The University of Akron Faculty Senate Chronicle

10-15-2019

Faculty Senate Chronicle for September 5, 2019

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SENATE ACTIONS

1. Adopted a resolution from the Executive Committee to ratify the Executive Committee’s approval of course proposals and the summer graduation list. (Appendix A).

2. Adopted a resolution from the Curriculum Review Committee to approve the list of course proposals (Appendix B).

3. Adopted the report of the Tiger Team; a set of recommendations to improve recruitment, retention, persistence, and graduation to The University of Akron (Appendix C)
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MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING OF

September 5, 2019

The meeting of the Faculty Senate took place Thursday, September 5, 2019 in room 180 of the Blake McDowell Law School. Senate Chair Linda Saliga called the meeting to order at 3:04 pm.

Of the current roster of 56 senators, 49 attended the meeting. Senators Haritos, Miller, Sahl, Simms and Szalay were absent with notice. Senators Matejkovic and Walker were absent without notice.

I. Adoption of Agenda

On Senator Roy’s motion, the agenda was adopted without dissent.

II. Adoption of Minutes of the May Senate meeting.

On Senator Makki’s motion, the minutes of the May Senate meeting were adopted without dissent.

III. Remarks of the Chair

Welcome to the first meeting of the Faculty Senate for the 2019-2020 academic year. I want to thank Nathan Mortimer and Steve Myers for securing our new home.

I would like to introduce our newly elected Faculty Senators and must apologize in advance for the names I will butcher:
College of Arts & Sciences
Re-elected: Linda Saliga
Newly elected: Parizad Dejbord-Sawan, Janet Klein, Laurie Lashbrook, Jutta Luttmer-Strathmann, Jie Zheng

College of Applied Science & Technology
Re-elected: John Nicholas
Newly elected: Sue Ramlo, Rob Schwartz

College of Health Professions
Re-elected: Michele Thornton

College of Business
Newly elected: Aigbe Akhigbe
Wayne College
Newly elected: Angela Hartsock

Retirees
Re-elected: Bob Gandee, Ali Hajjafar

USG
Newly elected: Mark Okocha – USG President

GSG
Newly elected: Amanda Stefin – GSG President

Congratulations and welcome.

Please note that the Faculty Senate is the legislative body of the faculty at the university level. Its meetings are relatively formal and are conducted according to its bylaws and Robert’s Rules of Order. If you wish to address the body, please
hold up your name tag so that the chair can read your name and wait to be recognized. When recognized, please turn on the microphone in front of you before you begin speaking. If I should fail to say your name (or butcher it) when recognizing you, please state it when you begin to speak so that your remarks may be properly attributed in the record (and I might learn your name). These meetings are recorded and transcribed. Please be sure to turn off your microphone when you finish speaking and do not make noise that may make it difficult for the transcriber to hear the proceedings. When you speak, please speak loudly enough to be heard by all, and bear in mind that your remarks will be transcribed for all the world to read. Please address your remarks to the chair rather than directly to another member of the body even if they are made in response to another member’s remarks. This formality helps to avoid personalizing issues and to maintain civility.

If you have not already done so, please sign one of the posted attendance sheets so that your presence may be properly recorded.

This is a relatively large, deliberative body with an Executive Committee and various committees that prepare legislation and informational reports for the Senate’s consideration. Today we will be electing members to serve on the Executive Committee. Members of standing and ad hoc committees are appointed by the Executive Committee. Every senator is expected to serve on at least one Senate committee. Any new senators who have not already done so are urged to submit their committee preferences.
The Senate has a number of representatives to the University Council and its standing committees. We will be voting to fill a three-year term to UC. By UC bylaws, at least one of the three representatives from each constituency shall be from its respective at-large community, i.e., not a member of the representative body. Consequently, we will be voting for a non-Senator to be filling that position. We have one vacant Faculty Senate seat on the UC Communications Committee. If you would be interested in serving on this committee, please let me know.

The summer of 2019 was very busy here at The University of Akron: among other things, a presidential search was conducted, a new curriculum proposal system was brought online, a report on student retention and persistence was written, and new guidelines for workload policies were developed.

In case you missed it, on August 14th The University of Akron’s Board of Trustees announced that Dr. Gary Miller will be our 18th President. In my opinion, the search process was a success. The nineteen members of the search committee had frank discussions during our meetings and I believe the opinions of non-board members of the committee were seriously considered by the Board. We as a university have a lot of work to do to get us out of our current financial state. All kinds of difficult decisions need to be made. I can’t remember the context, probably the discussions about reorganization, but I do remember Interim-President Green basically telling us that the status-quo is not an option. I think that comment applies to all aspects of the University, especially the administration. It is customary for a new leader of a large organization to
evaluate the management team, both performance and skill sets, to make sure the right people are doing the right jobs. President-Elect Miller has assured me that such a process will begin once he takes over. I assured him that the faculty believes that such an evaluation is welcome, and long overdue. Our conversation touched on the academic leadership of the University, and the search process for such an individual should be starting in October.

The new curriculum proposal system, called CIM, is up and running. It isn’t perfect, nothing will be, but is a significant improvement to the former system. Please sign up for a training session to gain complete access to the system.

Our ad hoc committee, called a Tiger Team, completed its work over the summer and is bringing forward recommendations for the improvement of retention, persistence, and graduation rates. They note that if improving recruitment, retention, persistence, and graduation are among the University’s major priorities, then the University needs to commit more human and financial resources towards these efforts.

In May I told this body that Interim President Green, Interim Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer Midha, and Executive Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer Ramsier would be meeting with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee over the summer to discuss the workload policies the deans had just delivered to OAA. That conversation never happened. In June, Interim President Green shared with EC a few department submissions that we were to discuss in our monthly meeting, but he was ill the day of the meeting and wasn’t able to attend. Interim Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer
Midha did meet with us but couldn’t supply any information regarding the department proposals we were given and the university level workload policy that was being developed. At our July meeting we were given a draft of the university level workload policy which had nothing to do with what departments submitted in the spring. The EC voiced lots of concerns about that document. At our August meeting, which Interim President Green was unable to attend, Interim Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer Midha presented a draft of the document that we now have as the Guidelines for Implementing University Rule (UR) 3359-20-03.2. That document was a significant improvement over the previous one, but we still had concerns. Our comments were considered, and a few minor changes were made, but many of our objections still hold.

- We believe the time line is too rushed, and continue to ask that implementation occur fall 2020 instead of spring 2020.
- We have to conclude that the intent of this exercise is simply increase the teaching load of tenured and tenure-track faculty. The rule is written for full-time faculty, which includes TT and NTT. Given that, we believe that the NTT teaching loads should be included in the unit averages. We acknowledge that the NTT faculty members’ load will not be flexible because of their individual contracts. The math department faculty is about half NTT and have until now been told that NTT teaching assignments were a part of our department average. This allowed TT faculty more time for research and service that is required of TT faculty. With NTT loads being cut from our department average, TT loads must rise leaving less time for research and service.
My last item today deals with part-time faculty salaries. University Rule 3359-20-06.1(H)(2) lists base pay for part-time faculty members as $600, $700, or $800 per credit hour. This is the same rate that was in effect 26 years ago when my husband and I first moved here, and he taught an evening section of College Algebra for us. If we consider the time commitment we expect per credit hour as listed in the workload policy, a beginning part-timer would be paid $13.33 per hour. They would be better off working at Target.

This concludes my remarks.

IV. Special Announcements

Dr. Jim Holda, associate professor of biology, passed away on Saturday, July 27. He was 65.

He joined UA on Aug. 31, 1987, as an associate professor and was set to retire next spring. He earned a Ph.D. at Wayne State University in 1982.

“Jim truly cared that students received a good education here, and he worked hard to make it happen, including many ways behind the scenes,” said Dr. Steve Weeks, professor of biology and chair of the department. “Some of the best master’s theses presentations were by Jim’s students. This was a reflection of the excellent mentoring that Jim afforded his students.”

A scholarship in the professor’s name will be set up.

V. Report of the Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met nine times since the last regular senate meeting.
The EC met on May 16th to prepare for the meeting with the president and chief academic Officer.

The EC met again on May 16th with the interim president and chief academic officer to discuss the roles and duties of the CAO and the CDO. Clarifications regarding reporting lines, the responsibilities associated with both positions, and shared governance structures were also discussed.

The EC met on June 20th to prepare for the meeting with the interim president and the CAO and to certify senate elections.

The EC met on again on June 20th with the CAO to discuss workload.

The EC met on July 17th to make committee appointments.

The EC met on July 25th to prepare for the meeting with the interim president and the CAO. We discussed workload and problems with tuition for Wayne College students taking online classes.

We met again on July 25th with the CAO and the interim president to discuss workload and tuition issues, as well as the duties of the CAO and the CDO.

The EC met on August 22 to prepare for the meeting with the interim president and the CAO.

The EC met again on August 22 with CAO Midha. Workload was discussed as well as faculty hires.

The EC met on Aug. 29 to prepare for the faculty senate meeting on Sept. 5th. We certified senate elections and discussed the need for more committee volunteers. We also discussed workload and changes made to the policy by the
administration to remove NTT’s from departmental averages. Finally, we discussed the Tiger Team Task Force’s Report on Retention.

In addition to our face-to-face meetings, we voted electronically to approve curriculum proposals forwarded to us from CRC after Senate’s May meeting as well as the summer commencement list. We ask that you ratify the approval of those proposals now.

This concludes my report.

VI. Remarks of the President

Interim President Green was pleased to be in the new room. He expressed excitement about the President-Elect Miller and planned to facilitate his rapid integration with the campus. He spoke of the difficult decisions made during his tenure and credited the campus with doing difficult work so the new president could focus on opportunities.

Interim President Green noted enrollment declined by 6% but found a silver lining in the new student enrollment numbers that were flat. He expressed concern over significant enrollment declines for continuing students across the board between 7-10%. Many of the students registered last year but did not return even though they were eligible to do so.

Interim President Green expressed support for the Tiger Team report and recommended implementation; however, he rejected the call for adding additional personnel and resources to achieve retention goals.

He discussed the new hires which will include ten tenure-track and seven NTT positions. He conceded this amounted to just half the faculty lines that were
awarded last fall. He also discussed the four dean searches and the new CAO position search.

Interim President Green updated the body on the status of the reorganization proposal. He announced that all further reorganization efforts would continue in conjunction with the strategic plan. He commended many colleagues for meeting to achieve the goals of reorganization and stressed the need to continue progress for the students and the institution.

Interim President Green moved into workload and stated that he would discuss this topic with the Senate out of courtesy, but no action by the body was requested or required. He urged the body to take workload concerns to deans and chairs rather than as a matter for the Faculty Senate. He argued that such a path was more appropriate. He acknowledged that he wrote the final draft of the document after consultation with deans, chairs, and the Executive Committee. He generalized some units had excellent guidelines and some did not and suggested units with consistent guidelines will not have difficulty conforming to the final draft. He reiterated his struggle in administrating with inconsistent guidelines and argued these guidelines create consistency between departments with similar missions. He also stated the incoming president supported the guidelines and requested swift implementation, quoting him as saying, “you can’t do much better than this”.

Interim President Green acknowledged the unit level averages were set at the high end and the overall teaching workload will increase. However, he stated that the workload will not increase for all faculty. He noted that while the workload in
the Political Science department will increase, the workload in the CBA will decrease, due to the similarity in mission.

He conceded some changes will be difficult and may not be achieved in spring. He conveyed the goals were subject to change and offered that deans could petition the CAO to change the departmental goals as priorities changed.

He addressed the continued disagreement surrounding the definition of regular faculty. He stated that non tenure-track faculty are individually contracted and claimed the collective bargaining agreement also distinguished between workloads for tenure-track and non tenure-track faculty. Interim President Green promised the body that he would petition the Board to change any language that did not distinguish between the two faculty groups.

He ended his remarks by suggesting the workload guidelines would communicate a clear message to potential and current students that teaching is a top priority.

Senator Shott asked how a teaching load of 16.8 hours will be implemented.

Interim President Green explained it was an average for the unit.

Senator Shott asked how it will be implemented in very small units.

Interim President Green conceded it will be very difficult.

Senator Nofziger inquired how increasing teaching loads will achieve the mission of retention, persistence, and graduation. She noted increasing the number of students assigned to each faculty member will not increase the quality of the interaction.
Interim President Green stated it was critical to retention to put faculty with primary teaching duties in contact with more students. He suggested faculty contribute different things to their departments and the workload policy increased teaching for those faculty whose primary contribution is teaching.

Senator Scotto would like the president and the senate to know that her department would aspire to have an 18 or 20 hour load and cited a typical load for nursing faculty as 24 credit hours despite significant service.

Interim President Green said nursing exemplified the kind of unfairness the workload guidelines were meant to address.

Senator Klein noted that her students value faculty that can bring their research alive in the classroom.

Interim President Green agreed some students value research but didn’t think it was a large portion of the students. He depicted himself as a strong researcher that still taught a large portion of undergraduates.

Senator Klein specified that most students expect faculty to bring up-to-date research information into the class.

Interim President Green described being up-to-date as an obligation of the profession and guaranteed that the workload guidelines are not an either/or proposition but rather a maximization of priorities.

Senator Schulze invited Interim President Green to meet with the chapter to discuss the distinctions between TT and NTT faculty as well as changes in workload. She stated that changes in workload are part of the CBA and must be discussed.
Interim President Green disagreed and characterized it is a management right.

Senate Schulze respectfully disagreed and reiterated that it should be discussed in consultation with the chapter.

Senator Stefin offered to put together a survey to ask students about the value of research.

Senator Nofziger characterized the main concern with the workload guidelines was the distinction between NTT’s and TT’s. The agreed upon directions to the units were to treat both groups as the same and to focus on the work, rather than on who was doing the work. She communicated disappointment that the new workload guidelines remove NTT’s from the unit average.

Interim President Green disagreed and described NTT’s contracts as different which necessitated different consideration.

VII. Remarks of the Chief Academic Officer

CAO Midha summarized the meetings that have occurred since May. He discussed the difficult budget meetings and cuts. Enrollment declines of 7.1% and 7.9% drove cuts. He hoped these numbers will go up and not down. During May, VSRP and workload discussions occupied a significant amount of time.

Deans submitted a list of critical needs. Sixty-four requests were made, and then after VSRP, deans submitted eighty faculty critical needs. Mid July, the president informed the deans that enrollment declines necessitated only 1 million be allotted to new hires. CAO Midha shared information with all the deans from the last four years that informed the hiring requests. This information included changes in enrollment and degrees awarded at the department level, at the
program, and college level. He also provided them with the state subsidy. The state subsidy is very complicated and was broken down in terms of dollars for course completion and for the degrees. Deans delegated among themselves 28 faculty totaling 2.1 million. The president allotted 1.4 million equaling 13 positions and 3 special positions (endowed positions and a director of the Bliss Institute). Four dean positions were added (CBA, ED, CHP, A&S). President-Elect Miller will review the positions of CDO and CAO and will decide whether or not those positions will stay or if they will go back to a unified provost position.

Senator Schwarz asked for a breakdown of positions.

CAO Midha read the positions. Faculty will be hired in psychology, geosciences, dance, math, computer information systems, electrical and mechanical engineering, surveying/mapping, economics/finance, social work, audiology and special education. The special positions included the David L. Brennan Endowed Chair of Law in the School of Law, the Austen Chair of Polymer Science and the director of the Bliss Institute of Applied Politics.

Senator Roy asked for clarification regarding the positions in CAST.

CAO Midha explained that when the positions were presented to the Executive Committee they were in draft form. Revisions were made and two joint positions were assigned.

Senator Schulze asked if the deans have expressed concerns about smaller units and programs that did not receive faculty. She wondered if the administration has started discussing what will happen to those units.
CAO Midha lamented enrollment declines were even heavier than anticipated, which had an impact on hiring allotments.

Senator Nofziger asked about why endowed positions were a part of the budget since they are endowed.

CAO Midha responded that the Bliss Institute and the Knight positions were very prestigious.

Senator Maaki revisited the question and asked why endowed positions were part of the hiring budget since, by definition, they were paid for through external means.

CAO Midha answered it was yet to be determined what portion of the salary was coming from the endowment and it was unlikely the entire portion would derive from the endowment.

VIII. Senate Elections

Chair (2-year term)

Senator Nofziger nominated Chair Saliga. Senator Shott moved that nominations be closed and Senator Saliga be elected Chair. The motion carries.

Vice Chair (2-year term)

Senator Schulze nominated Senator Makki. Senator Nofziger moved that nominations be closed and Senate Makki be elected Vice Chair. The motion was adopted.
Secretary (2-year term)

Senator Thorton nominated Senator Howley. Senator Klein moved that nominations be closed and Senator Howley be elected Secretary. The motion was adopted.

Executive Committee (2 seats, 2-year terms)

For the first seat, Senator Thorton nominated Senator Nofziger. Senator Seher moved that nominations be closed and Senator Nofziger be elected. The motion was adopted.

For the second two-year term, Senator Makki nominated Senator Schulze. Senator Klein moved that nominations be closed and Senator Schulze be elected. The motion was adopted.

Representatives to Graduate Council (2 representatives, 1-year terms)

Senator Hreno volunteered for the first seat.

For the second seat on the Graduate Council, Senator Brown nominated Senator Graor. Senator Shott moved that nominations be closed and both senators be elected by acclamation. The motion was adopted.

University Council (1 seat on council, 2-year term)

Senator Klein nominated Kate Budd. Senator Schulze moved that nominations be closed and Kate Budd be elected by acclamation. The motion was adopted.

Ohio Faculty Council (1 seat, 2-year term, 1 alternate, 2-year term)
Senator Roy volunteered for the first seat. Senator Schwartz moved that nominations be closed and Senator Roy be elected by acclamation. The motion was approved.

For the alternate seat, Senator Makki nominated Lynn Pachnowski. Senator Lashbrook moved that nominations be closed and Lynn Pachnowski be elected by acclamation. The motion was adopted.

IX. Committee Reports

A. Curriculum Review Committee

Chair Thorton summarized the last meeting. Actions included electing a chair, setting goals and she presented a motion to approve the curriculum proposals (Appendix B) sent with the agenda. The motion carries.

Chair Saliga mentioned that all new proposals will need to use the new system which is much improved from the old system.

B. Tiger Team Report on Retention

Senator Howley presented the Tiger Team Report (Appendix C. The report is an action item and the committee requested the adoption of the report.

Senator Howley thanked the members of the committee and asked the body to approve the report and discuss recruitment, retention, persistence and graduation with departmental faculty. She reiterated many of these items will require an institutional commitment in terms of human and financial resources to be successful despite budget shortfalls. She
described student/faculty interactions as critical to the learning process and creating belongingness which requires work outside the classroom. The report stated that one nexus point for action is at the departmental level where curricular bottlenecks can be identified. She also noted some items in the report can be implemented immediately by adopting an intrusive approach to mentoring, advising and teaching, which means offering help before it is needed.

The report was adopted without dissent.

X. Report of the University Council Representatives - Senator Evans

The UC met four times over the summer. In May, the UC heard a report from recreation and wellness regarding the campus cupboards program. Campus cupboards provide daily access to free food and supplies. Senator Evans directed the body to Uakron.edu/wellness. They also discussed the budget with CFO Mortimer and asked a lot of questions. In June, the UC heard about VSRP and also heard about the ad hoc textbook committee’s proposal make the texts more affordable, encouraging online texts and the affordable learning initiative. In August, the UC met to receive updates on the pedestrian bridge between the ASEC and the student union. The UC also discussed updates on student health insurance.

Senator Stefan discussed the challenges domestic students faced in obtaining health insurance. The previous provider went bankrupt and a provider has yet to
be found for graduate and undergraduate students that are not also international students.

**XI. AAUP Standing Report—Senator Schulze**

Senator Schulze asked for input on how the VSRP and lack of faculty is impacting units. She also discussed the AAUP’s work including doing outreach and gearing up for the next round of contract negotiations.

**XI. New Business**

Senator Hazlett discussed the resolution from 2015 to increase the base minimum salary for adjunct faculty. He stated that every other employee group has been given a salary increase and although the part-time faculty did receive an increase it was not to base pay. The resolution was passed in 2015 and he wrote to Interim President Green twice to ask for the matter to be taken to the Board for approval and has yet to receive a response. He asked the body and all full-time faculty to work with the part-time faculty to increase compensation.

Senator Schott asked for clarification regarding a discrepancy between the Chair Saliga’s and the secretary’s remarks regarding workload discussions.

Chair Saliga explained that the EC never met with the interim president, the CAO and the CDO together even though such a meeting was promised.

Senator Shott asked the Senate to make a resolution that all administrators should teach on a regular basis. He argued that the administration should be under the same requirements to maximize the potential of the University. He also
stated that he felt that this would help to bridge gaps in understanding what goes into teaching.

Senator Schulze supported the proposal.

Chair Saliga agreed with the sentiment and offered the have the EC work in conjunction with Senator Shott on crafting a resolution.

XII. Good of the Order

Senator Makki asked about the next steps for the Tiger Team report.

Chair Saliga explained that the report goes to the president as an action item.

Senator Howley also requested that the report be shared in departmental meetings to figure out what would work for each department.

Senator Klein asked for the campus cupboard website link to be emailed out.

Chair Saliga reminded the body to please fill out one of the attendance sheets located in multiple places around the room.

XIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:46 pm.

—Heather Howley, Secretary.

Questions and comments about the minutes can be emailed to hhowley@uakron.edu or called in to x8914.
# APPENDIX A

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<td>Foundations in Early Childhood Education</td>
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APPENDIX B

Curriculum for FS Summer 2019

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<tr>
<td>A&amp;S-MODL-19-26575</td>
<td>French and Francophone Cultures Through Film</td>
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APPENDIX C

Recommendations for the University of Akron to improve retention, persistence, and graduation.

2019 Tiger Team Task Force

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Heather Howley, Faculty Senate
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Tiger Team Report

Preamble

This work represents a set of recommendations to improve recruitment, retention, persistence, and graduation at The University of Akron. A task force comprising constituents from the Faculty Senate, the University of Akron Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, University Student Government, University Council, and the Office of Academic Affairs (represented by chairs and deans) was charged with developing this set of recommendations.

The task force has developed this set of recommendations with the belief that traditional students want a true “college experience” and programs of study that prepare them for future careers. Our majors should provide a match between our students’ passions and capabilities. The task force further believes that non-traditional students seek dollar value and flexibility when selecting an academic program and generally desire to enhance skills, knowledge, and credentials while
maintaining a job and/or a family. More importantly, non-traditional students should be identified as those students seeking a flexible degree program and not necessarily by demographics. Our academic offerings and student services need to address the needs of both traditional and non-traditional students.

Student retention and persistence are affected by a range of interconnecting concerns that span academic, non-academic, and personal issues. Not surprisingly, students who feel they are significantly increasing knowledge in their field tend to have higher retention rates. However, non-academic issues can be equally important for student retention. Feeling connected to the University and other students is very important for retention and “Developing a ‘sense of belonging’ is critical to the success of college students, particularly for the retention of students who are considered to be at risk of non-completion” (pg. 607, O’Keefe, 2013). Such feelings of “fitting in” can be achieved by as little as one key person in the student’s academic experience: a faculty member, an advisor or another student on campus. Fowler and Boylan (2010) suggest that four key components can increase student retention: (a) clear student guidelines, (b) integrating first-year coursework to help students transition to college-level work, (c) intrusive academic advising to treat nonacademic and personal risk factors, and (d) traditional developmental education coursework and tutoring to address academic problems. The task force strongly recommends that the entire University community commit itself to promoting quality interaction between the faculty and our students as well as making sure students are fully engaged with the University’s environment throughout their academic careers.

Herein we have compiled a range of suggestions that address the academic, non-academic, and personal aspects of student retention and persistence. These recommendations have been implemented successfully in other universities and colleges. Many of these ideas directly relate to Fowler and Boylan’s four components noted above, but there are various additional ideas to increase retention included below. We have also added ideas on how to increase recruitment. There are too many suggestions to be implemented effectively by any one unit. Therefore, our task force proposes that each academic unit maintain the flexibility and discretion to select the recommendations that best fit its academic program and mission. As well, the task force believes that each academic unit should determine its own metrics for success in the areas of recruitment, retention, persistence, and graduation.

The task force recognizes that some of these recommendations will require university-level action and investment in the form of financial and human resources; the task force recognizes as well that, at the current time, the university may not be in a financial position to engage in certain recommendations. However, the university must realize that if improving recruitment, retention, persistence, and graduation are among our major priorities and, some increase in allocation of resources will likely be necessary. Appropriate investments produce results in nearly any domain. Therefore, we recommend that the university commit more human and financial resources toward these efforts, as appropriate.
A) **Retention/Persistence/Graduation** – Why do UA students continue, progress, and graduate?
   1) *Faculty engagement with students.*
      a) Create a faculty mentoring/advising toolkit.
      b) Develop faculty mentoring programs.
         (i) For example, UC Boulder has a program that targets 1st year students with 100 volunteer faculty who lead fireside chats weekly around known obstacles and student questions. Faculty are trained regarding what questions to refer to specialists in various departments across campus.
         (ii) Develop an intrusive faculty mentoring program such as Marshall University’s EDGE Program [https://www.marshall.edu/edge/](https://www.marshall.edu/edge/) In short, the program targets students with incoming high school GPA’s of 2.0-3.2. Faculty and students apply for the two year program. Faculty mentors receive a course release each semester, professional development and a small stipend. Faculty mentors meet with their mentees (approximately 40 students) at least four times per semester, hold eight weekly office hours in a centralized study space with program participants, and maintain informal contact. The mentors also meet as a group and discuss various issues. EDGE students had an average 15% higher retention rate by the end of the two-year program.
      c) Encourage faculty to pay special attention to “at risk” students. Faculty should receive information from advisors or administrators so they can follow-up with their majors who are identified as:
         (i) Murky Middle students (i.e., GPAs between 2.00 and 3.00).
         (ii) First Gen students.
         (iii) Students from under-represented groups.
         (iv) Students with low first semester and first year GPAs as they predict student success.
      d) Offer faculty suggestions and information for intervening with students at high risk:
         (i) Federal TRIO student support services for underrepresented and disadvantaged students.
         (ii) Intensive coaching programs.
         (iii) Tutoring and Supplemental instruction.
         (iv) Academic skills workshops.
         (v) Math workgroups.
      e) Enhance faculty interaction with their students, especially in first year classes. Students need professors who care, make them excited about learning, and encourage their dreams. Staffing introductory courses required for matriculation into one’s major with “part time faculty” (i.e., adjunct professors, part-time lecturers or postdoctoral researchers) increases student attrition relative to the persistence levels in these same courses when they are taught by tenured (or tenure-track) faculty or graduate students. Colleges could work with Chairs and Directors to
engage faculty in first year classes to support students and attend to their performance.

f) Direct Institute for Teaching and Learning (ITL) to continue to find new ways of communicating with all faculty regarding best practices to excite and engage students.

g) Early Alert System: Revise and communicate an Early Alert system (and its critical importance) to faculty; without this, preventable issues go unaddressed and many students are not contacted until they withdraw.

Some recommendations:
(i) Use a single referral system with multiple choices where faculty can make recommendations regarding what the student needs (e.g., use faculty office hours; supplementary instruction; tutoring center; other departmental resources; early warning office determines message) -- all alerts go to one office.
(ii) Single system for logging attendance, academic/behavioral alerts is most desirable.
(iii) Train GAs and teaching assistants on alert system.
(iv) Faculty and advisors should be informed of alert receipt and progress toward resolution.
(v) Students should be provided with positive messaging and next step suggestions.
(vi) Educate faculty about career alternatives that may be more appropriate for students struggling in their original career choice, and their relationships with majors.
(vii) Chairs/deans contact faculty who failed to submit alerts regarding Ds and Fs to emphasize the importance of the early alerts. It would be ideal if UA could collect some data and have chairs share those data with their faculty.

h) The Chief Academic Officer should take a leadership role in reminding faculty of the link between early risk indicators and success. S/he should prioritize this and get buy-in from faculty.

i) Nurture faculty-advisor relationships. Faculty can train advisers on degree maps and also learn from advisors’ experiences with students.

j) Use social media to keep students engaged. The goal should be to create a community based social media connection that serves as an information vehicle.

k) Nurture a positive and collaborative dynamic between faculty and administration because such a dynamic will foster strong and positive faculty-student engagement.

2) **Student engagement opportunities.**

a) A specific focus on student engagement/involvement is required. Fostering engagement has been shown to be one of the best predictors of student success. This may be accomplished through promotion of:
(i) Living and Learning Communities.
(ii) Study Abroad.
(iii) Study Away (e.g. Semester-in-the-City).
(iv) Experiential Learning, Internship and Field Experiences.
(v) Joining the Williams Honors College.
(vi) Service to the community (e.g., build a house with habitat for humanity, make a trip to help hurricane victims, be part of a project for the food bank, etc.).

(vii) Joining at least one student organization and serve in a leadership position by the time they graduate.

(viii) Having a job on campus and require that campus jobs have a career training component.

(ix) Live on campus.

b) Offer students more opportunities for significant interaction with other community members (academic and social); leverage common interests.

c) Build out the MakerSpace and/or EXL as a more robust innovation hub to support entrepreneurial skills.

d) Offer students more challenges, innovation competitions, and hackathons.

3) **Affordability.**

   a) Consider a Summer General Education Discount–If a program were to be created called Zip-To-Finish, discounted summer courses could be marketed as incentives for continuing students to finish in time. UA could offer the program to all students, or to specific pre-determined segments.

   b) Continue the following activities and provide a significant amount of communication to faculty about them:

      (i) Salvation Army support for book purchases.

      (ii) Retention and Completion Grants to help students just get over the graduation hump.

      (iii) SEFA grants – UA needs to expand this emergency funding.

   c) Students missing fee payments should be proactively counseled and assisted in exceptional cases because small unpaid bursar fees lead to hundreds of stop-outs after hold is placed.

   d) Work with students to collect and promote affordability ideas. A recent story on NPR described how students “crowdsourced” a guide for low-income students. The guide provided tips on low cost places to live, eat, and survive. They also shared information on sources of support (grants, loans, etc.).

   e) Encourage adoption of open educational resources and development of interactive courseware to reduce or eliminate textbook costs, then list and promote those courses/programs.

   f) Actively remind potential students of the option of starting at one of the University of Akron’s regional campuses.

4) **Advising.**

   a) Software Support System: there is great concern about not renewing UA’s GradesFirst License for Advising Notes. The current system is easy for faculty, advisors, and administrators to use and the current system stores valuable information about student interactions. However, university personnel have been told there exists promise that the PeopleSoft system can bring the various sets of student records together in one location while incorporating the benefits of the previous GradesFirst system. The faculty and staff not familiar with the PeopleSoft records system and/or those who have been previously only trained on
the GradesFirst system must have additional training so that the full promise of the PeopleSoft system is realized.

b) Major/Career Selection/Navigation: Advisers need an enhanced guide for majors (created with help from UCM and input from colleges—perhaps like the FSU guide https://academic-guide.fsu.edu/). A map showing all majors and how they relate would allow advisors to show students alternate paths to their career goals at a glance.

c) Consider developing a formal Meta-Major system (i.e., this would involve faculty working with advisors in a multidisciplinary committee) for entering students. This has worked at other schools like Georgia State. This idea might be used to create a large funnel of similar majors, where students enter a general field at first. As requisite courses are completed successfully, increased narrowing toward specific majors would occur. For example, the engineering meta-major might lead students to anything from engineering technology to computer engineering. With the completion of specific math courses, a declared major in computer engineering would be available and selected by the student.

d) Recommend the completion of a vocational fit test to all new students as part of their personal development process in the first year. This could be used as part of a discussion that includes Math and English scores, GPA, etc. It should be possible to explain the probability of success for majors based on scores and early grades.

e) Add a dedicated early intervention specialist and degree completion specialist to the advising personnel in each college.

f) All advisors should meet individually or in small groups with first year students within two weeks of the start of the semester. The sooner these meetings take place, the more likely the students will be able to express their challenges to skilled advisors who will be able to help them. This could possibly be built into the New Roo Friday schedule.

g) All advisors should meet individually or in small groups with returning second- and third-year students within the first month of the start of the fall semester to complete an academic “checkup” that ensures students are on track for achieving their educational, professional, and graduation goals.

h) Include goal setting and career-planning guidance in student advising sessions. Maintain a record of goals and career plans for each student. This process should also be considered in First Year Seminar courses.

5) Academic structures and supports.

a) Better use analytics to:

(i) Identify bottleneck courses and examine causes.

(ii) Focus on the power of predictive courses. We probably still have these predictive courses identified somewhere in our database as a result of our work with EAB.

(iii) Identify specific high schools that provide exceptional preparation or lack thereof. Develop specific strategies to work more closely with each of those specific schools.
(iv) Look at majors with high retention rates and determine what makes them successful; use that information as a model for other majors.

(v) Investigate why struggling students stay instead of looking at why students leave. This could be really helpful and might allow us to build workshops to help students develop skills (e.g., persistence or grit [if that really does exist]).

b) For probationary students we could adopt Western Michigan University's Phoenix program and develop a 1 credit hour mandatory academic recovery course that students must take when on probation. The program increased retention by 22% for students on probation. Program included intrusive mentoring, mandatory advising appointments, and mandatory study hours.

https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1030&context=assessment_faculty_grant

c) Develop a summer boot camp/bridge program for new or continuing students in areas where student success is a concern. We currently do this for select cohorts (Choose Ohio First) but we should investigate expanding the program.

d) Utilize course structures and delivery modes to make a difference:
   (i) Continue redesigning calculus courses to enhance student success.
   (ii) Incorporate time management and study skills strategies into lower division courses.
   (iii) Conduct a thorough audit and evaluation of our Akron Experience course and make changes if warranted, consider consistency/inconsistency across units, and work with departments in this endeavor. Since the research seems clear that “Akron-experience” type classes are important and strong predictors of student success, we should revisit components to see which reflect best practices. Perhaps offer the Akron Experience Course 1100:101 as a one-week freshman boot camp. Or try a five-week model in late afternoon/evenings now that schedule will not be so packed with classes that meet four days per week (could build into the class student activities and engagement opportunities). The problem with our current model is that by the time the students complete the course they may have already fallen behind. For example, Louisiana State University’s Biology program increased their retention rates by 5% and their 4-year graduation rates by 10% using the boot camp method. Students who participate in the program move in two weeks before the semester start date, and immediately before student orientation. Students pay or receive scholarships for the program, which includes meals. Faculty that participate receive a stipend. We could offer some general Akron Experience courses and some that are focused on specific majors. Another option would be to do a Saturday program during the first few weeks of school.

(iv) Align GenEd course recommendations with prospective clusters of majors or meta majors.

(v) Consider embedding certificates into degree pathways.

e) High Impact Practices.
(i) Recommend taking attendance in all 100 and 200 level courses.
   (a) Encourage faculty to reach out to students who are not attending or doing well within the first half of the semester.

(ii) Require graded work within the first few weeks of semester (especially critical for online/web courses).

(iii) Review the requirements and support necessary for learning communities. Since student involvement and academic support seem so important for the success of new students, we need to investigate how we might use best practices throughout the communities. True communities that learn and play together should result. There should be mechanisms that can be implemented so that the majority of freshman are incorporated into learning communities.

(iv) Incentivize active faculty involvement in learning communities (need not be financial).

(v) Expand use of Learning Assistants for classrooms (could be based on the “tutoring for tuition” model/experiential learning opportunity).

(vi) Hire specific teaching assistants to run weekly review sections for 1st-yr foundational courses (e.g., Principles of Biology, Principles of Chemistry, etc.). Consider requiring pre-admit students to attend these review sections.

(vii) Require a listing of the expected effort on syllabi with specific recommendations for course requirements. Develop standard hour expectations for courses (nationally, the norms seem to be two outside hours of study for every one class hour).

(viii) Institute peer mentoring by pairing incoming pre-admit freshman with seniors in their area. These peer mentors will closely communicate with the freshman and be liaisons between faculty advisors and these pre-admit students to help them be successful at UA.

(ix) Finish in Time (FIT) program (15 credits) was successful and national data suggest that students who take 15 credits per term are much more likely to graduate. Students could be required to take 30 credits per year or need an advisor waiver to take fewer.

(x) Active learning in classrooms should be modeled, encouraged, and supported.

(xi) Create a process for sharing best practices for teaching (e.g., ways to ensure attendance/ITL involvement).

(xii) Undergraduate Research opportunities should be encouraged including campus and community-based projects

(xiii) Innovative approaches to teaching (e.g., open-space teaching, “unclasses,” transdisciplinary and problem-based initiatives) should be encouraged.

(xiv) Embed co-curricular activities and experiential learning into degree pathways.

(xv) Use techniques such as the one-minute paper to improve class engagement, learning, and communication between instructors and students. Feedback is a condition for student success. Appropriate techniques enable students and faculty alike to adjust their learning and teaching in ways that promote learning. Just as importantly, early
and frequent feedback about student performance, in particular during the first year of study, can be used to trigger the provision of support in ways that enable students to continue their studies.

(xvi) Akron Experience faculty should consider weekly journals or similar assignments on specific topics/campus activities attended and allow class time for student reflection on campus life.

(xvii) Students are more likely to persist and graduate in settings that hold high and clear expectations for student achievement. Students need to be clear about what is expected of them and what is required for successful completion of a program of study.

f) Learning is a condition for retention. The more students learn, the more value they find in their learning, and the more likely they are to stay and graduate. Higher education is not merely focused on student retention, but student education. In the final analysis, student learning drives student retention.

6) **Social and personal supports.**

   a) Counseling - Create a Clinical Case Manager position in the Counseling and Testing Center to coordinate services for students (case manager services have increased by 135% in the last three years).
   
   b) Increase the amount of resources offered by Adult Focus and OMD.
   
   c) Coordinate outreach activities between Adult Focus and OMD and advising centers.
   
   d) Career Planning
   
   (i) Help students see the potential career outcomes of their studies. This can help them persist to graduation. Penn State does a Liberal Arts Career Week each spring to expose students to the many varied career paths for liberal arts graduates. [https://news.psu.edu/story/554574/2019/01/16/academics/liberal-arts-career-week-perfect-career-building-opportunity](https://news.psu.edu/story/554574/2019/01/16/academics/liberal-arts-career-week-perfect-career-building-opportunity)
   
   (ii) Better prepare students for the job market. Develop students’ perception that their courses have a clear value proposition.
   
   (iii) Offer early exposure to labor market realities and career options. Provide students with labor force information and windows into possible careers. The relevant information should be posted on web pages associated with each major.
   
   (iv) Offer skills workshops and certificates to train students in high demand skills that might be independent of their major. For example, a marketing student might also see value in obtaining a certificate in analytics.
   
   (v) Provide more career exposure during the undergraduate years, including supervised internships, co-ops, and relevant on campus employment.
   
   e) Promote a sense of belonging for transfer students with special programs or groups.
   
   f) Promote family involvement where appropriate, for example, by holding a special family orientation or inviting family members to come to campus.

7) **Streamlined policies and procedures.**
a) Have appropriate staff and faculty do customer walkthroughs. This will help us to understand what students actually experience through from a customer service perspective. We need to eliminate bureaucratic obstacles.
b) Have a clear policy on class cancellation. This should include specific deadlines, student notification policies, and student options for a cancellation. Information about the impact to Pell and other financial aid should be provided when a class is cancelled.
c) Multi-term registration (CSU did this and increased retention by 3%)
d) Further develop and expedite transfer articulation agreements for majors and make use of newly formed ODHE pathways to advise transfer students.
e) Make retention, persistence and graduation data transparent and open for all to see.
f) Incentivize departments for improving retention.
g) Whenever possible, consider instituting block scheduling to make it easier for students to juggle school and work.
h) Increase course availability by expanding hybrid, fully-online, and low-residency course options. The university should incentivize innovative delivery.
i) Maximize opportunities for students to pick up credits by offering intersession, weekend, evening, and online sections of high demand courses.
j) Require students to meet institutional (or college) degree requirements according to their degree plan in a timely manner. For example, in BCAS, delaying the language requirement lengthens time to degree so set up clear expectations for when this must be completed.
k) Broaden awarding credit for relevant work and training experiences via credit by exam or portfolio review.
l) Enhance collaboration with feeder institutions to align courses and academic expectations. Devise more curricular pathways in partnership with community college that will lead to success at the 4-year institution.
m) Expand co-enrollment community college students who meet the four-year institution’s admissions standards.

B) **Attraction/Recruitment** – *Why do students come to UA?*

1) **Perceived Value.**
   a) Highlight the academic and fiscal value of attending UA with visuals and utilize them widely on web sites and promotional materials.
   b) Affordability could be enhanced with a Housing Discount: Eastern Michigan created a program to offset the cost of living on campus. Students worked on campus and *in lieu* of a paycheck, students received credits to their housing bill for working a contracted amount of hours during the semester.
   c) Use open resources (free books and materials) to increase the value of attending UA, and promote this as a differentiating factor.
   d) The university should further support student-driven initiatives as an attractor.
2) **Commitment to student success.**
   a) Summer bridge programs work for at risk students (e.g., Choose Ohio First - state scholarship program to get students involved and be successful in STEM fields) and could be expanded to other groups. Summer Bridge programs involve a bootcamp for new students. Students live on campus and take courses in public speaking and other subjects while receiving instruction/assistance with goal setting, math, time management, an introduction to campus and the Akron area, and college readiness (e.g., how to talk to professors, how to write an e-mail and make a signature line). Students get a solid foundation for their first fall semester. All expenses are covered by the program with the exception of books and meals. Other experiences are included (e.g., community service project, partnership with the College of Engineering for a project). Program attendees become a cohort throughout their four years, and some are involved in living-learning communities.
   b) Build on Adult Focus efforts/ideas for a summer experience for at risk students. For example, Zane State created a free eight-week course to better prepare students for college. Program staff assisted with FAFSA, helped with career exploration, worked on time management, offered math and writing refreshers to facilitate placement testing results, taught computer literacy and created a first-year plan for students. Make this less than 8 weeks and use staff and administrative faculty to pilot in first summer to evaluate interest and outcomes.
   c) Allow a “Wayne on Main” approach much akin to the BGSU-Firelands approach to offering developmental education. We would need to develop an appealing new name for such a program to attract students to it.
   d) Have appropriate staff and faculty do customer walkthroughs of recruiting/admissions/orientation processes. This will help us to understand what students actually experience from a customer service perspective and provide feedback that we can use to help eliminate bureaucratic obstacles.
   e) Consider reducing “melt” of new students by offering an alumni mentor (perhaps from Roo Crew) to facilitate the transition to campus. A group called Mentor Collective, for example, organizes mentorships with new incoming students and existing students/alumni. One school (CU-Denver that is a public urban research university and largely commuter) saw a 3% melt with students in the program vs. 14% melt with those not in the program. They had 500 freshmen voluntarily sign up for a mentor (900 invited) when their original goal was 200.

3) **Availability of Information.**
   a) Revise and update web presence to be more consistently professional, engaging and easy to navigate.
   b) Create an enhanced guide for majors with help from UCM and input from colleges--perhaps like the FSU guide [https://academic-guide.fsu.edu/](https://academic-guide.fsu.edu/). We should develop a dendritic map that shows all majors so that similarity could be identified at a glance.
   c) Focus recruitment messages on academic programs along with faculty and student accomplishments.
d) Hire HS recruiters to bring specific UA message to school personnel. The College of Business Administration had an excellent recruiter who was doing a great job working with high schools, HS counselors, visiting HS classrooms, but when that recruiter left, the position was not replaced.

e) Engage K-12 teachers who are alumni to recruit for UA.

f) Engage CCP instructors to recruit for UA and promote the UA brand.

g) Identify feeder high schools to target recruiting efforts.

4) Innovative Programs.

a) Support faculty to innovate new programs that combine primarily existing resources to develop programs that address issues that new students consider important. Such agility requires rapid responsiveness for approval processes. It is possible that programs such as the examples listed below might draw high quality students and provide significant publicity for the university.

   (i) Develop a new flexible, problem-based major and minor. Students could create, within a set of guidelines offered by a faculty-led center, for example, a major focused on solving the fresh water problems of the world via study of engineering business opportunities, legal constraints, and polymer substrates that would facilitate the delivery of fresh water.

References

