Undergraduate Success Initiatives at UIC and in Chicago: Helping Chicago’s Students Succeed

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Who are UIC Students?

Among 16,660 undergraduates, 3,104 started in Fall 2013:

- 56% are Pell eligible (e.g., family of 4 making around $40K)
- 97% are from Illinois
- 29% are from Chicago Public Schools
- 40% live on campus
- 44% have a parent with a 4-year college degree
- 42% work
- 60% grew up in a non-English household
- No racial majority: 9% African American, 28% Hispanic, 31% White, 26% Asian, 6% other.
How do UIC students perform?
Graduation rates for students who started 6 years prior to date indicated. There has been little change in entering demographics or ACT scores during this time.
What is UIC doing to address student success?
Leveling the Playing Field with Financial Aid

Six-Year Graduation Rates by Pell Status (entering ’04, ’05, ’06 cohorts)

- Pell Eligible: 51%
- Non-Pell Eligible: 55%
A Campus “Best Practice” Model

The UIC Honors College

Home to a collection of engaging, “high-impact practices” with proven success…
UIC Honors College

88%

Latest 6-Year Graduation Rate
Why Are Honors College Students More Successful?

It’s not what you think!

Our multivariate analyses show that Honors College membership has an effect above and beyond entering ACT, HS grades, AP credits, family finances, etc.
Five-Year Graduation Rate as a Function of ACT:
UIC Honors vs. Non-Honors Students

Data for line colleges excludes Honors College students.
It’s not what **they** come to us with, it’s what **we** do with them once they get to us.
The Question, then, is:

How Can You Give an Honors Experience to All Students?
• Provost Lon Kaufman and Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Barbara Henley convened Undergraduate Policy Council of Deans. Charged by Chancellor with:
  • 85% First-to-second-year Retention Rate
  • 65% Six-year Graduation Rate
  • Racial/Ethnic Parity
UIC Student Success Plan: Process, Structure, Product

• Initial draft plan written in the Office of the VPUA.
• Action plan then created by 8 task forces of 200+ faculty, students, & staff convened by VPUA & Dean of Students:

  1. Data Analysis & Assessment
  2. Targeted First-Year Curriculum
  3. Support for Student Learning
  4. Faculty Engagement
  5. Advising
  6. Financing College
  7. Campus Life
  8. Pre-Matriculation

• Result: “A Strategic Plan for Increasing Undergraduate Success”: 1300 pages, 125 recommendations (March 2014)
• Available at: http://studentsuccess.uic.edu/
How Will UIC Implement 125 Recommendations?

• …with the help of an APLU/Gates “Transformation Planning Grant” ($225K: Bottoms, Farruggia, & Leighton), which will help UIC prioritize, plan, implement, and assess the 125 recommended actions.
RESEARCH: The right multivariate data analyses should drive everything

With a $400K foundation grant to Bottoms & Kaufman, we started a program of research …

• Building a multivariate model identifying factors predicting student success
• Non-cognitive survey (all UIC freshmen)
• Exit survey (top reasons: finances, commute, family/school balance, family emergency, classes not freshman-friendly)
But our smart funders wanted us to do something even bigger…
Community Context:

Bringing Higher Education to the Table:

The Chicago Collaborative for Undergraduate Success
Chicago Collaborative for Undergraduate Success

**Mission:** To help create a Chicago where all young people live up to their educational potential, by raising college graduation rates

**Members:** Work collaboratively collecting and using data to understand how to improve undergraduate success
Chicago Collaborative for Undergraduate Success

Representing 40 Chicago Colleges & Universities:

- 23 Associated Colleges of Illinois
- 7 City Colleges of Chicago
- Columbia College
- DePaul University
- Illinois Institute of Technology
- Loyola University
- Northeastern Illinois University
- Northern Illinois University
- Northwestern University
- University of Chicago
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- Roosevelt University

...aided by many community partners, funders
Only 17% of CPS 9th graders graduate with a 2- or 4-year degree.

- In 2012: 22,000 CPS students graduated H.S.,
- ... of whom 56% enrolled in college,
- ... of whom 52% enrolled in Collaborative institutions,
- ... of whom only 42% graduated.
Chicago Collaborative for Undergraduate Success: Sample Initiatives

1. Sharing “Promising Practices” with each other
2. City Colleges Pathways project
3. Sharing with the strong partner of CPS: e.g., White Paper -- what we think CPS should do to prepare students
4. Data Subgroup -- sharing data and designing analytic strategies
5. CPS High School “Feedback Reports”: Providing real data about how their students do in collaborative institutions (grades, % needing remediation, etc.)
6. Leading the “College Completion Change Network” of THRIVE CHICAGO. Developing 3 programs for the city:

- Accommodating Transition Coaching (from Non-Profits) on College Campuses
- H.S. Senior Seminar Curriculum
- H.S. College Advisor Credentialing
Increasing student success:

*It’s not just about your campus; it’s about your entire community.*
“Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood.”
“Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood; graduate more students from college!”
Thank you!