

Financial

Reduce barriers, financial and academic, to timely completion of degree

Identify what services students use and which ones students don't in order to reduce our overhead and pass savings along to students. The IEC worked on this and we can expand and act on their work.

Reduce the total cost of attending UA Little Rock to better balance value vs. cost. I think we need to look critically at which services our students utilize and to what extent they get value from their expenditures. For example if we have international students who are vegan, how much variety and value do they get from our meal plan offerings? We need to make sure that our value always meets or exceeds the cost; otherwise, students feel like they are being taken advantage of.

Comprehensively respond to largest single powerful predictor of undergraduate student persistence: student aid/finance

Come to grips with student finances as the greatest factor affecting retention. Could range from hiring an outside consultant to restructure the way we award aid to creating an emergency fund to get students over crises that would otherwise sink them.

Create consistently administered emergency fund for students who experience financial hardship and a more robust scholarship program based on need in order to serve nontraditional students

Critically review the scholarship models to achieve of balance of both merit-based and need-based scholarships. What kinds of funding are there for solid B- students who need financial support without requiring them to incur additional debt? With an infusion of resources, that B- student could become a B+ or even an A- student because they are relieved of pressure of trying to make ends meet.

Look closely at the financial aid system at the university. We are losing many students because they don't have the funds to continue to attend. There are many red-tape barriers and logistical hoops that prevent students from getting their aid in a timely manner. We need to do everything we can to remove these barriers.

Look at earlier. admission and scholarship packages to. help students. plan year to year.

Develop a more robust plan for dealing with student financial need issues, including audit of financial aid/ student billing accounts practices to ensure they conform with best practices

The Financial Aid/Scholarships Office needs to be one of the best offices on campus. Awarding scholarships earlier to students increases the likelihood that a student will attend that specific university. Personally, I was not awarded a major scholarship (CLC) until late May/early June. In addition, I was told that the CLC and Concurrent Scholarship would stack and was even told how much money I was awarded in total; however, I was told that two scholarships would not stack on July 30th. This gave approximately 3 weeks to apply for more student loans. The UA Little Rock BOSS system should be updated to catch this mistake and not allow specific scholarships to stack. I know that I was not the only one to possess this problem.

Social

Promote sense of belonging

Develop a sense of belonging and connection for engagement that. make students stay for legacy and education

Mentoring

Establish a robust mentoring/coaching program

Pilot a Undergraduate (Freshmen and Transfer) Student Mentorship program. Goal is assist our students with their transition to college life, will support them during difficult times, provide them with guidance and advice, and will ultimately help make their college experience more successful and satisfying. Steal and customize West Texas A&M Program .<https://www.wtamu.edu/fye/college-mentoring-program.aspx> Faculty and Staff will be Mentors. Have materials and program ready to pilot in Fall 2019, pair 50 freshmen, and 50 transfer students two to one with Mentors. So we would need 50 volunteers. Need a strong lead to coordinate and support this effort. Collect feedback,improve the program and expand in Spring 2020. Only limit by number of volunteers.

Create a mentoring/coaching program

Staff-to-student mentoring program for students not already linked to CLC, Donaghey Scholars, etc.

Create a system for supporting mentoring and coaching. both in academics and life skills

Create alumni bank to link back to sophomores, juniors, and seniors as career connectors, quasi mentors.

MENTORING: Faculty and staff who are passionate about student success and the opportunity of a liberal arts education should be paired with a small cadre of students to provide mentoring. Training should be set up by the university to emphasize key points for these mentors on things like differences between first-time freshman, transferring undergraduates, and graduate students. Additionally, a 1-hour training by UALR Human Resources should provide mentors with guidelines for acceptable communication and behavior. The HR training could be set up to run asynchronously within Blackboard, with a certificate of completion.

Establish a faculty/staff to student mentoring program. We have professional staff with experience running such programs at other institutions, and staff who have been looking for opportunities to serve.

Mentoring program beginning freshman year with faculty, staff, alums and peers.

Create self-help groups of 20-25 students who can meet monthly.

Create cohorts of students based on any variety of things...first gen, majors, background etc. Within the cohorts have access to mentors, services, activities etc. These create community which students crave.

Create systems for support for single parent learners, non-tradtinal learners and families wanting to be part of the tradition

Reinvigorate Student Affairs Success Initiatives—especially the African American Male Initiative (AAMI). We already have data indicating this population is at the highest risk. Lessons to be learned here about the kind of support necessary and how to scale it.

Reinvigorate Student Affairs Student Success initiatives; e.g. AAMI, AAFI, etc.

Restore Minority student mentoring program (Student Affairs Success Initiatives) by providing adequate funding and resources, human and otherwise. The data has proven that the program is effective. Incorporate a village approach so student is assigned to a faculty/staff member, a student, and a professional (alumni or otherwise).

Hire more diverse faculty, staff, and administrators

Increase funding for Student Organizations and start periodic film festivals. The goal is to improve social connectedness and student involvement. Require each department to host at least one weekly student group (I believe the majority already do). Make it easy for these groups to obtain and expense (pizza and such). Increase campus events. Show iconic films in an interesting campus venue (Gym, in front of Library, Jack Stephens Center,at Coleman Creek, etc.).

Increase funding for student organizations.

Hire and fully staff the student experience office. Provide robust on campus programming for OUR student body. Get student input for programming and offerings.

Host an annual campus/ community activity such as an a concert in the Jack Stephens Center. I emailed the Student Activities Board Director at UCA to ask questions about their annual concert. She stated that they charge \$1.59 per credit hour in order to provide the students with the entertainment brought to campus. In addition, they typically cover the payment of events on our own with the occasional co-sponsorship on smaller events.

Make sure campus is a place students want to be. The backlash against EStem came because students felt like their spaces on campus were no longer theirs, but were taken over by high school students. We need to make them feel welcome and at home. Student Life is a big part of this. Students tell me about concerts, events, and speakers at UCA or other universities that they wish they had access to.

Provide points of comfort for commuter students such as commuter student lounges, charging stations, etc.

Better coordination of co- or non-curricular units to provide programming that ties in with learning outcomes of the academic programs.

Add 'badges' to all Student Affairs programming so at a glance students know what domains it hits (such as diversity, personal growth, relationship building, etc.). Planning for this is in the works for 2019-20.

Assign a workgroup to explore details of providing at least drop-off day care. Few other issues have come up so consistently across such various forums for so long. Let's get a fix on the cost of a few options.

Create a Child care center

Child Care (Day Care, Drop-in Services, Night Care)

Academic

Require midterm progress reports in all courses

Implement policy changes as needed related to attendance tracking (at least for lower-level and/or core courses) and mid-term grades. Afterwards, build resources/pedagogy to respond to issues surfaced from data insights.

Require mid-term grades. We've been talking about it for years.

Require mid term grades. And make sure faculty understand and are equipped to not only calculate and post mid term grades, but grades in general. I was a student here and I had several classes where I seriously thought I was doing bad in the class because I was not receiving grades for my work. I am not calling out particular faculty members or departments. There are potential reasons for this, such as a tenure track faculty member preparing to go up for tenure. But the university can not build initiatives meant to help students in the middle of a semester who are at risk academically, if we can't identify them till after grades have been posted.

GRADES JOURNEY AS EARLY WARNING TOOL: Implement faculty use of the new Blackboard Grades Journey tool as a retention strategy by selectively choosing which grades will automatically migrate from Blackboard to Banner (and eventually Workday). The suggested grades to start with are all midterm and final course grades. It is also suggested that faculty participating in honors programs, First Year Experience, and have student athletes all use Grades Journey in a manner best suited to identify issues early.

McMillian smartphone application for class attendance and attendance to academic support opportunities

Track attendance in all pre-requisite and university core classes. Personally, there were several occasions where attendance in my Composition II class was "optional." Once he said this, I saw a dramatic decrease in the number of students that attended class.

Rather than simply tracking attendance, let's find ways to use classroom technologies to minimize missed classes. By installing additional Audio/Visual capabilities in our classrooms along with using Blackboard/Collaborate Ultra, departments can stream their classroom sessions live via webcast and record each session. Thus when a student needs to stay home because their child is sick, the student can attend class virtually or catch the recording later if the student needs to be at the Doctor's Office during that class session.

Consider flipping the curriculum for certain majors. For example in Information Science (a technology major) if I have a student coming in as a Freshman who only has savings for two years of college, I advise the student to take their Math, Writing/Communication, and major courses first. After four semesters, the student has sufficient technical skills to get a junior IT Internship Position that pays \$14, \$16, even \$18 dollars an hour. The student then can complete their four year degree by taking their University Core, Electives/Other Requirements while they work. It is much easier to schedule psychology when you are working (lots of sections including online options and the ability to transfer work from other schools) plus psychology is a lot more meaningful when you can see its applications in the workplace. This can be a recruitment tool to get technical majors to start their degrees at UA Little Rock first and then use a combination of UA Little Rock and other options) to finish up their degree as the savings run out.

Provide faculty with their own retention metrics, as well as comparative data for similar courses (courses in the same department, in the same college, at the same level, with the same number of students, taught through the same medium, etc.) so they know where they stand in terms of retaining students. Chairs should have these data as well and use them to make strategic decisions about course assignments.

In addition to comprehensively responding to student aid/finance issues, analyze curriculum possibilities to equip students with skills needed for immediate employment in a field related to the student's major (prior to degree completion). The intent is to reinforce curriculum with real-world, major-applicable experience; provide financial assistance to students through a job; and enable students to realize on the front-end of their degree plan the benefits of a college education. In other words, prove the return-on-investment on the front-end.

Directly tie programs to careers. Connect the dots with internships/job placement through out college careers

Encourage and incentivize faculty to build relationships with and care about whether their students succeed. It is hard to do this in very large classes. All the early alert systems in the world won't substitute for a sincere email or call from a faculty member who knows the student and expresses concern and an interest in helping them succeed.

Encourage colleges/departments to develop close relationships with their students. Personally, my political science professors and I have a special bond that makes me want to stay at UA Little Rock. Despite this, many students do not develop this relationship. During the fall semester especially, the college of business had many catered events from companies such as Waffle House. Here, students were able to connect with business professionals. Having similar events in each college/department will create more bonds and relationships and encourage students to stay at UA Little Rock.

Approximately 40% of undergraduate SSCH is generated from online course sections. Provide retention interventions applicable to this growing population of students.

Provide faculty with training and information on best practices for retaining students in online classes. 58% of UA Little Rock students are enrolled in at least one online class. Rebecca Glazier and Heidi Harris looked at our fall to fall retention data for 2016-2017 and found that we retained 60% of completely in-person students and only 43% of completely online students. We ran logit models including available demographic controls and found that the higher the proportion of a student's course load that is taken online, the less likely the student is to be retained.

Determine methods for ensuring quality instruction in face-to-face, online & hybrid formats, including maximizing use of technology to record courses for students who may have to miss due to work/family obligations. Communicate/incentivize implementation of best practices to increase retention such as those identified by Dr. Glazier/ Dr. Harris for our own students.

ONLINE CAMPUS REMEDIAL COURSES: Provide remedial courses on the Online Campus (there are none at present) that are designed to bring those (soon to be Online Campus) students into the mode of learning they'll use to complete their degree or certificate; rather than starting them as Main Campus and then they must learn to navigate the Online Campus Later. -- Connected with these remedial courses, should be a mandate that those students work with STaR to hone their knowledge and usage of online educational tools. STaR could then provide a notification to the program coordinator of the student's accomplishment toward academic success online. -- It is also recommended that these same remedial students be required to be connected with other student success resources available to Online Campus Students [<https://ualr.edu/online/resources/>] (e.g. Military Student Success Center, University Writing Center/ Online Writing Lab, & Communication Skill Center).

Increase academic support services and programs for students with centralized tutoring and supplemental instruction. Services should be integrated with academic advising.

Critically review the curriculum in the Freshman First Year Experience courses. These can extend the "orientation" experience and socialize students into a discipline and give them the necessary foundation to be self-directed learners and active agents in their own academic success.

Expand capacity of FYC to address preparation needs of all students, including transfers; bring college sections back into fold

Improve course scheduling to maximize demand (including sensible policy on course cancellations that allows flexibility so required courses aren't cancelled last minute) - looks like Civitas might be able to help with this

Either centralize course scheduling to a few folks in academic colleges, or provide resources to do so within Records and Registration. Departments should be required to justify to their deans that they are planning strategically to meet student needs/ demands for courses, and not just scheduling when their tenured faculty prefers to teach.

Improve course scheduling to identify where bottlenecks occur and centralize academic room ownership. This would require quite a bit of work as far as auditing the schedule, but I would start with core classes. Centralizing academic room ownership similar to how the DSC functions would expediate this and increase the efficiency of course scheduling in general. We should also explore montezing academic room reservation when the rooms are used for non academic use.

ACADEMIC SCHEDULING: I agree with Kristin Mann's suggestion on better course scheduling by academic departments with a focus on what works best for their students (particularly their majors). For instance, if it is clear (after identifying a pattern) that a significant number of students have difficulty meeting at certain class times, then adjust as needed to retain those students.

Reduce the number of curricular changes made to programs and classes. It is very difficult to advise on almost 200 academic programs when a program could potential change it's requirements twice a year. We see between 100 and 200 change forms on programs and classes every semester.

Cross-cutting

Early alert

Early Alerts and Mitigation - Student Outreach Programs. Require all faculty to enter students having difficulty, not attending classes, or failing by the fourth week of class. Provide target CRM-Advise text messages to those students offering assistance through the Academic Success Center. Have a team of staff dedicated to reaching out to these students. Recognize faculty that are able to identify and assist in trouble students. Award five \$1000 prizes "Excellent in Student Progress".

Early alert system...we used Starfish at my previous employer.

Look at the flow and support for early alert and at risk student monitoring

Utilize CRM-Advise in a phased roll-out to build on available data to understand student patterns and group membership. Identification of at-risk characteristics can be monitored and intervention plans developed. Utilize clear communication plans to encourage actionable messages to students to engage academically and socially. Utilize nudging techniques to move students towards action plans to meet learning outcomes such as nudging students along the advising and registration pathway to continue toward their degree completion.

Fully implement an early alert program including developing a way to determine high risk students and how to help them

Advising

Connect advising and marketing with career pathways; beef up career services

Review our intrusive advising practice and fill in gaps by fall, whether gaps are process, human resources, or need for development.

Each student should have an Advising Team made of their Academic Adviser, Career Mentor, Financial Adviser, and Health & Wellness Coach. Student should have a scheduled meeting with each member of their Advising Team at least once a year (and at least twice a year with their Academic Adviser).

Make the use of Degree Works and/or degree audit, depending upon student catalog, MANDATORY for each student advised. The university has invested millions of dollars in advising technology resources that not all departments are using, and as a result, we are losing students who are frustrated about the confused advising that they are receiving in academic departments. Use of advising technology should not be optional.

Require academic colleges to have each semester training for anybody advising students. Incentivize those who care about advising and do it well, and assess realistic penalties for those departments who consistently have students take extra courses beyond 8 semesters. The university is being penalized by the state for those mistakes, so folks not doing advising well should feel that imperative and also have some skin at stake.

Require Dean's offices to keep up with who is available in each academic department for advising during summer and regular semesters so that students don't get bounced.

Hire more professional advisors in the colleges for the junior and senior level students

Ensure every academic program has someone, preferably an advisor, available to talk with students over the summer, and that it's publicized on their site.

Cross-trained advisors that can receive students at any time and can also answer financial aid questions

Develop university-wide early warning system. A team based approach might be effective.

Locked down scheduling for students who are at risk.

Professional development/training year-around for advisors. Focus on advising the "whole person."

More hands-on help for transfer students to become oriented to campus. So often they wander into my office feeling lost after their advisor said 'go to Student Services Center to get your business taken care of' with no more detail than that.

Transfer student and returning student orientation. These orientations must be developed to support the socialization and transition into 4-year institution as well as develop skills for success (e.g., time management, study skills, how to use the library, campus student resources, online course success, etc.).

Review onboarding processes of transfer and online students and find a way to make improvements by fall.

Develop/assess effectiveness of seamless onboarding program for transfer students, especially those going straight into upper level courses (may involve "bridge" courses or academic readiness for upper level courses with high DFW rates)

Expand and develop Summer Bridge Programs.

The CEHP case management style of support is worth investigating as it provides the kind of "high-touch," wrap-around support vulnerable students need. This in conjunction with the capability of Civitas can provide the kind of guidance in advising so students can avoid "toxic" combinations of courses and thus be more successful. This type of intrusive advising will also ensure that struggling students are more likely to be identified earlier and more effectively.

Require (Yes REQUIRE) students to pick one high-impact practice to engage in each academic year - creating a cadre of options appropriate based on academic level. Students would register activity and record what is produced in co-curricular transcript - First year - Engagement/Involvement/Belonging/Research/First-Year Seminar, Second year - career exploration/job shadowing, networking, resume development, Third year - Internship/Practicum and in-depth research/publishing, Fourth Year - Culminating experience/Senior Seminar, thesis development, etc.

Implement a campus-wide academic recovery plan for students with a GPA below 2.5 in order to prevent students from progressing toward academic probation and academic suspension. This program would have a required online Powerpoint with short quiz regarding what it means to be on academic probation and suspension, how to prevent interruptions in academic progress and campus resources. A meeting with a trained academic recovery coach - different than an academic advisor) would be required to create a plan of action (using campus resources, changes in learning strategies, changes in work schedule, finding supportive study buddies, etc.) and then a follow-up meeting to discuss the progress of the plan. Advising flag would not be lifted until the second meeting - forcing the student to take action within the first three weeks of the semester (early enough to make positive changes).

Coordinated outreach efforts to students on probation with student success coaches.

Investigate the use of a Chatbot for UALR web presence - Many universities have found chatbots to be effective tools increasing student satisfaction and accessibility. This is a longer term goal. A chatbot can help field hundreds of questions around the clock, about financial aid eligibility, academic programs or even library hours during exam week. By freeing up service center staff, the department can now focus more on engaging with students on a higher level, Such as helping identify students in danger of failing grades, or those who may qualify for additional financial aid; and they can initiate outbound texts to let students know.

Customized UA Little Rock Web Experience - This will move from our current all public ualr.edu web presence to a public and logged in web presence. This will allow the public facing site to be tailored for marketing purposes, community communication, and all public information. Once a UA Little Rock affiliate signs into the ualr.edu website they will be able to see a customized view of materials appropriate for them. So for example, students would see class schedule links, Blackboard link, student account links. Faculty and staff would see time clock entry link. Note this has been proposed to the cabinet, but requires an additional FTE new hire, which is currently not approved.

Tuition and Fee or some other tangible incentives (discounts) for students who pay on time and don't carry balances between semesters. We need to start rewarding students who try to do everything right, rather than catering to students who have missed deadlines, register late, and join classes after the reasonable expectation of success is past and continue to set themselves up for failure every semester. Why are all deadlines negotiable on this campus? Other campuses in-state don't operate this way.

Customer service bootcamp for people who have been anonymously nominated. Kidding/not kidding. I don't think the HR training is nearly hands-on enough, and there is no competency requirement from trainees. We've got to get serious about this, because we're running students off.

CAMPUS CULTURE CHANGE: Implement a campus culture change to let all UALR employees know they must engage our students with courtesy, respect, and value their choice to live part of their lives at UALR. This needs to be a serious and explicit effort at all times from administration, to faculty, to staff, to student staff (e.g. graduate assistants and campus programs). "We Heart Our Students," is a good example of various campus stakeholders collaborating with a unified message and level of positive student interaction.

Require standardized customer service training with metrics and accountability for all staff. Stop allowing consistently poor service and set an expectation of excellence. Reward those who go above and beyond.

Assessment of need and risk

Build capacity to monitor non-cognitive factors in risk assessment

Implement wrap-around support services based on student needs that impact the largest number of students

Increase capacity to sort students by type and degree of risk and use to adjust investment in support services. Make advising more data-driven.

Identify at-risk students based on campus data, including available financial data used at peer institutions. Create intervention plans for each at-risk population including learning outcomes. Create measurable assessments to determine if at-risk populations need additional supports, skills, or clear pathways towards success. Utilize (qualitative and quantitative) assessments to understand the populations and the individualized needs. A mentoring program could be a strategic intervention, skill development in terms of overnight or day long leadership retreat opportunities. Incorporate positive interactions through service-learning to develop a sense-of-belonging.

Review exit surveys of undergrad non-completers and tackle the top reason first. Since it's probably financial, analyze common gaps and try to solve them.

Develop comprehensive needs/pre-assessment for academic & non-academic factors - ie. online course readiness, recommended number of hours, childcare, books/OER materials + follow-through with list of resources - this could be an online video/response module done at orientation or required prior to registration for specific student populations (ie. those who have dropped classes, are on probation, new students, transfer) (but then again, we don't want this to be a barrier to registration)

Spend some time identifying what we do well on campus as far as retention initiatives and actual assess those initiatives to try and identify what groups of students these initiatives serve and why and how they are working. For example, when I was an undergraduate student here I loved going to the Math Assistance Center for my physics classes and there were quite a few other students from my physics classes who also went. I know this example can seem anecdotal, but I think everyone in this group can identify a few initiatives they think work well and we as a group can assess those areas. Also, we need to spend some of our meeting time looking at what we do well also for morale of the group.

Other

Read the March 2019 Forbes Article on Southern New Hampshire University to get more ideas for what UA Little Rock will need to do to compete when it comes to recruiting and retaining working students - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2019/03/28/meet-the-english-professor-creating-the-billion-dollar-college-of-the-future/#46c59107426b>

Truly make retention our top priority, since that affects enrollment more than anything else. Hire a leader with experience turning around retention who has a vision and the ability to write a plan, operationalize the plan, and assemble a team to get the job done. A taskforce is not a long-term solution.