

Vision Project Performance Incentive Grant Summary

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES – NEW INITIATIVES:

Vision Goal II: Retention Improvement Project: Retaining students and ensuring their college completion is a high priority in FY2012. Our vision for accomplishing this goal includes:

***Acquisition of a Vision Project grant funded Retention Coordinator and a WSU half-time Faculty Fellow who will work with the Academic Success Center (ASC) and spearhead the design of a data driven, integrated model of retention and advising.** Focus will include: 1) development of a data collection system to identify and develop a comprehensive profile of students at-risk of dropping out. Implementation of a data driven retention plan in the fall 2012 with analysis of assessment data in the spring/summer 2013; 2) creation of professional development workshops for faculty and staff advisors to facilitate movement toward holistic advising; 3) development of advising and retention initiatives across campus divisions; 4) increasing our human resource capacity to improve specialized advising for students in transition (major-to- major or transfer students), undeclared students, and at-risk groups; and 5) expand the ASC advising capabilities through the establishment of a Drop-In Advising Service designed to see students with questions about course schedules, academic policies, and other basic first-level advising concerns, see students with questions about the Gen Ed curriculum, see students contemplating changing majors, or see students with questions about a major their own advisor does not advise. This Drop-In Advising Service would require the addition of a staff academic advisor to increase the level of service possible in the ASC.

*** Implementation of an early alert software package to be piloted in the spring.**

Early alert systems are useful for advising and retention through the facilitation of data driven early intervention strategies and follow-up. The software can be integrated with WSU's classroom management tool and will allow advisors/faculty to support at-risk students.

*** Enrollment in American Student Assistance (ASA) proactive education debt management services for students, parents, and alumni will serve as an additional retention tool.**

The ASA charter program provides students immediate access to financial counselors trained to resolve student loan issues, online financial education tool that helps them understand their loans, and email campaigns that offer tips on managing student loans, budgeting, and more.

Vision Goal II: Transfer Improvement Project:

In an effort to increase persistence rates among community college students and increase matriculation into a four year program, WSU and QCC will form a Faculty Articulation Collaborative Team (FACT). Recognizing that WSU receives an average of 150 students, or about one-third of our transfer population, annually from QCC, the team will build upon existing articulation agreements and work to further enhance the ease with which QCC graduates can complete their baccalaureate degrees at WSU. Focus initially will be targeted toward business program alignment and mathematics course equivalencies. Creation of a database easily accessible to students/faculty will be critical to facilitate advising and ensure seamless transfer from QCC to WSU. The Academic Affairs Office will appoint/oversee WSU FACT participants.

Vision Goal II: Collaborative Retention/Advising Initiative: WSU and FSU will work collaboratively to share best practices in an effort to improve retention and advising at our institutions. Students served by both institutions share similar socio-economic characteristics: they are predominately first generation college, low income students who tend to work part-time. Faculty and staff from both institutions will focus on issues affecting our shared retention concerns. An initial fall meeting will examine the similarities and differences and analyses of student data will inform the design of campus-based strategies. A retention consultant will facilitate the work and provide professional development. Collaborative analysis of mid-year data and progress will occur in winter. The spring institute will be open to the campus communities so that information can be shared campus wide. Second and third year meetings will occur in the winter and spring. Results will be shared via websites with other institutions in the state system in an effort to encourage new collaborations. WSU will strengthen our own retention and advising practices by adapting proven activities that Fitchburg has in place. These include an advising program that targets at-risk student populations and a summer program that successfully links students with faculty advisors in their declared major. Collaboration will allow us to compare retention success across our campuses and within comparable student population groups, and to compare student achievement on comparable campus-based assessments of learning. Sharing student outcomes, effective strategies and promising practices, with our faculty in a structured institute format will be another method of sharing limited resources. Over time, the roll of the retention consultant will be reduced and the role of peer-to-peer professional development will increase. The Academic Affairs Office will appoint and oversee WSU participants.

Vision Goal IV: The WSU Teaching Corps Program (TCP): The creation of the Teaching Corps Program will enable the University to strengthen the student experience for those enrolled as well as model the positive benefits of a college education for future students. Founded in 2000, the WSU Latino Education Institute is a leader in providing educational programs serving Latino families in our community. In the city of Worcester approximately 37% of the K-12 public school enrollment is comprised of Latino youth - over 50% higher than the Latino population served at the statewide level. The LEI will build upon these partnerships to launch this pilot program and will provide TCP students with stipends to work at local elementary schools as role models and to assist in a variety of classroom educational activities. The program will be led by the Executive Director, Latino Education Institute.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES – ENHANCEMENT OF EXISTING INITIATIVES:

Vision Goal I: Expansion of the A.I.D Program: While the A.I.D. summer and first-year programming has significantly reduced first-year attrition, concern remains these students are not receiving the continued support in subsequent years. Extension of the A.I.D. program addresses this by providing support services through the second year that will build upon the first-year program with a specific focus on the individual needs of each student. Data collection efforts will focus on tracking A.I.D. students from enrollment through graduation to evaluate student academic success with respect to learning outcomes, retention, and graduation. Funding will support the additional staffing for academic support for the twenty-five students enrolled in the program through their second year. This initiative will be led by the Director, Multicultural Affairs Office.