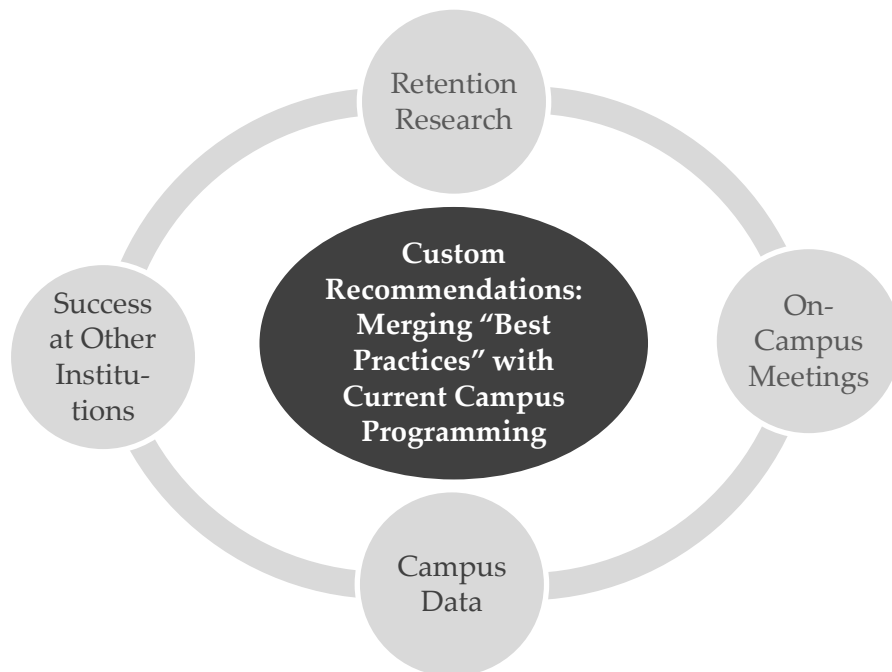
Teresa Farnum visited Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIU) on October 17–18, 2013, for the purpose of providing an external review of retention-related issues. Provost John Nicklow served as the contact. Preparations for the consultation, including sharing retention materials and creating an itinerary, were exceptional.

OVERVIEW

Goals

- Identify strengths and opportunities related to retention
- Provide five recommendations for top priorities

Process



ITINERARY

In order to achieve the goals, Sharon Brooks, facilitated the creation of the following itinerary:

Date/Time	Meeting	Participant
Oct. 3 11:00 a.m.– 12:15 p.m.	Conference Call Associate Provost & Dean University College Director, University Core Curriculum	Marc Amos Pat Manfredi
Oct. 17		
8:00 a.m.	Provost, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	John W. Nicklow
9:00 a.m.	Dean of Students	Katie Sermersheim
9:45 a.m.	Associate Dean of University College	Royce Burnett
10:30 a.m.	Chancellor	Rita Cheng
11:00 a.m.	Student Focus Group	See Appendix
11:45 a.m.	Lunch Meeting with Engagement Task Force and Retention Committee	See Appendix
12:30 p.m.	Faculty Focus Group	See Appendix
1:30 p.m.	Chief Academic Advisors	See Appendix
2:15 p.m.	Academic Deans and Associate Deans	See Appendix
3:00 p.m.	Director, Learning Support Services Director, Student Rights & Responsibilities Director, Disability Support Services Coordinator, Veterans Services	Lisa Peden Chad Trisler Sam Goodin Paul Copeland
4:00 p.m.	Director, Financial Aid Bursar Registrar	Terri Harfst Jill Kirkpatrick Tiffany Robinson
4:30 p.m.	Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs	John W. Nicklow
Oct. 18		
4:00–6:00 p.m.	Chancellor Provost, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Chief Marketing and Communications Officer Interim Dir. – Institutional Research and Studies Chief of Staff Lipman-Hearn Staff	Rita Cheng John W. Nicklow Rae Goldsmith George Vineyard Jake Baggot Kirsten Fedderke Tom Abrahamson

CURRENT RETENTION AND GRADUATION RATES

Comparison to Similar Institutions

Education Trust has a website, www.collegeresults.org, that draws data from IPEDS and creates a list of 15 similar institutions based on a very sophisticated algorithm. This permits an objective comparison of institutions with similar characteristics that may predict retention and graduation rates. This list—with a few data categories—is listed below in alphabetical order. The complete tables, with many tabs, are available at <http://www.collegeresults.org/search1b.aspx?institutionid=149222>.

Institution	% Pell FY	% URM	EST SAT	Ave. Net Price	UG FTE
Bowling Green	40.0%	14.7%	1,030	\$16,184	14,060
Central WA	31.0%	11.7%	995	\$13,775	10,103
East MI	50.0%	8.2%	1,010	\$13,537	10,922
East TN	39.0%	16.7%	990	\$13,702	9,287
Eastern IL	50.0%	24.2%	990	\$12,824	14,955
Ferris State	48.0%	10.3%	990	\$12,857	10,582
IN of Pennsylvania	37.0%	12.9%	985	\$14,892	12,230
Indiana Purdue	42.0%	13.5%	1,005	\$11,777	18,092
Kent State	39.0%	11.6%	1,050	\$17,489	19,418
Northern IL	50.0%	24.4%	1,010	\$16,568	16,535
SIU	49.0%	26.5%	990	\$13,399	13,889
U of Memphis	55.0%	41.7%	990	\$10,111	14,430
UNC at Charlotte	38.0%	22.1%	1,050	\$9,044	17,821
UNC at Greensboro	45.0%	28.0%	1,025	\$7,375	13,759
Western IL	37.0%	17.3%	970	\$14,133	9,822
Western MI	35.0%	12.6%	1,050	\$14,672	18,200

The table below reports, in descending order, rates of returns of 2009 first-time, full-time students, along with more recent data for SIU

Retention Rates	% Full-Time 2009 Freshmen Who Returned in 2010-11
Eastern IL	79.0%
Kent State	79.0%
U of Memphis	78.0%
Bowling Green	77.0%
IN of Pennsylvania	77.0%
UNC at Charlotte	77.0%
UNC at Greensboro	77.0%
East MI	76.0%
Western MI	76.0%
Central WA	75.0%
Indiana Purdue	74.0%
Northern IL	74.0%
Western IL	73.0%
East TN	72.0%
Ferris State	70.0%
SIU	69.0%

2010: 67%
2011: 61%
2012: 60%

Furthermore, the following data, supplied by Vineyard, show the importance of the first semester experience in retention:

YEAR	FALL NUMBER ENTERING	SPRING RETURN RATE	FALL-TO-FALL RETENTION
2008	2553	88.25	68.4
2009	2321	90.05	69.4
2010	21.98	88.44	66.7
2011	2304	84.72	61.02
2012	2291	83.15	60.06

System-Defined Similar Institutions

Retention and Progression Rates	% Full-Time 2009 Freshmen Retained	4-Year Grad Rate	5-Year Grad Rate	6-Year Grad Rate
Texas Tech University	82.0%	35.3%	56.3%	61.4%
Mississippi State University	82.0%	30.0%	53.8%	60.2%
East Carolina University	81.0%	32.5%	53.9%	58.5%
West Virginia University	80.0%	32.5%	52.2%	57.0%
University of North Dakota	79.0%	23.0%	46.4%	54.3%
Kent State University at Kent	79.0%	26.1%	44.2%	49.5%
Oklahoma State University-Main Campus	78.0%	34.3%	56.5%	61.8%
University of Louisville	78.0%	22.1%	43.6%	50.8%
University of Missouri-Kansas City	75.0%	17.2%	35.2%	41.3%
Wright State University-Main Campus	71.0%	17.9%	34.4%	40.3%
Southern Illinois University Carbondale	69.0%	24.2%	40.9%	44.5%

STRENGTHS

Even with just a short time with the university, it is clear that there is an incredible focus on retention as well as many, excellent strategies and elements of a potentially outstanding organizational structure. Some observations include:

- Use of a predictive model in advising
- Organizational structure that has Student Affairs, Academics, Financial Aid and Enrollment Management at the same table (great for retention, which touches all of these)
- Plans to move offices to facilitate improvements in service to students
- Lots of positive, student-success changes in academic policies (especially important as the student profile improves)
 - Repeat policy limit to twice with last grade only in GPA calculation
 - Incomplete grade change required following term

- Academic Renewal
- Centralized approval for early reinstatement
- Diversity:
 - Center for Inclusive Excellence with increased programming
 - Diversity component of CORE
 - Lots of affinity groups (BAG, SIS, Black Male Initiative, HRC, etc.)
 - Diverse faculty (reported by students)
- Veteran Services
- Saluki Cares

Wonderful resource center that has high use (though its use may not be meeting its full potential—students complained of run-around, and Saluki Cares is an important part of minimizing difficulty in getting answers)
- Math faculty are working to improve learning and success
 - Fall Math 107 increased success rate last year from 48% to 56%
 - Fall Math 108 increased success rate last year from 47% to 56%
- Commitment to technology
- Improved facilities
- Living/Learning Program
- Transition to multi-year scholarships!
- 400 registered student organizations, Greeks
- No class purging process: financial hold increased limit to \$1000, a reasonable amount
- Course availability (excellent—very unusual to hear this at a large university!)
- 120 credits required for graduation in most programs
- Increased attention to the role of J-term and summer to support accelerating time to graduation
- Unusual collaboration among bursar, financial aid, registrar offices (and outreach practices)

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

I. University College

Observations

- Strengths
 - The model is great and, in fact, is rarely seen: UC includes academic support, Honors Program, advising, learning support services, CORE, career services—all critical components in retention
 - The organizational structure incorporates the concepts of best practices by aligning these important functions and elevates the leadership position to an associate provost level
- Weaknesses
 - Despite the best practices “on paper,” retention has gone down significantly, while making significant investments in human and fiscal resources
 - There may be a lack of understanding of how to actualize the kind of collaborative activities that are needed to be an effective office for increased student-centeredness
 - There may be inadequate connections to the colleges, particularly in advising

Recommendations

- Review expectations and document roles of leaders in UC to reflect specific retention activities
- Ensure that advising:
 - Has a very strong connections to colleges
 - Has a prominent voice in the Advising Council
 - Develops structured programs of collaboration with Career Services to serve undecided students
- Fill the UCOL 101 coordinator position
- Retain the structure of the College—it holds tremendous potential in a retention initiative

II. Advising

Observations

- The current Freshman Intake Model is a good one for SIU
- The Advising Council is great structure for unification of *university* advising, with some progress as a vehicle for
 - Standardizing definition and delivery of advisement
 - Connecting First-Year Programs with colleges (though this may not be working)

Recommendations

- Expect an advising plan from UC with explicit strategies for subpopulations
 - Pre-majors and majors (collaboration with colleges)
 - Provisional
 - Undecided
 - First-semester <2.0
- Complete preparations for full implementation in fall 2014

III. UCOL101

- Strengths
 - The course offers graduation credit
 - It is taught largely by faculty and AP staff (some GAs, no adjunct); this is excellent and a huge commitment!
 - All sections have a peer mentor
 - Some sections are designed for majors (e.g., engineering, psychology), and there are specially designated sections for Honors, Undeclared, etc.
 - It's required
 - There are important transition-to-college topics
- Weaknesses
 - This should be one of the most exciting courses in the first semester, but it is reportedly not popular with students and some faculty
 - A course that doesn't include some traditional components such as tests, quizzes doesn't feel like a "real" course to 18 year-olds

- The difficulty in recruiting faculty (this is always the case in early implementation of these models) may have resulted in a desire to move the budget to UC to hire instructors

Recommendations

- Hire a director charged with assessing and improving the program
- Include more “academic” content and ensure that the themes are targeted to faculty desires and enrolled students
- Maintain the learning outcomes
- Consider special topics (such as math professor with civil war hobby, etc.)
- Promote the special topics to new freshmen to generate excitement and enrollment in a section of interest
- Embed the transition-to-college components into traditional “academic” content with tests, in addition to journals and reflection papers
- Have honors sections with increased research on independently chosen topics
- Consider a common summer reading
- Increase collaboration/persuasion to teach (rather than reallocating budget to UC)—enhancing the content of the course will help with this
- Decrease to two credits (one-credit courses work poorly, but three may be more than needed, in the context of continuing to decrease graduation requirements)
- Increase reading and the weight of tests

IV. Retention Structures

Institutions with successful retention initiatives have six fundamental structures/conditions in place:

Observations

- **Senior staff commitment:** SIU definitely has this as evidence by initiatives such as creation of University College, purchase of technology for an early alert and intervention system, unusually high support for retention “best practices”
- **Single leader for initiative:** The structure is in place with the associate provost serving in this role

- **Engagement of the community:** This is in process but probably not at the desired level
- **Extensive retention data:** Vineyard is clearly dedicated to this
- **Retention plan** and effective process for implementation of strategies: A retention plan, developed by the community, and includes:
 - Decisions regarding student populations that are large and retain poorly
 - Strategies that are specifically targeted to meet the needs of these populations
 - Baseline data and goals for each
 - Action plans for each strategy that include:
 - Tasks
 - Responsibilities
 - Deadlines
 - Assessment procedures

The process of creating and implementing a clearly defined and documented Retention Plan is one of the most critical components in a culture shift to increased student-centeredness and its natural outcome—improved retention and graduation rates.

- **Retention Committee** to monitor action and support strategy teams: SIU has two teams, the Engagement Task Force and the Retention Committee, but the charges and activities are not clearly delineated; an effective Retention Committee does not make recommendations, it supports teams that are implementing strategies in the Plan

Recommendations

- Create a SIU Retention Plan
- Engage departments (high numbers with low retention) in creating mini-retention plans to complement the university plan
- Create a new Retention Committee, a leadership team with about 15 members

- Start with some members of Engagement Task Force; include faculty, advisors, and admissions
- Charge them with development of Plan and oversight for implementation

V. Academic Success

Observations

- 3231 students had not achieved Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) in May 2013. The number was reportedly lower than the previous year, but it is still very high
 - 816 were above the limit of credits attempted for degree
 - 2415 undergraduates had a GPA less than 2.0 or had completed less than 2/3 of the expected progress toward graduation

This is consistent with the low retention rate and is likely one of the most important factors in attrition at SIU

- An effective early alert and intervention program can be very effective in preventing large numbers of students on SAP and the resulting denial of federal aid

Recommendations

- Form a non-IT task force to plan for implementation of the Early Intervention part of Ellucian
- The technology will streamline identification and notification, but these components have no impact on retention without an effective system of working with students who are on alert
- This is a huge and complex job, but can be very effective AND first semester is critical in retention!

VI. Other Recommendations

- Improve the effectiveness of the excellent Tablet Initiative by providing development opportunities for faculty on the incorporation of technology into instruction: this was requested at the faculty meeting
- Stagger hours of student service offices to increase access: there were student complaints—especially non-traditional
- Continue to work to improve learning and success in mathematics:

- Increase the likelihood of better grades in the first semester by postponing enrollment for those who place <12 on Math Test 1 and require math in the spring instead to increase confidence
- Continue to explore curricular and pedagogical enhancements for learning math (e.g., the second-week upgrade opportunity to move out of 107/108 is great, but 101 may not be appropriate)
- Set a goal that 70 percent of students on the rosters as of end-of-add/drop period receive a grade of A, B, or C—without lowering standards or inflating grades

CLOSING REMARKS

Southern Illinois University is very well poised for a successful retention initiative—with incredible support from senior management, an organizational structure that is cutting-edge in retention, a credit freshman year course, a new advising model, tremendous understanding of retention fundamentals, and a community ready for a clear retention plan.

A reasonable expectation for retention with a formal, structured initiative is:

Return to 69 percent by 2018 for the 2017 cohort
With the improved student profile, SIU may very well exceed this!

APPENDIX

Meeting Invitees

Student Focus Group (11:00-11:30):

- Mustafa N. Abdullah
- Diana Balan
- Rebecca Boyer
- Marcus Bryant
- Marvin Dixon
- Matt Enger
- Alisha Fain
- Shantel Franklin
- Steven Gear
- Jared Jones
- Robert Lee
- Donnell Murdock
- Dylan Neudecker
- Jacob Palmer
- Prince Rule-Hill
- Scott Shackmann
- Benjamin W. Smith
- Kia Smith
- Brendon Tarvin
- Carolina Villanueva
- Tiffany Walker
- Christopher Wheatley
- Brandon Willingham

Engagement Task Force (11:45-12:30):

- Tom Cheng, Executive Assistant, Commercial Innovation and Technology Transfer
- Tamarah Cook, University Social Media Strategy Specialist
- Mike Ruiz, Director, University Communications
- Chet Savage, Associate Athletic Director
- Katie Sermersheim (Chair), Interim Dean of Students
- Matthew Shackleton, Assistant Director of Arena
- Jon Shaffer, Director, University Housing
- Lori Stettler, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Auxiliary Services
- Blaine Tisdale, President, Graduate and Professional Student Council

Retention Committee (11:45-12:30):

- Phil Campbell, Director, New Student Orientation
- Lizette Chevalier, Associate Dean, College of Engineering
- Jill Gebke, Recruitment and Retention Coordinator, College of Business
- Terri Harfst, Director, Financial Aid
- Harvey Henson, Assistant Dean, Recruitment and Retention, College of Science
- Chester Hood, Recruitment and Retention Coordinator, College of Education and Human Resources
- Amber Loos, Assistant Professor, Morris Library
- Zowadi "Zoe" Owen, Retention Coordinator, College of Applied Sciences and Arts
- J.P. Reed, Assistant Professor, Sociology, College of Liberal Arts
- Charlotte Sarao, Assistant to the Dean, College of Agricultural Sciences
- Ratna Sinha, Associate Director, Graduate School
- Amanda Sutton, Coordinator, Undergraduate Admissions
- Luke Tolley, Associate Professor, Chemistry, College of Science
- Veronica Williams, Director, Exploratory Student Advisement, University College
- Tamara Workman, Director, Advisement

Faculty (12:30-1:30):

- Mavis Adjei, Marketing
- Ras Michael Brown, History

- Andrew Carver, Forestry
- Christina Castillo, University College
- Rhonda Dively, English
- Tom Downen, Accountancy
- Boyd Goodson, Chemistry
- Lalit Gupta, Electrical and Computer Engineering
- Barb Hagler, Workforce Education
- Christina Heady, Library Affairs
- John Legier, Information Systems and Applied Technology
- James Mathias, Mechanical Engineering and Energy Processes
- Howard Matyl, Radio and Television
- Justin Schuch, University College
- Sylvia Smith, Hospitality and Tourism Administration
- Rob Spahr, Cinema and Photography
- Saikat Talapatra, Physics
- Juliane Wallace, Health Education and Recreation
- Mark Watson, Library Affairs

Chief Academic Advisors (1:30-2:15):

- Elaine Atwood, Chief Academic Advisor, College of Applied Science and Arts
- Kathleen Jones, Chief Academic Advisor, MedPrep Program
- Jean Kelley, Chief Academic Advisor, College of Mass Communication and Media Arts
- Kimberly Little, Chief Academic Advisor, College of Education and Human Services
- Jean McPherson, Chief Academic Advisor, College of Science
- Charlotte Sarao, Chief Academic Advisor, College of Agricultural Sciences
- Tabitha Stone, Chief Academic Advisor, College of Business
- Martha Taricone, Chief Academic Advisor, College of Liberal Arts
- Veronica Williams, Director and Chief Academic Advisor, University College/Exploratory Students
- C. Jenise Wilson, Chief Academic Advisor, College of Engineering

Deans (2:15-3:00):

- Laurie Achenbach, Interim Dean, College of Science
- Dennis Cradit, Dean, College of Business
- Cynthia Fountaine, Dean, School of Law
- Kimberly Kempf-Leonard, Dean, College of Liberal Arts
- Dafna Lemish, Interim Dean, College of Mass Communication and Media Arts
- Anne Cooper Moore, Dean, Library Affairs
- Katie Sermersheim, Interim Dean of Students
- Andy Wang, Dean, College of Applied Sciences and Arts
- John Warwick, Dean, College of Engineering
- Keith Wilson, Dean, College of Education and Human Services

Associate Deans (2:15-3:00):

- Royce Burnett, Associate Dean, University College
- Lizette Chevalier, Associate Dean, College of Engineering
- Joan Davis, Associate Dean, College of Applied Sciences and Arts
- Frank Houdek, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, School of Law
- Scott Ishman, Acting Associate Dean, College of Science
- Allan Karnes, Associate Dean, College of Business
- Meera Komarraju, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts
- Cathy Mogharrenben, Acting Associate Dean for Academics and Student Affairs, College of Education and Human Services
- Andy Morgan, Acting Associate Dean of Students
- Brian Small, Acting Associate Dean, College of Agricultural Sciences

- Deborah Tudor, Associate Dean, College of Mass Communication and Media Arts

Academic Support Staff (3:00-4:00):

- Royce Burnett, Associate Dean, University College
- Paul Copeland, Coordinator, Veterans Services
- Sam Goodin, Director, Disability Support Services
- Lisa Peden, Director, Learning Support Services
- Chad Trisler, Director, Student Rights and Responsibilities