

From: University of Wisconsin-Parkside Office of the Chancellor <chancellor@uwp.edu>
Sent: Monday, October 14, 2019 12:37 PM
Subject: MONDAY UPDATE: Progress on Student Success



Colleagues,

Let's start with where we've been and some data.

In fall 2016, the Provost built on the existing academic plan through a consultative process that helped narrow a large number of goals to four considered most important. Teams then developed strategies for each goal and the resulting plan was adopted by the Faculty Senate on Oct. 24, 2017. Of the goals considered, "increasing retention and graduation rates," how we typically measure student success, was the only goal included in the top five ranking of every constituent group surveyed: faculty, instructional academic staff, non-instructional academic staff, university staff, students, and senior administrators.

The average six-year graduation rate since UW-Parkside's first graduating class in 1973 has been 26.4 percent. The six-year rates for the most recent three annual cohorts have climbed steadily and set new highs each year: 34.0 percent, 38.1 percent, and 44.5 percent. The most recent graduation rate is 69 percent above the historic average and a 31 percent increase in three years. We developed a plan, we're using it to guide our efforts, and we're making good progress!

Beyond growth in graduation rates, there is also evidence of extraordinary student learning across our four colleges at UW-Parkside: close to 90 percent acceptance rates into health science professional programs; student-developed award-winning software applications adopted by regional organizations; compelling performances in theatre and music; and high levels of student engagement and voting in national elections. All these attest to transformational learning and the work of our faculty and staff.

The environment we face in public higher education is not, of course, without challenges. As the cost of a higher education has grown, so too has criticism of our ability to change, be accountable, or serve students from marginalized backgrounds.

We wish to share two thoughts as academic and administrative leaders. First, UW-Parkside's role is as important as ever and, second, we must continue to focus on improving student success.

Most students in the U.S. earn bachelor's degrees at public institutions like UW-Parkside, close to where they live. A 2019 report from the American Enterprise Institute, "Is the University Next Door the Way to Upward Mobility?", demonstrates that over half the low-income students enrolled at 307 comprehensive universities reached the two highest earner quintiles by their early 30s. There were two other relevant findings. First, considerable variation exists in the post-graduate earnings of students from different universities in the sample. Second, the factor most highly associated with differences in earnings is college completion rates.

These robust findings reaffirm the power of universities like ours to fuel upward mobility, as well as the importance of continuing to focus on improving graduation rates. And while our highest-ever graduation rate of 44.5 percent is encouraging, it remains below the national average and gaps do remain amongst different groups. The six-year rate is 32.3 percent for underrepresented minority students, 39.6 percent for Pell-eligible students, and 42.0 percent for first-generation students.

So, to continue to improve the career and life prospects of all our students, improving their chances of graduating -- especially students from groups historically underserved by higher education -- is necessary. Consider as well that 43 percent of the incoming fall 2019 class at UW-Parkside are students of color. While there are no "magic bullet" solutions, the strategies we are implementing reflect best practices and collectively seem to be working.

As an example of what's possible: In 2003, Georgia State's six-year graduation rates for African American and Hispanic students were 25.6 percent and 22.0 percent, respectively. From 2008 to 2017, students of color went from 53 percent to 67 percent of their enrollees. Over the same period, the percent of their students eligible for Pell grants went from 32 percent to 59 percent, average SAT scores declined 33 points, and state appropriations decreased by \$40 million. In spite of trends typically associated with lower graduation rates, Georgia State increased the number of degrees awarded annually by 67 percent, and increased six-year graduation rates for African American and Hispanic students to 77.5 percent and 76.7 percent, respectively!^[1]

The list of strategies that Georgia State and universities across the U.S. are adopting, include those in UW-Parkside's Academic Plan, include –

- ["15-to-finish"](#) to ensure sufficient credit momentum to support timely graduation;
- [Math Pathways](#) that tailor students' math requirements to their majors;
- Co-requisite Remediation that reduce students' sense that they're starting out "behind" by scheduling developmental math work concurrent to the credit-bearing requirement;
- a new advising model and [data analytics platform](#) to support more effective and efficient interventions;
- the new [Parkside Promise+ Program](#) to attract and support students least able to afford a higher education;
- enhanced mentoring focusing on students of color;
- [meta-majors](#) to make initial choices easier and help ensure subsequent and inevitable changes are less likely to result in wasted credit, added time, and added cost;
- student-focused scheduling to optimize course availability;
- stereotype reducing and belonging-increasing interventions because students' feelings affect their performance; and
- a full complement of [faculty and staff development programming](#) to support these initiatives.

As academic and administrative leaders at UW-Parkside, we are committed to continuing to work together to improve student outcomes. Thank you for all you do to serve our students, each other, and the residents of Southeastern Wisconsin.

Go Rangers!

Debbie Ford, Chancellor

Rob Ducoffe, Provost

Gary Wood, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

Tammy McGuckin, Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Enrollment Services

DeAnn Possehl, Assistant Provost for Student Success

John Skalbeck, Interim Chair, University Committee

^[1] “Transforming Student Success through Data and Analytics, Timothy M. Renick, Senior Vice President for Student Success, Georgia State University, University of Wisconsin Advising Conference, Madison, WI, October 23, 2018. Presentation available by request.

Five Things You Should Know...

- [Foxconn Recruiting and Hiring Session Oct. 16](#)
 - [Maxwell Street Klezmer Band Trio Concert Oct. 18](#)
 - [The Role of Social Media in Shaping Our Perceptions of Safety \(Smart Cities Brown Bag Discussion\) Oct. 16](#)
 - [H.O.R.S.E. A participatory performance by Marcela Torres in the Fine Arts Gallery Oct. 17](#)
 - [Free Speech and Minority Rights: Friends, Acquaintances, or Enemies? Featuring Dr. Tim Shiell Oct. 15](#)
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