Strategic Planning Group 2: Retention until Graduation

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Our goal is to begin to build a culture where 4-year graduation is expected for first-time, full-time, degree seeking freshmen in all undergraduate programs, and where full-time transfer, non-traditional and graduate students complete in a timely manner.

EWU’s current 4-year graduation rate is 20.8%. Our 5-year graduation rate is 39.3%. Our 6-year graduation rate is 42.8%. These rates are below national and acceptable standards. Graduation rates are a mark of an institution’s quality. We can do better.

Overarching strategic planning goal: Sustained increase in 4, 5, and 6 year graduation rates
(measured in terms of first time, full time entering freshman- does not include part-time or transfer students.)

After our presentation at this forum, participants will

1. think that we must increase our graduation rates
2. feel motivated to act to increase our graduation rates
3. do something within the week to move us toward that goal.

Example longer-term strategies and tactics include (but are not limited to) the following:

a. develop differentiated student and academic support for specific student populations (undergraduate, graduate, on and off campus, first generation, etc.)
b. enhance orientation programs for all new students – with a clear focus on what it takes for students to be successful
c. enhance curricular and co-curricular programs that promote social and academic integration
d. create opportunities for faculty and administration collaboration to enhance engagement
e. provide incentives for engagement by faculty and staff

Sample Tactics
- conduct research on the graduating cohorts- seek to understand best practices in retention and graduation for EWU students
- provide training for student support staff, faculty, and chairs in policy implementation
- initiate enhanced communication between faculty, staff, and students
- centralize and regularize scheduling of courses and spaces
- student and faculty support services are available across all locations
- service learning becomes integrated into the academic curricula
- faculty service to student groups, campus clubs and organizations, community partnerships, is recognized and rewarded
- strengthen remedial education programs
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What has led us to this goal and these recommendations?

Local information

Anecdotal
- record of academic appeals, observations of inconsistent implementation of policies
- pervasiveness of “scarcity” rhetoric regarding resources
- SFCC plans for developmental education
- EWU scheduling committee minutes since 1998

Reports
- First Year Experience Model (Dale Turner)
- Summary: Implementation of Semesters (EWU, 10/6/04)
- EWU Tech Scheduling and Security Policy

Research
- OIRDA data on graduation and retention rates

National Information

- College Results Online for retention and graduation rate data.
- The Education Trust- [http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust](http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust)

Publications

- Understanding and Reducing College Student Departure by Braxton, Hirschy, and McClendon
- Postsecondary Participation & State Policy by Mario C. Martinez
- Education Trust Article – “A Matter of Degrees: Improving Graduation Rates in Four-Year Colleges and Universities”
- Education Trust Article – “On Course for Success: A Close Look at Selected High School Courses That Prepare All Students for College”