

## **Retention and Completion Institutional Initiatives**

The following activities at each campus were provided as part of each institution's Compact Report.

### **Bluefield State College**

#### *Retention*

- The Retention Task Force recommended and began implementing new initiatives to: 1) recruit higher quality students, 2) develop an on-going advisor training program, 3) develop a Developmental Studies department including a module base curriculum, 4) develop a formal early alert system, and 5) place greater emphasis on career advising.
- The on-line tutoring program known as SmartThinking was renewed. This program has improved Bluefield State College's ability to deliver tutoring services to students who take on-line classes but are not able to come to campus.
- Two courses designed to improve retention became operational recently. BSCS 101 is a mandatory institute for all new and transfer students, and BSCS 102 Academic Recovery class is required for all students placed on academic probation until they are removed from probation.

#### *Completion*

- BANNER Enrollment Management module, which continues to be implemented, is designed to expand the institution's ability to track student academic progress, expand the early-alert system for academic problems, and communicate with students more readily and automatically from many offices, including the Business Office, the Registrar's Office, the Advising Center and the Financial Aid Office.

### **Concord University**

#### *Retention*

- Piloted the ACES scholarship program to freshmen who participate in weekday study halls.
- Implemented PAWS retention scholarships for students with financial need who are in good academic standing but do not receive institutional aid
- Required Academic Success Center (ASC) contracts for students who were admitted via the appeals process, as well as for students reinstated via the academic and financial aid appeals process.
- Lowered a majority of Concord University's degree program requirements from 128 to 120 credit hours
- Awarded scholarships to student who may not qualify for traditional financial aid awards
- Utilized the Sigi<sup>3</sup> program to facilitate career planning

### **Fairmont State University**

#### *Retention*

- Special Freshman Seminars have been developed for science, math, technology and Honors students. Major-specific Freshman Seminars are being designed for the upcoming year.
- A Wilderness Explorer Program (rock climbing, whitewater rafting, hiking, and campfire discussions) was linked to the Freshman Seminar Program and oriented students to what it takes to be successful in college.
- True Colors was administered during Welcome Weekend to assist students in identifying personal strengths and helping them understand how to utilize those strengths.

Students' schedules were modified if problems were identified through these assessment measures to ensure success in first year college course

- Textbook Scholarships were administered through the Bookstore Advisory Board and Fairmont State University

#### *Completion*

- An additional graduation audit counselor was added to the Enrollment Services area in order to complete audits in a timely manner enabling students to make adjustments regarding schedules to ensure degree completion.
- Degree completion initiatives have required individual programs to redesign hours toward major hours, elective hours, and general education hours so that students have the opportunity to efficiently maximize total hours toward degree completion
- TaskStream software has been implemented in order to record, assist with reporting, and foster a dialog of improvement, adjustment, and feedback on programs and the assessment of student learning outcomes.

### **Glenville State College**

#### *Retention*

- Pilot tested a developmental math course with required supplemental instruction. The relative success of this initiative resulted in the addition of the supplemental instruction to all developmental math courses starting fall 2011. Thus, the weekly contact and total credit hours of developmental math courses have been increased from 3 to 4 hours.
- Revamped first-year experience course (GSC 100) to provide more mentor-mentee interaction
- Expand career planning and placement services and link these services to academic planning through academic departments and the Academic Support Center.

#### *Completion*

- Continued to use gateway and capstone course assignments to move students towards graduation.
- Began examining the need to deliver specific courses and/or fields of study in the evening, on weekends, or online to better address family and other commitments of adult learners. In the short term, the College selected to increase online offerings
- Established the Center for College Completion to improve retention rates and thereby graduation rates through early intervention with at-risk students
- Started identifying continuing students who have already satisfied the requirements of an associate degree program and encouraging them to request the awarding of this degree even if they are planning to pursue a four-year degree

### **Marshall University**

#### *Retention*

- Reduced the minimum number of hours required to graduate to 120. All programs have evaluated major degree requirements and created four-year plans of study based on this evaluation.
- In a new course called Freshman First Course (UNI 100) students start the process through the university's new e-portfolio project of creating statements about their career/professional plans that will match their choice of majors for which there is a four-year plan of study.
- Beginning with the fall 2011 semester, high at-risk students were required to attend UNI 202 as an "academic recovery" course in basic academic survival skills

### *Completion*

- With the development of the new core general education curriculum, the development of four-year plans of study, the implementation of Map-Works, and the emphasis on communicating more directly with students, Marshall anticipates a its graduation rates will be closer to the state-wide goal.

## **Shepherd University**

### *Retention*

- Utilized a web page and Facebook page (FASTPASS) specifically designed to keep in touch with parents and families of Shepherd students.
- Formed a new constitutionally-driven Student Success Committee (replacing the old Retention Steering Committee), co-chaired by the retention specialist, composed of 20 members, including eight full-time teaching faculty members.
- Implemented RETAIN, a new Client Relationship Management (CRM) software program designed to expedite and facilitate early intervention with students displaying at-risk behavior.

### *Completion*

- Retention efforts are designed to extend through graduation not just from the first to second years.
- Build/maintain an electronic transfer articulation process to ease the integration of transfer students and their credits into their chosen programs.
- Build/maintain a robust and responsive degree evaluation tool, readily available to advisors and students from the point of matriculation through graduation.

## **West Liberty University**

### *Retention*

- Piloting MAP-Works, a web-enabled retention program used as an assessment tool for determining first-year student risk factors. Map-Works provides a centralized venue for faculty and staff to communicate about “at risk” students.
- Hired a Retention Specialist who has implemented strategies such as: 1) the Early Alert System; 2) the Retention Action and Advisory Committee, a team of faculty/staff who review, recommend, and advise on retention initiatives; 3)Parent Power, an electronic news update that provides parents with information to support student success; 4) Academic Success Contracts
- Expanded the Hilltopper Academy, a summer bridge program for first-time freshmen who have ACT composite scores in math and writing of 18 or lower from one week to three weeks.

### *Completion*

- Considered adding an online tutoring program but was not able to due to costs
- Academic sections of the First Year Experience Program were added during the fall 2010 semester. Sections were created for psychology, biology, graphic design, and art education majors. These major-specific sections promoted student engagement and encouraged them to connect with their peers, as well as faculty in their respective majors.

## **West Virginia State University**

### *Retention*

- In Fall of 2010, WVSU began offering “enhanced” sections of English 101. Eighty percent of enrolled students passed the enhanced course.
- West Virginia State University received a Life Bridge AmeriCorps grant for 2010-2011 that funded eleven AmeriCorps volunteer positions to implement recruitment and retention activities including: 1) establish a mentoring program using upper class students to mentor freshman; 2) monitor and provide tutoring services in the math and writing drop-in centers; 3) make contact with students referred by faculty through the Faculty Referral Retention Program.
- In the spring 2011 semester, Collegiate Support and Counseling Services continued implementing the Faculty Referral Retention Program. Faculty makes referrals at the end of week’s one, three, five, and eight for students who are not attending classes, sporadically attending classes, and/or are having academic difficulty.

### *Completion*

- To aid students in planning their course schedules, each academic department (that did not already have one) developed a long-range course-offering schedule so students could plan when major courses would be offered. The purpose of this was to publicize course rotations and to address the problem of students being unable to fulfill their degree requirements because courses were not offered in the semester they planned to take them.
- A prospective major must meet with the Department Chair of his/her major department prior to admission to the degree program. This provides the student with a definitive evaluation of the courses taken to date and what will be required to progress to graduation. In addition, the student is also required to meet with the Department Chair once he/she completes 90 credit hours in order to map out a schedule of courses remaining for graduation and to guide the student in selecting those courses remaining in the degree program.
- In fall 2010, Student Services started the Mentoring Program. The primary objective of the Mentoring Program is to provide support for new students, to positively impact student success, and to enhance student learning.
- Academic Coaching Program – The program was implemented at WVSU in the spring 2011 making it mandatory for students on Financial Aid probation to attend two coaching sessions and one workshop or additional assignment. The goal of the program was to help students on financial aid probation identify ways to increase their grades and/or completion ratio in order to increase their likelihood of graduating and to be able to continue to receive financial aid.

## **West Virginia University**

### *Retention*

- The First-Year Academy, initiated in the fall of 2011, is designed to help students transition to an academic setting in each academic unit. Preliminary feedback suggests students were engaged and appreciate the opportunity to visit with program faculty and administrators.
- In the fall of 2010, WVU implemented Early Alert with the goal of identifying students three to four weeks into the semester who are experiencing academic difficulties in high D, F, W, and repeat courses. A process is now in place that not only identifies students experiencing academic difficulty, but also makes available intrusive mentoring and academic interventions to students requiring academic intervention.

- All Undergraduate Advising Services Center (UASC) incoming and first-year students are required to participate in the Freshmen Workshop Series, a set of workshops designed to teach freshmen how to manage their academics using the multiple resources available at WVU. The new online freshman advising workshop tutorial has been implemented as a requirement for all new UASC freshmen and transfer students to familiarize them with advising, scheduling, and related resources.
- Offering of Ask Regan, a one-stop shop website that allows current students to ask questions via email, instant message, or text message. Ask Regan is also available on Twitter and messages are sent about important dates, reminders, or events. Ask Regan will also post on Twitter when several questions on one subject are asked. This year, more than 250 questions have been answered.

*Completion*

- The Retention to Graduation Council was established to address issues and to create a culture where graduation is an expected outcome.

**Potomac State College of West Virginia University**

- Redistributed advisees among faculty to increase the ratio of advisors to advisees. In addition, faculty members were required to attend an extensive advising workshop before academic year 2011-2012 commenced.

**West Virginia University Institute of Technology**

- In March 2011, a coordinator of retention was hired and a campus-wide retention council was created.
- Students who were eligible to register for fall 2011 but had not done so were identified and contacted.
- Student affairs committed to administer the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) in spring 2012.