Retaining All Our Students (RaOS) Initiative Update

Enrollment management efforts focused on low-income and first-generation student success

The University began this collaborative initiative 15 months ago to support the success of low-income (Pell-eligible) and first-generation students. The RaOS effort initiated key efforts around enhanced financial literacy, enhanced monitoring and advising support. It also increased focus on student access and awareness of support resources.

Achieve Pell-eligible and first-generation student retention rates inline with the University’s overall freshman retention rate, from Fall 2014 to Fall 2015.

- First generation, non-Pell eligible student retention rose from 90.2% to 93.1%.
- Pell-eligible, non-first generational student retention rose from 91.1% to 91.4%.
- Students who both identify as first-generation and also who are Pell-eligible rose from 89.7% to 91%.

Many colleges, units, and departments across campus actively support the success of first-generation and low-income students. The RaOS work helps to coordinate a variety of central efforts to avoid duplication, enhance collaboration, and support new targeted central efforts, as a complement to other campus retention efforts.

Why are efforts focused on low-income and Pell-eligible student success important?

Historically, low-income students and first-generation students are retained at lower rates than the University’s overall retention rates.

The RaOS initiative was created in support of the University’s desire to increase the retention rates of Pell-eligible and first-generation students.

We believe a focus on making sure all students within our community have the resources and support specific to students’ needs is critical to student success. The research is clear that additional efforts that take into account the unique needs of first-generation and low-income student success are necessary to achieve increased retention and positive student outcomes.

Examples of central initiatives include:

- Financial wellness counseling sessions
- Targeted SMART learning sessions for first year students - scheduled for Spring semester.
- Families First event for incoming first generation student families during Welcome Week
- Orientation & First-Year Programs first generation student chat and chew
- New! Housing scholarships for 29 Pell-eligible students.
- Targeted admitted-student communications focused on the benefits of campus housing and encouraging students to live on campus
- Gopher Family Connect events for families who did not attend Orientation (to encourage connections with first generation and low income students and their families)

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