

# Report of the Wright State University Faculty Senate *ad hoc* committee on Student Success Jan 2012

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The report *Access, Progress, Success: Recommendations for Increasing Retention and Graduation in the Semester Transition* (the APS Report) was submitted to the Faculty Senate in late October, 2011 [<http://www.wright.edu/administration/senate/senage/documents/AccessProgressSuccessReport.pdf>]. The APS Report presents a summary of academic challenges faced by Wright State University (WSU) and begins a focused conversation on specific potential strategies for improving retention and graduation rates. In response to the APS Report, the Executive Committee of the WSU Faculty Senate has charged this *ad hoc* committee to review the report so “as to be able to make recommendations to the Faculty Senate at its January, 2012 meeting regarding the report as a whole and its recommendations in particular and to make recommendations of its own regarding how Faculty should participate in ensuring the success of our students.”

## **Committee Membership**

- Ann Bowling, representing the College of Nursing and Health
- Rich Bullock, representing the College of Liberal Arts
- Joe Coleman, representing the Raj Sojin College of Business
- Travis Doom, representing the Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Chair
- David Kender, representing the College of Engineering and Computer Science
- Anna Lyon, representing the College of Education and Human Services
- Corey Miller, representing the College of Science and Mathematics
- Weiqun Zhang, representing the Lake Campus

## **Highly Recommended for Immediate Action**

This section of the report contains recommendations that the committee feels are the most worthy of consideration for immediate action. This set of recommendations includes both high impact changes and worthy recommendations with less impact whose low-cost or relative ease of deployment encourage immediate action.

### **Recommendation #1: Formation of a University College Curriculum Committee**

The *ad hoc* committee strongly recommends that the Faculty Senate establish a standing curriculum committee for University College. The UVC Curriculum Committee shall recommend to the Faculty Senate, via UCAPC, courses and policies affecting UVC courses and the first year experience. Furthermore, the UVC Curriculum Committee shall provide long-term faculty oversight of first-year outcomes and provide periodic recommendations on

university-wide admissions policies, remediation strategies, joint-enrollment program articulations, and the like. This body should consist of no fewer than four faculty members from the university at large (appointed by the Faculty Senate) and a like number of University College staff (appointed by the Dean of University College). The Dean of the University College may serve *ex officio* as a non-voting member of the UVC Curriculum Committee.

**Be It Resolved that:**

*WSU shall maintain a University College Curriculum Committee as a standing committee of the University College. The UVC Curriculum Committee is charged with the ongoing evaluation of UVC courses, the first-year experience, and policies that affect first-year students. This includes, but is not limited to, long-term oversight of first-year outcomes, university-wide admissions policies, remediation strategies for conditionally admitted students, and join-enrollment programs. The committee is charged to recommend improvements as necessary to UVC courses and to forward policy recommendations to the appropriate bodies for consideration and action. At least one-half of the committee membership shall consist of faculty from the Academic Colleges. The remainder of the committee shall consist largely of UVC faculty/staff directly involved with the first-year experience. Committee members shall serve two-year staggered terms.*

**Recommendation #2: Ensure broad participation in University College Advisory Board**

It is common practice in the academic colleges (and, in many cases, departmental units or programs) to solicit input regarding policy and curricular development from the constituencies that it serves through the use of an advisory board. The *ad hoc* committee recommends that the University College ensure broad participation in its advisory board including current students (having completed the first-year experience), recent alumni (3-5 years), local community college deans/advisors/faculty, and local high school principals/advisors/faculty. The advisory board shall continue to provide advice and feedback to University College and to the UVC Curriculum committee on current, planned, or desired changes to admissions policies, remediation strategies, and the first-year experience. Ideally, this body can also serve as a vehicle for outreach to local high schools and community college so that local students are better prepared for their first year at Wright State University.

**Be It Resolved that:**

*The University College Advisory Board shall include among its membership current students (having recently completed the first-year experience at WSU), recent alumni (3-5 years post-graduation), and administration/faculty from local high-schools and community colleges that prepare our incoming students.*

**Recommendation #3: Conditional admission and placement for students with marginal GPA or low-ranking standardized entrance examination subject scores [APS Report, page 17]**

Currently, Ohio applicants are unconditionally admitted to Wright State University if they meet two of the three following criteria: 1) high school GPA of 2.0 or higher, 2) 18 ACT composite or 840 SAT critical reading and math only, or 3) completion of college preparatory curriculum. Non-Ohio residents must meet higher criteria of a 2.5 high school GPA, 20 ACT composite or 960 SAT critical reading and mathematics, and must complete a college preparatory curriculum.

The six-year graduation rate for students meeting or exceeding the ACT and GPA admission standards is 56%. As applicants only need to meet two of the three criteria, students are currently admitted unconditionally even if they do not meet the GPA or ACT/SAT criteria. The APS Reports that the six-year graduation rate for students who do not meet *both* of the GPA and ACT/SAT criteria is below 20%.

The Faculty of Wright State University are committed to the mission of providing affordable, quality, and accessible education to qualified students in the Miami valley. However, the *ad hoc* committee agrees with the concerns noted in the APS Report that unconditional admittance of students who fail to meet *all* of the admissions criteria is not in the students' best interests. Therefore, we highly recommend the APS Report's proposal for conditional admission of such students requiring a mandatory course of action designed to improve these students' ability to transition to the university, maintain financial aid, and successfully graduate in a timely fashion. All students who qualify under WSU's existing admission requirements should be given an opportunity to demonstrate the necessary proficiency in mathematics and language skills vital to their university preparedness. Students who are not able to demonstrate the required proficiency may be admitted as jointly-enrolled students to allow them an opportunity to develop and demonstrate these skills at our community college partners or through Wright State preparatory programs.

**Grade Point Average Requirement:** Students who have completed a college preparatory curriculum and have demonstrated competence on national standardized examinations but have a high school GPA of less than 2.0 may be admitted conditionally. Such students should "be recommended for a joint-enrollment program with a collaborating community college in order to give the students an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to obtain the grade point average necessary to maintain good standing at Wright State and retain their eligibility for financial aid." [APS Report, page 17]

**Language skills assessment requirement:** "Students with a writing ACT score of 11 or less should be admitted conditionally" [APS Report, page 18]. Such students will be expected to successfully complete an appropriate course to cover the deficiency from another institution (such as a community college) or to successfully complete the Wright State Writing Academy summer bridge program before their first term of study.

Conditionally recommended students who fail to demonstrate their readiness prior to the start of the first term will be recommended for a joint-enrollment program.

**Mathematics skills assessment requirement:** “Students with a mathematics ACT score of 13 or less should be admitted conditionally” [APS Report, page 18]. Such students will be expected to successfully complete an appropriate course to cover the deficiency from another institution (such as a community college) or to successfully complete the Wright State Math Academy summer bridge program before their first term of study. Conditionally recommended students who fail to demonstrate their readiness prior to the start of the first term will be recommended for a joint-enrollment program.

The committee notes that the effective cut-off scores for the ACT Reading would be about the third percentile, and the second percentile for the ACT Mathematics (the ACT does not report percentile zero). The exact percentile is subject to change slightly based on a particular year’s test. This is in effect the next to lowest possible score on both sub tests. An applicant to WSU would need to score higher than one percent of individuals taking the ACT in order to be potentially qualified for conditional admission.

The committee has some areas of concern regarding the implementation of this recommendation. We are concerned that this may decrease the size of the First Year class by about 8% (adding all those in the report data set that have high school GPAs less than 2.0 (150), ACT Reading less than 12 (134), or ACT Mathematics less than 13 (69)), while simultaneously increasing enrollment in the summer bridge academy. The summer bridge programs must have the necessary capacity to serve the student demand. In addition, the revision of admission criteria has the potential to disproportionately populations of students from regions that typically have lower ACT scores. This could affect the diversity of Wright State’s first-year experience, and raises potential concerns over equal access to education. These potential issues should be monitored by the UVC Curriculum Committee.

**Be It Resolved that:**

*The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate charge UCPAC to work with the appropriate administrative bodies (Undergraduate Enrollment, the Council of Deans, etc.) to formalize an admissions policy that allows the conditional placement of students in developmental programs that may substantially increase the likelihood of their academic success.*

**Recommendation #4: Early identification of deficiencies to allow pre-enrollment remediation [APS Report, page 13]**

The committee strongly agrees with the fundamental principles for streamlining remediation presented in the APS Report. “The remedial curriculum should be designed with the objective of having students enroll in college credit-bearing courses at the earliest possible time. Students should be able to complete all remediation in a single semester” [APS Report, page 27].

The committee recognizes that early identification of deficiencies is vital to allowing students to prepare for their first-year experience. Automatic identification of deficiencies based upon standardized examination subject scores will allow students to remediate subjects in their final year of high-school, in community college coursework, or in summer bridge programs or academies.

Initial placement in writing and mathematics courses should be determined by the results of standardized examination subject scores. Input from the Mathematics Department suggests that students with an ACT Math score of 17-21 are currently recommended for developmental mathematics. Students with an ACT Math score of 22 or higher are recommended for *College Algebra* or higher. This approach allows students (and advisors) to determine an appropriate course of action well *before* enrollment. Local tools, such as the eCompass examination or submitting an essay for review should remain available to allow students to challenge/improve their initial placement based upon standardized examination subject score.

### **WSU Current Admission Policy**

[We are having some difficulty in locating the current "official" policy. Included for now is the unofficial summary from the university webpage].

#### *Ohio Residents*

All Ohio residents who have graduated from an Ohio public or chartered high school will be considered for admission. For unconditional admission, a student must meet the following criteria:

- 2.0 or higher cumulative high school GPA
- 18 ACT composite or 840 SAT critical reading and math only
- Completion of college-preparatory curriculum

#### *Out-of-State Students*

Out-of-state students must present evidence of an above-average ability to do college-level course work, which is generally illustrated by:

- 2.5 or higher high school GPA
- 20 ACT composite or 960 SAT critical reading and math only
- Completion of college-preparatory curriculum

### **Proposed starting point for revision of admission policy (consistent with Recommendations #3 and #4)**

For unconditional admission, a student must meet the follow criteria:

- 2.0 or higher cumulative GPA from a Ohio public or chartered high school *or* 2.5 or higher cumulative GPA from an out-of-state high school.
- Completion of a college-preparatory curriculum
- ACT Mathematics score of 22 or higher *or* SAT Quantitative score of 520 or higher
- ACT Writing score of 23 or higher *or* SAT Writing score of 530 or higher

Applicants who fail to meet the high-school GPA requirement but who meet the other requirements may be admitted conditionally as part of a joint-enrollment program with local community colleges in order to allow the student to mature and demonstrate their academic ability. Students who successfully complete the joint-enrollment program will be considered to have met this admissions requirement.

Applicants who fail to demonstrate the expected college-preparatory high-school curriculum may be admitted conditionally and notified of their preparatory deficiencies. Students will be expected to cover their high-school deficiencies in college-level coursework prior to achieving junior status.

Applicants who have not demonstrated mathematics preparedness may be admitted conditionally. Applicants with an ACT Mathematics scores between 14 and 21 (SAT Math between 350 and 519) may be admitted with a condition to demonstrate mathematics preparedness before the end of their first year of study or through the following (or equivalent) means: placement test score, successful completion of an appropriate remedial course from another institution (such as a community college), or successful completion of an approved summer program before their first term of study. Applicants with ACT Mathematics scores below 14 (SAT Math below 350) who fail to demonstrate preparedness may be admitted conditionally as part of a joint-enrollment program. Students that successfully complete the joint-enrollment program will be considered to have met this admissions requirement.

Applicants who have not demonstrated writing preparedness may be admitted conditionally. Applicants with ACT Writing scores between 12 and 22 (SAT Writing between 330 and 530) may be admitted with a condition to demonstrate writing preparedness before the end of their first year of study or through the following (or equivalent) means: placement test score, successful completion of an appropriate remedial course from another institution (such as a community college), or successful completion of an approved summer program before their first term of study. Applicants with ACT Writing scores of below 12 (SAT Writing below 330) that fail to demonstrate preparedness before the start of their first term may be admitted conditionally as part of a joint-enrollment program. Students that successfully complete the joint-enrollment program will be considered to have met this admissions requirement.

**Be It Resolved that:**

*The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate charge UCPAC to work with the appropriate administrative bodies (Undergraduate Enrollment, the Council of Deans, etc.) to formalize an updated admissions policy that allows placement in developmental programs based upon standardized examination scores available at the time of application.*

**Recommendation #5: College placement by sophomore year [APS Report, pages 22-23]**

The role of University College should be to provide an outstanding first-year experience for students. University College provides advising and remediation for students who are not able to enter the Academic College of their choice or who have not chosen an Academic College. Students must leave University College for Academic Colleges in a timely fashion in order to graduate without unnecessary delay.

The committee recommends that University College have all remediation completed in one semester and place all students in Academic Colleges by the end of their freshman year. Students who are not placed in an Academic College by the end of their first term as sophomores at WSU should be placed on academic probation. Students who have not selected or do not qualify for an academic college at the end of their second term as a sophomore must be considered for dismissal.

The committee recommends that all Academic Colleges review their direct and regular admissions processes for college entrance with these goals in mind.

**Policy: Placement in academic colleges by the sophomore year**

*Students must be accepted to an Academic College by no later than the end of their first semester at WSU with sophomore status (or higher). Students who fail to apply and qualify for admission to an Academic College by the end of their first semester at WSU as a sophomore (or higher) shall be placed on Academic probation.*

**Recommendation #6: Mandatory intervention for students on probation [APS Report, page 26]**

The committee strongly recommends the creation of a one semester credit hour course *UVC Recovery* that shall be made mandatory for all students on probation. This course should serve as a study table environment similar to those found in Athletic Study Table programs. Furthermore, this course should serve as a scheduled opportunity for students to meet regularly with advisors to discuss academic and career counseling, to make students aware of campus resources, and to help students develop the necessary study skills for academic success.

Students who do not recover from probation are normally dismissed from the university. Students may appeal this decision. Students who fail to participate in the mandatory intervention shall have this failure weigh heavily against them in the appeals process.

## **Policy: Mandatory enrollment in UVC Recovery for students on Probation**

*WSU students on Academic Probation must enroll in the course UVC Recovery while on probation. Petitions to avoid dismissal from the University from students who do not pass UVC Recovery in the semester prior to their dismissal shall be denied unless the petition shows that the student was unable to participate in the course.*

### **Recommendation #7: Enhancing success for at-risk students [APS Report, page 32-34]**

Factors other than academic preparedness and background play an important role in student success. The committee agrees with the APS Report recommendation that University Organizations that provide services to at-risk students should work with University College to encourage students to make appropriate use of an expanded Student Academic Success Center. The Student Academic Success Center and Bolinga multicultural center should be focused on student success and may require additional university resources to meet their expanded mission.

#### **Be It Resolved that:**

*UCAPC shall work with the administration to focus and expand the resources of our Student Centers towards student academic success.*

### **Recommendation #8: Develop joint-enrollment, collaborative programs with all local community colleges [APS Report, page 16]**

Joint-enrollment programs allow students to stay connected with Wright State while advancing or rescuing their academic careers at lower cost institutions more traditionally focused on developmental material. Joint-enrollment partnerships provide academically or financially at-risk students room to grow academically with less financial burden and with less threat to long-term eligibility for federal financial aid. To maximize student flexibility, WSU should form such partnerships with all community colleges in the region. Joint-enrollment curriculum oversight should be overseen by the UVC Curriculum Committee.

The committee highly recommends that students whose academic preparedness falls below the threshold for statistically likely success at WSU be required to begin their academic careers at a partner community college under advisement from WSU University College advisors. Other students may voluntarily choose to enter the joint-enrollment program for non-academic reasons, such as cost or location. The loss of these students will cause enrollment declines in developmental and first-year courses and limit WSU's ability to proactively intervene with these students. The hope is that success for students who are able to mature academically in their first-year joint-enrollment program will be greatly increased when they transition to full-time students at WSU. The number, demographics, short-term success, and long-term success of students who use these joint-enrollment programs must be carefully monitored by the UVC Curriculum Committee to ensure a smooth transition to WSU.

**Be It Resolved that:**

*The University shall expand its joint-enrollment program to include all local community colleges.*

**Recommendation #9: Summer Bridge Program: WSU Mathematics Academy [APS Report, page 15]**

Early identification of deficiencies (Recommendation #4) encourages pre-enrollment remediation. The APS Report recommends that the WSU Mathematics Department establish a pre-enrollment 4-week summer academy designed to prepare students for regular developmental coursework.

The committee agrees that students assessed in lower levels of remediation should be provided with multiple pre-enrollment means for preparation. The committee unanimously agrees that a summer mathematics bridge program similar to the summer Writing Academy is worthy of immediate action. The APS Report proposes that the Mathematics Academy run in the same time frame but opposite to the Writing Academy. Some faculty are concerned that running the programs simultaneously may reduce the effectiveness of both programs as at-risk students may manage their time poorly. The committee is in favor of running the Academies simultaneously in the AM/PM, but recommends that the effectiveness of the bridge programs for students enrolled in only Writing, only Math, or both programs be tracked for future effectiveness planning. This is a worthy initiative and university resources should be allocated to its implementation and success.

**Be It Resolved that:**

*The University College shall work with the WSU Mathematics Department to develop and pilot a 2012 Summer Mathematics Academy. The goal of this Academy shall be to prepare and evaluate students for preparedness for a one semester Mathematics remediation course during their first year.*

**Recommendation #10: Expanding opportunities for top scholars [APS Report, page 31]**

"The Honors Program, in conjunction with enrollment Management and the colleges, should develop an extensive recruiting program to attract Honors eligible students from High Schools throughout the Dayton region" [APS Report, page 31]. "To support for the growth in the Honors Program, the University should adopt a budgeting model that recognizes and encourages growth in the program by ensuring that funding is available to provide the courses and support needed by the increasing numbers of Honors students." The committee supports the APS Report recommendation that university resources be budgeted to increase recruiting efforts, to support increased workload related to the honors classroom experience, and to support increased advising responsibilities. The committee notes that while top scholars are not at-risk for academic failure, the APS Report data shows that many top students do not end up graduating from Wright State University.

Expansion of opportunities for top scholars should support the goal of making Wright State University the school of choice for graduation of these outstanding students.

**Be It Resolved that:**

*The Administration shall work with the faculty/staff of the Honors Program to expand the funding of the honors program to provide more opportunities for students to participate in the program. Issues that cause qualified students to not graduate with Honors (such as limited offerings of honors courses) shall be identified and addressed.*

**Recommended for future development**

This section of the report contains recommendations that the committee feels are worthy of consideration, but that have less impact or require more lead time than the recommendations in the previous section.

**Recommendation #11: Freshman seminars and learning communities [APS Report, page 21]**

Many universities have experienced success with first-year experience programs supported by freshman seminars or cohort-based learning communities. The APS Report does not provide data regarding the effectiveness of our freshman seminars, but the general consensus is that there is considerable room for improvement. The focus of the redesigned courses should include not only strategies for academic success, but become increasingly focused on shared intellectual experiences. This will require increased faculty participation in the first-year experience.

In the short-term, the committee recommends that first-year seminars continue to be offered through University College. The curriculum of the UVC semester course should be developed by the UVC curriculum committee. Periodic college-wide seminars where a member of the college faculty or invited speakers gives a presentation appropriate to first-year students in the college may serve as a means to provide a worthwhile shared experience. Preparation for and discussion of these periodic seminars could serve as an intellectual focus for a portion of the small group experiences. Ideally, at least one seminar each year would be an invited speaker dealing with a contemporary issue of cross-disciplinary interest that could intellectually engage the entire student community. In the long-term, the first year experience may need to be redesigned and housed in the Academic Colleges.

**Be It Resolved that:**

*The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate charge (or create) a committee(s) to plan, develop, monitor, and improve the effectiveness of freshman seminars and learning communities.*

**Recommendation #12: Enhanced scholarly and co-curricular activities [APS Report, page 28]**

“The University should develop a three-year plan to increase opportunities for students to engage in service learning, community engagement, and undergraduate research in cooperation with the coordinators of these programs of the academic colleges” [APS Report, page 28-29]. The committee supports this recommendation, urging that the faculty from the academic colleges be included in all stages of the development of the plan.

**Be It Resolved that:**

*The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate shall work with the administration to charge (or create) a committee to develop a three-year plan to increase opportunities for students to engage in service learning, community engagement, and undergraduate research in cooperation with the coordinators of these programs of the academic colleges.*

**Recommendation #13: Proactive intervention for at-risk students [APS Report, pages 23-24]**

The APS Report recommends that faculty of courses critical to first-year success make available to academic advisors immediate access to student grades and attendance data so that intervention can take place well before course completion. This goal first requires the identification of critical first-year and general education courses. Secondly, this goal requires that the faculty of such courses be encouraged to enter this data into a common electronic format (such as Pilot) in a timely fashion. This may require investment into technologies to ease the collection and maintenance of such data directly into an electronic format, such as response clickers, electronic card-swipe or RFID readers for classrooms, or the like.

The committee supports this recommendation in principle but notes that there must remain room for significant variation in assessment both by course and by instructor. There is no “one tool fits all” solution to this problem. Participation in this recommendation must be completely voluntary; faculty must have the freedom to choose to use them—or not. A pilot study of the effectiveness of this approach on some sections of one or more critical courses should be considered before applying this approach more generally.

**Be It Resolved that:**

*University College allocate resources to Fall 2012 pilot for proactive intervention for at-risk students in one or more courses student to critical success and report to the Faculty Senate in Spring 2013 on the effectiveness of these techniques.*

## **Actions requiring significant revision or further planning**

This section of the report contains recommendations that the committee feels that, while potentially worthwhile, require significant revision, planning, or study before adoption.

### **Recommendation #14: Streamlining mathematics remediation [APS Report, page 28]**

As noted in Recommendation #4, the committee supports the goal of providing means for students to be able to complete all remediation in a single semester. The APS Report recommends that the Mathematics Department consider the feasibility of both math-emporium software-based remediation and concurrent co-requisite stretch remediation courses that allow just-in-time remediation in parallel with immediate entry into non-remedial first-year Mathematics courses including *College Algebra* and *Math and the Modern World*.

The committee supports the recommendation that Mathematics Department investigate multiple paths for first-year success. This recommendation requires significant development before deployment, but seems, in theory, sound. Some members also suggested different remedial approaches for liberal arts majors, or engineering and science majors.

The committee recommends that the University allocate resources for a pilot program for a math emporium based approach to remedial/developmental mathematics education. We recommend that University College/UVC Curriculum committee work with the Mathematics Department to develop and fund a pilot program, to develop an implementation timeline, and to identify registration/financial aid issues unique to individualized learning paths and progress rate.

### **Be It Resolved that:**

*University College and the Mathematics Department shall develop multiple one-semester remediation paths for conditionally admitted students with mathematics deficiencies. These paths should include individual (software-based) remediation, co-requisite stretch remediation, and more traditional remediation. These multiple paths should be evaluated over the next several years for their effectiveness in preparing students to succeed in their university mathematics requirements.*

### **Recommendation #15: Enhancing success for minority students [APS Report, page 33]**

The APS Report recommends that "Enrollment Management, in collaboration with the academic colleges, should develop an aggressive plan to recruit minority students with ACT scores of 22 or more and high school GPAs of 3.2 or above" [APS Report, page 33]. The APS Report recommends that this recruitment should include financial aid packages "more than competitive" with other local institutions.

The committee supports the goal of making Wright State the school of choice for all qualified students in the Dayton region. The committee supports Wright State building relationships with area high schools to increase the number of qualified local students coming to Wright State. The committee feels that resources should be allocated to programs that work with area High Schools to increase the number of qualified minority (and non-minority) students (students who do not require significant remedial coursework).

The committee has concerns with committing competitive scholarship dollars to top-performing minority students only. Other local institutions (such as University of Dayton and Miami University) offer substantial financial aid packages to top-performing minority students, making it difficult to compete without dedicating substantial resources. These local top minority students *will* succeed - the only question is *where* they will succeed. The committee feels that spending these dollars better preparing local students who might otherwise *not* succeed may be a better allocation of resources.

**Be It Resolved that:**

*The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate shall work with the administration to charge (or create) a committee to develop a three-year plan to increase the preparedness of students from local area high schools to enter Wright State University. Particular attention should be paid to institutions with a history of producing underprepared students.*