Student Success Steering Committee

On-Time Graduation Report and Recommendations

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Rochester Institute of Technology August 2016
On-Time Graduation Report and Recommendations

At the Provost’s request, the Student Success Steering Committee established a special task force of 45 individuals from across the University to develop recommendations aimed at implementation of RIT’s Strategic Plan On-Time Graduation objectives. The Task Force worked together from September 2016 – June 2016 and divided its work into three working teams who met regularly.

The entire Task Force and Student Success Steering Committee met together six times over the course of the year to discuss preliminary findings, seek guidance and develop recommendations.

Members of the Special Task Force included:

- Jesus Aguilar, Instructional Faculty, Philosophy Department, CLA
- Luke Auburn, Communication Specialist, Human Resources, Finance & Administration
- Candice Baldwin, Senior Director for Academic Success, Multicultural Center for Academic Success, Diversity & Inclusion
- Stephanie Bauschard, Associate Director, University Advising Office, Office of the Provost and Sr VP for Academic Affairs
- Heath Boice-Pardee, Associate Vice President, Student Development, Student Affairs
- Lisa Boice, Assistant Dean, Student Services, SCB
- Jodi Boita, Assessment Director, Research & Tech Services, Student Affairs
- Charlie Border, Associate Professor, Information Sciences & Technologies, GCCIS
- Nicole Boulais, Associate Vice President, Student Learning, Support & Planning, Student Affairs
- Belinda Bryce, Program Director, HEOP, Office of the President
- Jeanne Casares, Associate Vice President & CIO, Office of the CIO, Finance & Administration
- Robin Cass, Associate Dean and Professor, CIAS
- Matt Coppenbarger, Associate Head for Student Affairs and Associate Professor, School of Mathematical Sciences, COS
- Kevin Dudarchik, Director, ITS Applications Development, Finance & Administration
- Bob Finnerty, Chief Communications Officer, University News Services
- Rebecca Fletcher Roberts, Assistant Dean, CHST
- Megan Fritts, Academic Advisor, Computing Security, GCCIS
- Nick Giordano, President, Student Government
- Joan Graham, Assistant Vice President, Institutional Research, Finance & Administration
- Scott Grasman, Department Head and Professor, Industrial & Systems Engineering, KGCOE
- Verna Hazen, Assoc. VP & Director, Financial Aid and Scholarship, Enrollment Management and Career Services
- Dan Hickey, Assistant Director, Academic Support Center, Student Affairs
- Gary Johnson, Associate Director, University Advising Office, Office of the Provost and Sr VP for Academic Affairs
- Mohan Kumar, Department Chair and Professor, Computer Science, GCCIS
- Raja Kushalnagar, Instructor, Information and Computing Studies, NTID
- Jenny LaFlam, Retention and Technology Manager, University Advising Office, Office of the Provost and Sr VP for Academic Affairs
- Christine Licata, Senior Associate Provost, Academic Affairs, Office of the Provost and Sr VP for Academic Affairs
- Ed Lincoln, Assistant Vice President, Enrollment Management & Career Services
- Joe Loffredo, Registrar, Office of the Registrar, Office of the Provost and Sr VP for Academic Affairs
- Mike Long, Data and Research Analyst, Office of the Registrar, Office of the Provost and Sr VP for Academic Affairs
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- Shawna Lusk, Director, Center for Orientation & Transition, Student Affairs
- Lynne Mazadoorian, Director, University Advising Office, Office of the Provost and Sr VP for Academic Affairs
- Fernando Naveda, Professor and Director, Office of Intersession and Summer, Office of the Provost and Sr VP for Academic Affairs
- Dave Pecora, IT Manager, Application Development, Finance & Administration
- Chelsea Pettree, Director, Parent and Family Programs, Student Affairs
- Ellen Shady, Director, University Publications, Enrollment Management and Career Services
- Tony Smith, Associate Professor, Criminal Justice, CLA
- John Smithgall, Assistant Dean, CLA
- Rachel Silvestrini, Associate Professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering, KGCOE
- Tina Sturgis, Senior Associate Registrar, Office of the Registrar, Office of the Provost and Sr VP for Academic Affairs
- Laura Tubbs, Associate Dean and Professor, Undergraduate Education, COS
- Stephen Turner, ACE Fellow, Office of the Provost and Sr VP for Academic Affairs
- Fred Walker, Dean and Professor, CAST
- David Wick, Director, Diversity Assessment/Research Management, Diversity & Inclusion
- Nilay Yildirim, Senior Research Associate, Institutional Research, Finance & Administration

Additional Student Success Steering Committee Members:
- Anne Wahl, Assistant Provost Assessment & Accreditation, Office of Educational Effectiveness Assessment, Office of the Provost and Sr VP for Academic Affairs
- Carla Dilella, Executive Director of Housing Operations & Global Initiatives, Aux-Housing Operations Admin, Finance & Administration
- Lynn Wild, Associate Provost for Faculty Development & The Wallace Center, The Wallace Center, Office of the Provost and Sr VP for Academic Affairs

The Task Force was chaired by Senior Associate Provost, Christine Licata. The three working team leaders were Joe Loffredo, Ed Lincoln, and Fred Walker.

Heartfelt appreciation to our staff support wizards, Karel Shapiro and Stephanie Rankin, who ensured that all of our needs were met.
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Learn. Grow. Graduate. – Three simple words on their own. Yet, working together, as a theme, these words are an imperative to student success and on-time graduation at RIT. The University identified on-time graduation as a goal in its 2015-2025 Strategic Plan, Greatness Through Difference, and sees it as integral to the overall effort to foster a culture of student success. The Student Success Steering Committee and On-Time Graduation Task Force (OTG) propose recommendations in this report that will provide the necessary scaffolding to make RIT’s goal achievable. Among other things, the recommendations include implementing several key advising and support systems that will help students navigate a successful path.

When reviewing this report, it is important to keep in mind that the OTG Task Force framed its recommendations as an integrated, synthesized plan of achieving RIT’s vision for on-time graduation for undergraduates. The recommendations are interdependent and when taken together represent a compelling response and a call to action. It is the hope of the OTG Task Force and Student Success Steering Committee that implementation decisions calibrate with this cohesive and coordinated intent, and that cherry-picking some recommendations over others is avoided.

The report does not address on-time graduation for graduate students. In fact, defining what “on-time” specifically means for graduate students is not something that many institutions have done. Graduation rates for graduate students are not a factor in the U.S. News ranking of national universities; nor are they reported to or published by IPEDS. Because we do not have benchmark data for OTG rates for graduate students, we do not know if we have an issue at RIT with rates for graduate students. It is suggested that if on-time graduation for graduate students is considered a priority that it be separately integrated with the work associated with Dimension Maker II: The Student-Centered Research University, in general, and more specifically with the implementation of the Graduate Education Strategic Plan (2014), and Dimension Maker II.4 objectives.

INTRODUCTION

RIT’s 2015-2025 Strategic Plan, Greatness through Difference, espouses the values of student success, college affordability, and achievement for all students. On-time graduation is a critical strategy to achieve goals in all three areas. Through the implementation of a comprehensive on-time graduation program, RIT will:

- Increase student success, as measured by overall graduation rate and on-time graduation rates;
- Reduce the achievement gap in graduation rates between minority and majority students, as measured by overall graduation rates and on-time graduation rates; and
- Help to contain tuition and fees for students by reducing students’ time to degree and helping students to avoid extra tuition and fees associated with additional terms of enrollment

While RIT has steadily been improving its graduation rate, additional progress is needed. This is evidenced by:

- RIT’s 6 year graduation rate, which ranked 15th out of 20 AITU institutions (AITU 2015-16 report);
- RIT’s on-time (4/5 year) graduation rate, which ranked 13th out of 20 AITU institutions (AITU 2015-16 report); and
- RIT’s 6 year graduation rate, which was 6% lower than US News’ predicted 6 year graduation rate for RIT in the 2015-16 ranking. US News’ predicted rate is an expected graduation rate after controlling for spending
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and student characteristics. For national universities ranked between 95 and 99, the average graduation rate was an average of 2% higher than the predicted rate.

In light of this, RIT’s on-time graduation imperative begs three important questions:

1. Why highlight this goal when retention and graduation have been the focus over the past ten years?
2. What will this on-time graduation emphasis mean for students who either choose to take longer to finish or find themselves in the situation where more time is required to complete a degree?
3. What is the University’s operational definition and goal for on-time graduation?

1. WHY ON-TIME GRADUATION?

As previously pointed out, RIT has placed considerable emphasis, resources and energy over the past ten years on strengthening and improving retention and graduation rates of undergraduate students. This emphasis will not be diminished moving forward. Quite the contrary, on-time graduation is a component of the overarching University graduation goal and is a means to that end. Recognizing the progress made on retention and graduation serves as an important backdrop to on-time graduation recommendations because these data tell us that the needle has been moving in the right direction for some time. Case in point: over the past 10 years, RIT’s first to second year retention rate has moved from 84% to 88% and its 7 ½ year graduation rate has progressed from 62% to 68%. This past year the 2009 cohort achieved a 6-year graduation rate of 70%.

Even so, there is little disagreement that RIT’s freshman graduation rate is lower than desired and lower than it should be given the quality of our incoming students. We also recognize that our graduation rate will receive greater and greater scrutiny by students, parents, governments, and other outside agencies. We believe that now is the time for RIT to commit itself and hold itself accountable to significantly higher rates of on-time graduation – defined as completing four-year programs in four years, and five-year programs in five years – as a means to maintaining college affordability and promoting student success.

This commitment to on-time graduation is predicated on the following overarching principles:

- The resources allocated to build and deliver an on-time graduation program will be provided.
- All students will receive customized guidance and resources to assist them in graduating on-time.
- Students who pre-plan their courses and graduation pathway are expected to be more likely to engage in experiential learning experiences, including co-op, internships, and study abroad.
- Students who graduate on-time will incur less tuition, fees, and room and board expenses.
- Students who graduate on-time will enter the workforce or begin their graduate education more quickly.

It is equally important to understand that on-time graduation is currently not part of RIT’s campus culture. We have never intentionally emphasized graduating on-time as one of our University goals. We emphasize “graduating”!

So, transforming the culture will mean directing attention to and emphasizing the importance of on-time graduation to students, families, and the campus community.
Finally, but clearly not the driver, persistence and graduation are factors considered by most, if not all, of the primary college ranking organizations. The US News Best College ranking is arguably the most influential of these rankings. Within that particular ranking schema, persistence and graduation factors comprise 30% of the total score as shown below:

- Six-year graduation: 18% (the most heavily weighted of all factors)
- Freshman retention rate: 4.5%
- Predicted graduation performance: 7.5%

As RIT moves into its new Carnegie category, performance in these categories compared to our peer group becomes ever more important. This is another reason to begin implementation of strategies to achieve on-time graduation as soon as possible. Presently, RIT has not produced a strong six year graduation rate.

Because increasing student success outcomes in the form of improved persistence and graduation has been the centerpiece at RIT for over 10 years, we have identified some factors that influence retention and variables that must be built these into an overall on-time graduation strategy.

2. **WHAT ABOUT STUDENTS WHO CAN’T GRADUATE ON TIME?**

On-time graduation goals need to be realistic. Not every student will graduate on time, but every undergraduate should be positioned for success to graduate. Despite all efforts to promote on-time graduation by the RIT community, we must also not lose sight of the fact that this expectation may not match the expectation of every student. And, because of this, *graduation* will remain the overarching goal, regardless of time to degree.

3. **DEFINITION OF ON-TIME GRADUATION AND ON-TIME GOALS**

In order to establish objectives and goals, an institutional definition for on-time graduation is a pre-requisite. We propose that on-time graduation means *undergraduate students who are completing the appropriate number and distribution of credit hours each semester in order to graduate in the designated “time-to-degree” for their program – that is, completing a four-year baccalaureate degree program in four years; a five-year baccalaureate degree in five years.*

A key distinction here is the difference between being a “full time” student and being a student that graduates “on-time.” They are not synonymous. Full time status connotes undergraduate students who are registered for 12 or more credit hours. This designation determines a student’s tuition and fee levels as well as financial aid eligibility. Correspondingly, a part-time student is one who falls below the credit hour thresholds previously described.

It is also important to note that the number of successfully completed credit hours required in order to stay on-track and on-time will differ by academic major. In general, baccalaureate degree programs require between 120 and 129 credit hours. Students should, therefore, on average, earn between 15 and 18 credit hours per semester. The specific number of credits hours earned per semester will vary by program.
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Currently, RIT’s on-time graduation rate is about 45%. Clearly, there is room for significant improvement. The real question is how much improvement is needed (and realistic) in order for this strategic objective to be a real difference maker for the University. Stretch goals have been established and the recommendations center on moving the University by 2025 to achieve:

- 63% On-time graduation rate (4 in 4 or 5 in 5)
- 80% Graduation rate reflecting 150% program completion time (4 in 6 and 5 in 7.5)

THE RIT COMMITMENT: CULTURE TRANSFORMATION

To be successful in achieving on-time graduation goals will require a commitment and strong leadership at every level. On-time graduation messaging will need to appear all over campus:

- in multiple marketing and recruiting publications
- at admission events for prospective students and their families
- in new student orientation activities
- on every academic program website
- within every advising and student support office setting

Getting to the ideal state will be aided by making clear the responsibilities that RIT and its students take on in order to graduate on-time. It is this type of compact that institutions across the country are embracing, whether it is the “finish in 4” pledge at the University of Buffalo or the “finish in 4” agreements at Old Dominion University or Boise State. The basic approach is to clarify roles and responsibilities in order to keep on-time graduation at the forefront and achievable.

THE RIT COMMITMENT: ON-TIME GRADUATION COMPACT

Our pledge that RIT students will learn, grow and graduate on-time must be characterized by a compact that includes stated responsibilities for students and the campus community alike. While certainly not a legal contract, a declaration of responsibilities is important nonetheless. We envision this “declaration” to include expectations that reflect joint responsibilities of the following order:

RIT Responsibilities:

i) Provide academic advising in an intentional way each semester
ii) Offer the required sections and seat capacity as required in curriculum plans
iii) Provide clear course expectations and timely faculty feedback on academic progress
iv) Monitor student’s academic progress each semester and conduct outreach regarding progress
v) Suggest interventions and strategies when necessary for students to stay on track to on-time graduation

Student responsibilities:

i) Follow the curriculum of their declared major
ii) Retake courses as necessary, but understand that the need to retake/repeat a course may extend time to graduation
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iii) Partner with academic advisor every semester to review progress toward graduation as well as options for study abroad, experiential learning, undergraduate research and internships

iv) Complete the course registration process in a timely manner [Note: Specific details of this will need to be developed at a later date and will include an annual registration format.]

v) Monitor progress toward graduation using on-time graduation tools and degree audit

vi) Earn a minimum of 30 to 32* credits per academic year (*varies by major)

vii) Maintain good academic and financial standing at RIT [Definition of ‘academic standing’ and ‘financial standing’ will be linked to https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d051, https://www.rit.edu/fa/sfs/policies/financialstanding.html]

Following in the footsteps of other institutions in this regard, this type of commitment, pledge or compact represents a two-way commitment, helping inform the steps along the way to on-time graduation

Process and Recommendations

PROCESS

The On-Time Graduation Task Force divided its charge into three working groups organized around the following Strategic Plan objectives:

Group #1: Policies, Procedures, Practices and Conditions to Facilitate On-Time Graduation

- Objective 1.7.1: Students and their advisors will develop comprehensive, multidimensional educational plans designed to ensure that students maximize RIT’s learning resources while also graduating on-time
- Objective 1.7.2: Identify existing and new policies, procedures, practices and conditions that support progress toward on-time degree completion
- Objective 1.7.4: Eliminate existing policies, procedures, practices and conditions that impede progress toward on-time graduation (e.g. revision of the “W” policy; investigation of pass/fail).
- Because the work of Group 1 is expansive, this team was divided into three sub-teams:
  - Team A: Course planning, degree audit, annual registration, full-time status, and tools and systems to support these efforts
  - Team B: Policies
  - Team C: Development of Holistic Student Risk Model

Group #2: Embedding On-Time Graduation into the Culture at RIT

- Objective 1.7.5: Incorporate the on-time graduation priority into recruitment and marketing materials
- DM IV.2: Publicize and deliver on a guarantee that no student in good standing within 15 credits of graduation will drop out because of insufficient funds for remaining tuition.

Group #3: Programmatic or curriculum design that may impede on-time graduation (e.g. course sequences, DFW’s, etc.)

ARRIVING AT RECOMMENDATIONS

Each Working Team reviewed relevant internal data, national best practices, and completion agenda research reports. Based on this data collection and analyses, each Working Team produced its own final report and
recommendations. The entire OTG Task Force then reviewed and synthesized all recommendations into themed categories and prioritized core initiatives accordingly.

The final list of recommendations represents those recommendations and steps that the OTG Task Force and Student Success Steering Committee believe strongly need to be taken over the next 5-8 years if we hope to achieve our on-time graduation goal of 63%.

The themes and the associated major priority areas are best viewed holistically as RIT’s OTG framework:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Specific recommendations follow in Attachment 1 and are shaded in terms of priority:

- Immediate high impact actions are shaded green (these have timelines)
- Important impact actions needing further requirements and definition are shaded orange (some have timelines)
- Actions with strong potential impact but needing further information/analysis re: scalability or affect are shaded blue (most do not have specific timelines)
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Each Working Team’s Final Report is found in Attachment 2. These individual reports contain rich information, references, websites, and are intended to be used to assist in implementations steps. The expectation is that these individual reports will be handed off to implementations teams, as appropriate.

Where possible, notations regarding estimated resources are included in the reports.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The strategic vision articulated here is to create acceptance and shared understanding between the university and its students about the enabling conditions, commitments and actions required for on-time graduation to become a reality. This goal finds strong support in the current national dialogue and in RIT’s previous and current efforts to increase graduations rates. This entails removing barriers that prevent students from completing degree requirements in a timely manner. And, it is predicated on students taking full advantage of the dynamic educational model offered by the University.

While there is little disagreement that RIT’s graduation rate is lower than what it should be given the quality and quantity of our resources, and the quality of our incoming students, we also recognize that our graduation rate will receive greater and greater scrutiny by students, parents, governments, and other outside agencies. We believe that now is the time for RIT to commit itself and hold itself accountable to significantly higher rates of on-time graduation – defined as completing four-year programs in four years, and five-year programs in five years.

Much has already been accomplished to improve and enhance advising, academic and emotional support services, student life, facilities, campus spirit, and so much more. Despite all of these efforts, RIT is still not where it can be with respect to degree completion. The recommendations in this report recognize this and also recognize that a substantial culture change will require sizable effort and in some cases significant resource investments.

Our proposition is that by 2025, RIT will consider itself successful in meeting its on-time graduation Strategic Plan imperative if 63% of undergraduates complete their program on time.

There is no better time in the history of RIT to take on this goal. Let’s get moving!

CAUTIONARY ADVICE

As the University embarks on this Strategic Goal, consideration must also be given to possible unexpected consequences which can affect the bottom line. A recent EAB briefing (EAB Daily Briefing: July 28, 2016: The Unexpected Consequences of Promoting Timely Graduation) advised institutions that enrollment patterns will shift when students take a shorter time to complete their degree. This also means demand for courses can pose challenges for course scheduling, section size and stress on classroom space. This same briefing pointed out that the growth in the 4-year graduation rate at the University of Texas at Austin resulted in the need to increase the size of its freshman class. The University of Hawaii’s four-year institution saw a drop in enrollment of 9.2% because of the increase in on-time graduation. Because of these experiences, analyzing the effect on tuition revenue and “the new normal” for enrollment planning will be needed so that RIT can ensure a steady state.
Student Success Steering Committee
On-Time Graduation (OTG) Framework

Culture Transformation
- High Level Institutional Commitment
- Recruitment & Marketing Messaging
- Robust & Comprehensive OTG Website
- Process to Support Near Degree Completion Students At Risk for Withdrawal Due to Financial Difficulty

Intentional Advising Tools and Strategies
- Advisor Point of Contact
- Online Course Planner
- Degree Audit Integration
- Annual Registration System
- Predictive Student Success Model

Curriculum Design & Delivery
- Minimize D,F,W Rates
- Post Syllabus & Gradebook
- Use of Early Alert
- Horizon Initiatives
  - Learning assistants
  - Spatial visualization
  - Co-op requirements
  - Internal transfers

Related Policy Review & Revision
- LOA/University Withdrawal
- Course Withdrawal
- Credit Overload
- Probation/Suspension
- Pass/Fail Grading Option for Credit Courses
ON-TIME GRADUATION TASK FORCE
RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES

The following recommendations are shaded in terms of priority:
- Immediate high impact actions are shaded green
- Important impact actions needing further requirements and definition are shaded orange
- Actions with strong potential impact but needing further information/analysis re: scalability or affect are shaded blue

I. INTENTIONAL ADVISING TOOLS AND STRATEGIES:
Intentional Advising is defined as advising that is accurate, consistent and takes into consideration both the student’s unique situation and the goals of the university. Moving to this definition will require additional “tools” and “supports” at the front-end and “teeth” at the back end in order for advising touchpoints and interventions to have meaning and impact.

The overarching strategy here will be to define and document the student life cycle relative to academic advising and support and use this as a means to assess implementation of a simplified interface for advising, (i.e., portal). This must be seen as the work of the entire University Community and not that of Academic Affairs or Student Affairs or any other individual unit/division. This strategy will include rigorous interrogation of existing systems to reduce or eliminate redundancies and leverage existing strengths. Such systems include, but are not limited to: Degree Audit; Non-Registered Student Outreach; Course Planner; Starfish - Early Alert; My Courses; SIS (Variable tabs), and Home grown (college) shadow systems.

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<th>PRIORITY OBJECTIVES:</th>
<th>SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION STEPS</th>
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| Advisor Point of Contact: | • Define mandatory points of contact for students throughout their career, including advising contacts each term.  
• Review advising caseloads after specific points of contact and expectations are developed to determine appropriate load for student and advisor success. Additional advisor resources will be necessary if delivery of advising is expected to be each term and in person for every student. Additionally, more robust expectations for advisors’ review of students & outreach to students outside of advising sessions must be factored into the advising caseload.  
  o Begin planning conversation with college leads in 2161 to ensure that recommendations are manageable and achievable | X | X Registrar Advising New/Continuous work | X Current advisor loads are high. Increasing number of advisors is a partial solution. Additional office spaces |
| Course Planner Tool: | • Implement and integrate an on-line course planning tool for students and advisors | • One essential tool for Intentional On-Time Advising is the use of an on-line course planning tool for students and advisors.
• In order to provide such a tool, the following steps and considerations are crucial:
  o SIS includes a course planner; however after having evaluated it, it was determined that it is deficient as currently available and would not meet our requirements.
  o A team of advisors, and Dean’s Delegates, led by members of the Registrar’s Office and the University Advising Office, is currently defining the requirements for a course planning solution. Based on these requirements, a recommendation will be made to purchase a third-party planner tool or to modify the existing SIS Course Planner. Either solution is likely to require a significant investment.
    o Examination to date includes:
      ▪ Review of a third party system called Smart Planner, which is a “bolt-on” to our SIS and is integrated with the SIS Student Center. The University of Arizona, Boise State University, NYU and a number of California State Universities use this system. University of Arizona and Boise State have packaged Smart Planner as a part of a comprehensive advising program:
        • University Arizona - http://advising.arizona.edu/content/smart-planner
        • Boise State - http://sspa.boisestate.edu/advising/degree-tracker/ | X | X | X | Budget needed will be part of September 2016 proposal | • Course Withdrawal
• Credit Overload
• Probation / Suspension
• Leave of Absence / University Withdrawal
- Review of the Degree Planner that has been developed by Hobsons/Starfish, which would be integrated with our Starfish Early Alert system.
  
  http://www.starfishsolutions.com/home/starfish-enterprise-success-platform/starfish-degree-planner/
  
  - The review of these alternatives will continue and a formal proposal will be brought forward at the end of fall semester 2016.

### Degree Audit:

- Fully integrate the recently implemented Degree Audit into the advising/registration culture.
- Leverage degree audit data to inform course scheduling and to identify students potentially off-track for on-time graduation.
- Time and effort will need to be invested in this aspect of the project. Consideration of outside consulting resources to fast-track this initiative have been allocated in FY 17 budget.
- These funds will engage a degree audit consultant to help us build the required reporting and diagnostics mechanisms and alerts to leverage degree audit data.
- The Registrar’s Office and the University Advising Office will help to ensure that the use of the degree audit becomes a key component of advising sessions and will continue to train advisors to use degree audit.
- Continued outreach to students to increase awareness of benefits will occur.
- It is recommend that manual paper-based planning worksheets currently maintained by each department be replaced.
  - It needs to be determined the extent to which the degree audit can meet this specific need.
- Due to its complexity, at this point, we do not fully understand the range of data services that degree audit’s data model will enable us to provide.
- Need to identify potential tools and whether they need to be purchased or developed in house.
- This analysis will continue and a formal proposal will be brought forward at the end of **Spring Semester 2017**.

### Annual Registration System:

- Establish an annual registration process permitting and encouraging students to register for summer, fall and spring semesters in advance, at the same time.
- Successfully implementing annual registration will require comprehensive planning, coordination and communication.
- One-time funds were approved for FY 17 to begin this work.
- A cross-functional team will be charged in Fall Semester (2016) to develop a plan for the implementation of this initiative.
- This cross-functional team should have representation from the following:
  - Department Chairs, Scheduling Officers, Advisors, Registrar’s Office, University Advising Office, Financial Aid and Scholarships, and Student Financial Services. The team must consider the following basic guidelines:
    - There will be an initial additional workload for departments, advisors and other key stakeholders associated with building a full

### Minor changes:

- Course Withdrawal
- Credit Overload
- Probation / Suspension
- Leave of Absence / University Withdrawal

| X | (50,000 one-time funds) | X |
academic year class schedule, the process would be initiated earlier and additional time would be built into each phase.

- Some unanticipated changes to the schedule for any term are inevitable; departments however, would be expected to develop schedules as close as possible to the anticipated final schedules for each term. Additional classes would be permitted at any time, but deletions/changes to meeting day or time after the beginning of enrollment would be permitted only under limited circumstances, and once all other options for retaining the original schedule had been exhausted. Room changes would continue to be dynamic.

- The enrollment period may begin early in the year. Enrollment appointments would continue to be utilized to prioritize student enrollment, but there will likely be additional time between succeeding year-level appointments. Open enrollment (for visiting and affiliate students) may be pushed out later in the academic year giving degree-seeking students the opportunity to enroll for the full-academic year without the introduction of non-university members.

- The cross functional implementation team will be expected to learn from other institutions that have already implemented this process, include the following:
  - Cleveland State University:
    - [https://www.csuohio.edu/registrar/multi-term-registration](https://www.csuohio.edu/registrar/multi-term-registration)
  - Michigan State University
  - University of Central Florida:
  - South Dakota State:
    - [http://www.sdstate.edu/campus/records/multi-term-registration-faq.cfm](http://www.sdstate.edu/campus/records/multi-term-registration-faq.cfm)
  - George Fox University

- The team must also take the following into consideration when preparing the business rules for the Annual Registration System
  - Course sequencing and need for trailer courses
  - Need to offer additional sections of high wait-listed General Education courses

that we will consider are related to the waitlists, registration swaps and reserve seats. Specifically, we will focus on enhanced tools that we can provide to academic administrators and academic advisors to more efficiently and transparently managing waitlists, swaps and reserved seats.
### Predictive Student Success Model:
Build and implement a Holistic Student Success model to identify at-risk students

- Expand our understanding of student success through a combination of academic and non-academic factors:
  - Purchase and administer a Comprehensive Entering Student Readiness and Engagement Survey that provides predictive scores for first year academic success and retention.
  - Form an advisory committee (including a representative from the Academic Support Center, Student Life and Year One) to further inspect the selected surveys to make a final decision.
  - Engage selected survey vendors in further conversation and request trials or demos.
  - Leverage underlying data in MyCourses to predict student success and retention.
  - Follow up with ILI to develop a plan for investigating the potential use of D2L’s Insights.
  - Utilize student engagement data in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities to predict student success and retention.
  - Track student engagement with faculty and staff and use these data to predict student success and retention.
  - Continue investigating how to utilize big data elements such as swipe data, behavioral data and/or location data for future retention modeling efforts.

- Develop and maintain statistical models to predict student success:
  - Build and maintain additional statistical models to provide predictive scores for academic success and retention beyond first year.
  - Form an Analytics Action Team that can structure and lead the analytics effort related to student success.
  - Conduct a data exploration phase to evaluate the importance of data elements in predicting retention and to evaluate different modeling techniques.

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<th>Shifting schedule from low enrollment courses to more high enrollment courses</th>
<th>The following recommendations are components of the “Holistic” risk model that will be considered.</th>
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<td>The following recommendations are components of the “Holistic” risk model that will be considered.</td>
<td>Expand our understanding of student success through a combination of academic and non-academic factors:</td>
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<td>Develop and maintain statistical models to predict student success:</td>
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<td>Expand our understanding of student success through a combination of academic and non-academic factors:</td>
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<td>Develop and maintain statistical models to predict student success:</td>
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<tr>
<td>$23,000 for purchasing a survey tool</td>
<td>Estimated at about $150,000 per year for additional staffing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deliver and use results of model</td>
<td>Deliver and use results of model:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Integrate use of results with advising strategies and portal</td>
<td>• Develop intervention strategies regarding how the analytics results will be utilized and explore necessary resource requirements</td>
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Form an “Intervention Strategy Group” that will work on outlining an intervention plan for students who are identified at risk by the retention models.

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**CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DELIVERY**

Curriculum design and delivery can directly or indirectly affect a student’s ability to stay on track for graduation. Because RIT’s programs are designed so that first year students directly enter the major in their first semester, success in critical gateway courses and sequential courses (with pre-requirements) determines a student’s ability to progress on-time in the major. Ability to secure a co-op placement can also affect progress to a degree. Maximizing student success across these requirements is needed if on-time graduation is to be realized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRIORITY OBJECTIVES:</th>
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<th>RESOURCE NEEDS</th>
<th>RELATED POLICIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>D, F, W Rates</strong>:</td>
<td>• Associate Deans have already been involved in discussions related to “change” strategies related to courses with high D, F, &amp; W rates. It is recommended that this group work together during the 2016-2017 academic year to:</td>
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<td>• Because D, F, W rates influence On-Time graduation, provide a common methodology-and develop standardized analysis/improvement procedures for courses with high D, F, W rates</td>
<td>o Analyze and use DFW information to maximize student success through recommended adjustments to pedagogy, staffing, supplemental instruction, learning assistants or curriculum design, including gateway course options.</td>
<td>TECH/SYSTEMS</td>
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<td>o Utilize research done to inform analysis (e.g., M. Long)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Review current utilization of Early Alert System and recommend any necessary modifications to faculty utilization expectations/requirements</td>
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<td>o Analyze whether contact hours vs. credit hours contribute to D, F, W in certain courses.</td>
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<td>o Analyze whether these additional contact hours are a barrier to OTG and make recommendations as appropriate. Some introductory courses require more in class contact hours than credit hours (e.g., 6-8 required in-class hours for a 4 credit class). This is true especially for some math and physics courses. This increases a student’s weekly contact hour load. For students to graduate on time in many STEM programs this requires registering for 15-18 credits a term.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Review how Learning Assistant Program, Supplemental Instruction Program and other University Academic Support Programs might be used and/or expanded in order to improve D, F &amp; W rates. (See recommendation that follows re: Learning Assistants)</td>
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</table>
### My Courses:
- Initiate additional study (data) of the use of MyCourses by faculty and how use impacts OTG
- Investigate increasing the use of MyCourses by faculty
- Investigate components to include in MyCourses: (Current survey of faculty regarding Use and satisfaction with D2L may help inform this recommendation)
  - Students want up-to-date information on course expectations and how they are progressing academically in a course. Use of My Courses or another common platform can satisfy this need.
  - Further, intentional advising is greatly enhanced when an advisor can meet with an advisee, go into the common platform where grades are recorded and help students understand how they are doing in a particular course.
  - Without such a tool, students are often in the dark and cannot take informed responsibility for improving their grades. Currently, use of a common platform is not required for faculty.
  - In order to enlarge and inform current discussion around the benefit of requiring use of a common learning management platform, further data collection and investigation should be conducted by a Working Group of faculty, students, advisors and staff. The group should conduct additional study including:
    - Better understand whether there is an impact on OTG in institutions where use is required
    - If and how RIT’s current system accommodates posting of syllabus, schedule, gradebook (updated throughout term), etc.
    - How a faculty member using his/her own website could link to My Courses
    - How a faculty member using separate grading website can provide link to My Courses
    - How current faculty survey regarding use and satisfaction with D2L can help inform this action step
  - Recommendations should be made by end of Fall semester 2017

### Learning Assistants Program *(Not to be confused with Teaching Assistants and Supplemental Instruction):*
- Examine results of this programs on D, F, W rates and on overall persistence and expand this program across colleges, as appropriate
  - Initial results for Learning Assistants Pilot Program are very promising - need to track further to determine scalability and if and how to expand
  - Need to analyze results for Supplemental Instruction as well to determine if and how it might expand
  - Need to understand how LA and SI should work together or apart
  - Because it will take time to recruit faculty and pedagogy instructors, getting as much lead time as possible is important.

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<p>| | $350K (See Page 15 at end of document for breakdown) |  |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Spatial Visualization</th>
<th>Co-op</th>
<th>Internal Transfers</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Explore a common approach across the university to determine the interest and needs of each college for spatial visualization assessment and training.</td>
<td>• Strategy used in ODI with STEM majors</td>
<td>• On-Time graduation for internal transfers has been a perennial issue. Given the nature of RIT majors, this is not easily remedied without a major curriculum change within all colleges.</td>
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<td>• Investigate scalability further</td>
<td>• Investigate scalability further</td>
<td>• The goal for many internal transfers may better be framed as “Graduation in a timely fashion”</td>
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<td>Recommend data be collected on the time to graduation for internal transfers and re-visit this topic in five years to determine if any action is recommended</td>
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II. CULTURE TRANSFORMATION

Delivering on RIT’s promise of On-Time Graduation cannot occur until RIT’s commitment to this goal is a more tangible and visible element of the University’s culture. It must be deeply and proactively embedded in the messaging delivered to students and parents across the student career cycle. It must become a priority for Executive Leadership and be reflected in divisional expectations and planned outcomes. It must be reflected in academic program practices, advising and all day-to-day touch points with students.

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</table>
| **Website:**  
- Develop a robust and comprehensive web page devoted to RIT’s commitment to on-time graduation. | • Using the outline that accompanies the Task Force’s report as a basis, assemble the content for the web page. Content will include text, icons, links, forms, and other necessary information.  
• Provide content to web developer  
• Once created, review web page and develop maintenance/update schedule  
• This website should recognize students who are graduating (or graduated recently) on-time and are placed well in the workplace/pursuing graduate programs. | DATA: X  
TECH/SYSTEMS:  
STAFF:  
INCREMENTAL $: | |
| **Marketing:**  
- Incorporate the on-time graduation priority into all recruitment and marketing materials. | • Engage the Chief Marketing Officer to develop a branding and marketing plan  
• Once web page (see above) is developed and there is tangible evidence that the commitment to on-time graduation is effective, incorporate on-time graduation priority into recruitment and marketing materials including the Freshman and Transfer Prospectus pieces, college view book series, information brochure, and other related publications and web pages. | DATA: X  
TECH/SYSTEMS:  
STAFF:  
INCREMENTAL $: | |
| **Student Financial Support:**  
- Deliver on a guarantee that no student in good standing nearing graduation will drop out because of insufficient funds for remaining tuition. | • Develop process (analogous to Semester Conversion Impact Claim process) for reviewing cases where students nearing graduation (to be defined in terms of credits) who have fulfilled obligations with respect to satisfactory academic progress (to be defined) but are running out of time and money and are in danger of withdrawal can request wrap around support (reviewed by appropriate committee) in order to complete studies.  
• Identify sources of incremental funding to support students who demonstrate financial difficulty via the appeal Process referred to in above | DATA:  
TECH/SYSTEMS:  
STAFF:  
INCREMENTAL $: $300,000 to $400,000 per year. One source of incremental funding is identified in the university’s campaign. | |
III. RELATED POLICY REVIEW AND REVISION

Policies affecting student academic success must communicate community expectations and parameters for remaining in good academic standing and making on-time graduation progress. Policies that hinder such progress will require modifications or full policy review through governance channels. Additionally, adjustments to how such policies are implemented, which do not require policy changes may also be required. In some cases, recommended policy changes may need to be coordinated with other on-time graduation initiatives recommended previously.

### PRIORITY OBJECTIVES: SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

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| Course Withdrawal Policy | - This would require a custom build in SIS, and could be modeled after a similar process at NYU. We believe that this would ensure that students are making informed decisions regarding their course withdrawal.  
- A supplemental group consisting of 2 members of the current Team 1B (Lynne Mazadoorian and Belinda Bryce) work with representatives from the Office of the Registrar, ITS, and Academic Affairs during Fall 2016 to build the mechanism to provide information on the multiple implications of course withdrawal (Financial Aid and Financial Services input needed)  
- After implementing this new process, this group should work with Academic Senate to re-evaluate the course withdrawal policy which is relatively permissive and counter to on-time efforts. We recommend the following limitations be considered for implementation:  
  o Prohibiting full-time students from dropping below 12 credit hours without departmental approval  
  o Prohibiting students from withdrawing from the same course more than once  
  o Placing a maximum credit or course withdrawal limit for a student’s undergraduate career  
  o Refer to Texas State University system’s six drop rule, where students starting as a first time undergrad at a Texas institution cannot drop more than six courses during their entire college career  
- Recommend that Academic Senate take up as part of their plan of work based on the initial work of the committee this year.  
  o Consider “bundling” a review of course w/d policy, course repeat policy, probation suspension policy, and the possibility |

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<td>INCREMENTAL $</td>
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Credit Overload Policies
- Change the policy to read: Degree seeking undergraduate students registered for over 19 credit hours are charged full-time tuition plus the applicable credit-hour rate for each hour over 19.

Probation and Suspension Policy
- Continue to study this policy by the working group until further recommendations can be outlined.

- Based on the peer institution policy review, we are recommending the following pending further information regarding RIT specific data.
  - Limit academic probation students to no more than 15 credit hours during the term of probation.
  - In addition, we discussed the importance of a centralized academic intervention for students on academic probation. Interventions should be developed based on individual student needs. However, it is not recommended that we integrate this in the Academic Probation and Suspension Policy.
    - Further recommendations will be made if and when requested data will be made available to the team.
- Potential impact of these changes
  - Limiting credits hours during the academic probation term will allow students to focus on a reasonable academic load which should result in positive outcomes for the academic term.
  - Encouraging students to utilize academic support resources to further develop skills in areas such as time management, and study skills, as well as utilize tutoring and other academic support resources.

- This affects the university's tuition assessment policy and should be discussed with the Budget Office. The timeline for implementation will be impacted by the evaluation of the budgetary impact of the change.
- Recommended for financial review by Budget Office as the next step
- Review whether upper limit should be 19 or 20 credit hours
- Needs as a safety valve
- Recommend that Academic Senate take up as part of their plan of work based on the initial work of the committee this year.

- of pass/fail options as part of a bigger conversation with this committee around student success, on-time graduation, and how policies may inform/interface with student behavior. These policies are synergistic in possible impact on OTG.

- Further recommendations will be made if and when requested data will be made available to the team.
support services during the probation period will provide students with an appropriate level of support.

- Get the data requested from Registrar, complete study and initial recommendations and then pass along to Senate.
- Recommend that Academic Senate take up as part of their plan of work based on the initial work of the committee this year.
  - Consider “bundling” a review of course w/d policy, course repeat policy, probation suspension policy, and the possibility of pass/fail options as part of a bigger conversation with this committee around student success, on-time graduation, and how policies may inform/interface with student behavior. These policies are synergistic in possible impact on OTG

- Current University Committee, led by Tina Sturgis and Stephanie Bauschard and joined by Megan Fritts co-chair of this working team, has already begun work to both update the Leave of Absence Policy as well as to address the needs for clarification and alignment between LOA and Withdrawal actions.
- It is recommended that this committee address any items in its current charge as well as the recommendations outlined in this report

- Possible considerations/options for change affecting On-Time Graduation include:
  - If the policy states students can be gone 3 terms, then they should be dematriculated in the 4th term after add/drop.
  - More specific details on dates a student will be dematriculated from RIT, based on LOA vs. non enrollment. This way communication can go to students prior to the dematriculation, and them needing to reapply through admissions.
  - RPI has a wonderful Q/A available to anyone to access on Leave of Absence and University Withdrawals: [http://studentlife.rpi.edu/student-experience/leaves-and-withdrawals/leave-absence-faq](http://studentlife.rpi.edu/student-experience/leaves-and-withdrawals/leave-absence-faq). RIT should look into creating this for the university as a quick easy reference for students/faculty/staff on campus.

- Be more transparent on financial aid implications for both students and advisors, to assist in guiding students to the best path. If a student were to lose financial aid due to a leave of absence or owe more money based on a form being filled out incorrectly, it could impact a student’s ability to return
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pass/Fail Grades</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Recommended for tabling /future consideration</td>
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<td>to RIT.</td>
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<td>• Writing of the University Withdrawal policy</td>
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<td>• May be beneficial to revisit this topic in 2-3 years after other on-time graduation initiatives are underway as its impact may be assessed differently at that time.</td>
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<td>• Additionally, this item may align better with other strategic planning items related to curricular flexibility, innovation, and interdisciplinary work. As such, a copy of this report may be useful for consideration for teams working this area now or in the future OR may be beneficial to an Academic Senate committee for consideration under general policy review.</td>
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COST FOR LA PROGRAM EXPANSION

Stage 1: (current situation): 65 LAs in COS Courses: $117K + $30K (Currently funded by COS, Provost, Colleges) = 147K

Stage 2: (begin fall 2017 at earliest, 50% expansion): an additional 34 LAs (17/semester) + 0.25 additional FTE for 2nd pedagogy section: 34 X $1800 = $61,200 + 0.25 FTE ($15K). We can handle this w/our current program coordinator if we know well enough in advance + 76K

Stage 3: (Fall 2018 at earliest, 50% expansion): an additional 34 LAs + 0.25 coordinator: 34 X $1800 = $61,200 + 0.25 admin ($15K) + another Scott (priceless 😊) + 50% of additional faculty member + 76K + 50% of Faculty

Total 299K + 50% of a faculty member

- If, for example, we know early next year that the schedule under Resources Needs $ is approved, we can consider conducting a nation-wide search for a LA administrator. There are examples of positions like this (Colorado & Rutgers are 2), all with Ph.D.’s in STEM disciplines, so the person could teach 50% for the LA program and either also do the program administration or teach 50% as a lecturer in a STEM department. Or, we could integrate them into IMPRESS or CASTLE for the other 50%; there are a lot of options.

- From a timeline perspective, we probably need at least a year’s lead-time to recruit and educate faulty. Since students need to enroll the semester before they LA, faculty will need to be on board by the beginning of the semester before they use LAs. That is, if faculty starting in Fall 2017 need to be on board by Jan. 2017.
On-Time Graduation Report and Recommendations

RELATED REFERENCES

Many national examples were studied. Among others, these included:

FINISH IN 4 EXAMPLES:

UB:
http://advising.buffalo.edu/fif/pledge.php
http://www.buffalo.edu/news/releases/2015/01/026.html

Boise State:
http://sspa.boisestate.edu/advising/finish-in-4/
https://go.boisestate.edu/finish4/agreement/

Baldwin Wallace:
https://www.bw.edu/academics/graduation-guarantee/

Old Dominion (not much information on their program, but the minutes below are interesting):
https://www.odu.edu/success/programs/finishin4

Others:
http://www.northcentral.edu/futurestudents/finish-in-four
https://newstudents.okstate.edu/sites/default/files/FinishInFour.pdf

Also, there are ‘15 to Finish’ initiatives:
http://www.completecollege.org/news.html
(This is very interesting – it pulls together many resources)
http://grownandflown.com/how-to-finish-college-in-4-years/

Examples of tools to support the effort:
Arizona State - https://eadvisor.asu.edu/students/tools
Arizona University - http://advising.arizona.edu/content/smart-planner
Boise State - http://sspa.boisestate.edu/advising/degree-tracker/
Company that built “Smart Planner” http://www.tbginc.com/smart-planner/
April 2016

Working Group Final Reports

• Working Group 1
  o Team A
  o Team B
  o Team C

• Working Group 2

• Working Group 3
On-Time Graduation Working Group 1  
Team A: Registration/Scheduling - Recommendations

Team 1A focused on making recommendations to achieve one goal: To provide students with the ability to graduate on-time.

In support of this goal, Team 1A has set one objective: To implement a requirements-based course scheduling, student planning and registration system to ensure that course availability will not be a limiting factor in time to degree.

The following are key issues in support of the above:

- Students must have access to individualized up-to-date program requirements including course sequence and progression to degree completion from the first time they register for courses at RIT.
- Students must be enabled to plan and register for courses and must be provided real-time feedback on the degree completion relevance of course choices.
- Students and their advisors must be enabled to review degree completion requirements and update enrollment plans and registration as needed, at least annually.
- The university has an obligation to verify that students register and wait-list for courses in the student’s degree completion plan, and to reach out to students and their advisors when errors are detected.
- The university will leverage the data acquired through degree audit, registration and course planning to understand course demand and accordingly develop and modify fall, spring and summer class schedules to address student needs both in advance and during the class registration cycle.
- The university must develop the capability to produce near real-time notification for advisors when students are potentially off-track, including any of the following triggering events:
  - Registering in fewer than 15 credits in fall or spring terms.
  - Enrolling in courses that will not meet degree requirements
  - Early alert in a required course(s)
  - Not successfully completing required course(s) (D,F,W)
  - Not registered for upcoming semester(s)
  - Change of major or minor
  - Student stops out and then returns

All of these events require re-planning. The occurrence of any of these triggering events should also initiate a “nudge” to students to take action to seek assistance and to potentially re-plan.

To be effective, deployment of the various components of this recommendation will include training and communication with stakeholders as necessary, including students advisors and academic administrators.

Team 1A Recommendations - The following recommendations are designed to address the key issues stated above:

1) The recently implemented Degree Audit (Academic Advisement in SIS) needs to become part of the advising/registration culture.

   - **Background:** Degree audit was rolled out to students and advisors in fall 2015, however much work still remains to integrate it with the advising and registration culture. There are many advantages to having this tool in place; they include: students and advisors will be provided with timely details about degree requirements for each student’s academic degree program(s), an automated process will provide students and advisors with details on how registered classes and upcoming planned registrations will apply toward degree requirements. Additionally a detailed list of classes (if applicable) that a student has taken that are not being applied to their degree program is provided within the degree audit system. The goal is that both students and advisors will use degree audit as a guide for course registration and to help ensure that students are taking the correct courses leading toward on-time graduation.
On-Time Graduation Working Group 1
Team A: Registration/Scheduling - Recommendations

- **Next Steps:** The Registrar’s Office and the University Advising Office will continue to train advisors to use degree audit and will continue to outreach to students to increase awareness of its benefits. Further, the Registrar’s Office and the University Advising Office will help to ensure that the use of the degree audit becomes a key component of advising sessions. It is also this group’s recommendation to replace manual paper-based planning worksheets currently maintained by each department. It needs to be determined the extent to which the degree audit can meet this specific need.

2) **Leverage Degree Audit data to inform course scheduling and to identify students potentially off-track for on-time graduation.**

- **Background:** When looking at a degree audit for an individual student it is relatively easy to know if the student is registered for courses that are fulfilling requirements, which is a key part of advising students toward on-time graduation. Evaluating a large number of students, however, is a laborious and tedious task. This problem is magnified by the number of times that students change their registration. As a result, a data driven progression towards graduation alert system is needed to flag students who may be off track and, consequently, inform advisors so that action can be taken. Now that degree audit is fully implemented we need to leverage data from the audit in support of this graduation alert system. We also need to be able to leverage degree audit data to provide colleges and departments with real-time information regarding the courses needed by students to complete degree requirements to help build and update class schedules. For example, we need to identify students that have registered for courses that are not going to satisfy any requirements on the audit; identify students in a specific major and year that have not completed key required courses; identify students in a specific year that have not completed various aspects of general education requirements. Unfortunately, our SIS does not provide any pre-defined ways to do this.

- **Next Steps:** Due to its complexity, at this point, we do not fully understand the range of data services that degree audit’s data model will enable us to provide. Time and effort will need to be invested in this aspect of the project. It is recommended that we consider outside consulting resources to fast-track this initiative. We have requested funds to engage a degree audit consultant to help us build the required reporting and diagnostics mechanisms and alerts to leverage degree audit data. ($50,000 one-time funds)

3) **Annual Registration:** Establish an annual registration process permitting and encouraging students to register for summer, fall and spring semesters in advance, at the same time.

- **Background:** A number of institutions have implemented multi-term or annual registration as a way to improve graduation rates and support student success. The Educational Advisory Board (EAB) has identified this as an emerging strategy and we also believe that it has the potential to be a key aspect of our on-time graduation strategy. The advantages of offering annual registration include:
  o Prompts academic units to create a set class schedule for the academic year, which will help students understand when prerequisite and follow-up courses will be offered
  o Provides students the ability to secure classes for the academic year in advance and affords them the opportunity to plan ahead to stay on track for graduation
  o Provides enrollment and waitlist projections to academic units much earlier and allows academic units more time understand the real demand for classes and to respond to student needs and also to review and possibly accommodate student class “wants”
  o Extends the length of time that the university has to engage with students, through academic advising, about their enrollment plans and progression toward on-time graduation
On-Time Graduation Working Group 1
Team A: Registration/Scheduling - Recommendations

- While the first cycle in the transition to annual registration may pose challenges, once complete, multi-term registration also has the potential to reduce the amount of time spent on scheduling and revising class schedules

- **Next steps:** It is recommended that a cross-functional team be charged to develop a plan for the implementation of this initiative. Successfully implementing annual registration will require comprehensive planning, coordination and communication. This cross-functional team should have representation from the following: Department Chairs, Scheduling Officers, Advisors, Registrar’s Office, University Advising Office, Financial Aid and Scholarships, and Student Financial Services. The team must consider the following basic guidelines:

  - There is an initial additional workload associated with building a full academic year class schedule, the process would be initiated earlier and additional time would be built into each phase.
  - Some unanticipated changes to the schedule for any term are inevitable; departments would be expected to develop schedules as close as possible to the anticipated final schedules for each term. Addition classes would be permitted at any time, but deletions/changes to meeting day or time after the beginning of enrollment would be permitted only under limited circumstances, and once all other options for retaining the original schedule had been exhausted. Room changes would continue to be dynamic.
  - The enrollment period may begin early in the year. Enrollment appointments would continue to be utilized to prioritize student enrollment, but there will likely be additional time between succeeding year-level appointments. Open enrollment (for visiting and affiliate students) may be pushed out later in the academic year giving degree-seeking students the opportunity to enroll for the full-academic year without the introduction of non-university members.
  - The team will be expected to learn from other institutions that have already implemented this process, include the following:
    - Michigan State University
    - University of Central Florida: http://registrar.ucf.edu/multiple-term-registration
    - South Dakota State: http://www.sdstate.edu/campus/records/multi-term-registration-faq.cfm
    - George Fox University

4) **An online course planning tool should be made available to students and advisors.**

- **Background:** An online course planner will complement both degree audit and annual registration. It will help students and advisors plan additional years at the course level and provide students with individualized and dynamic plans toward on-time graduation. Many institutions with on-time graduation initiatives have implemented course planner tools. We believe that such a tool may be the ultimate answer to eliminating the current decentralized, manual paper-based, planning sheets that most academic departments maintain for students. In addition, the online planner will support our effort to quantify and track student demand for courses past the active registration semesters.

**The key features of such a planner tool are:**

  - Pre-set semester-by-semester on-time graduation plans for all of majors and each catalog year, similar to the current Table 1 reports in the RIT Bulletin
  - Integration with SIS student registration records, to automatically update student plans with the most recent registration and grade activity
On-Time Graduation Working Group 1
Team A: Registration/Scheduling - Recommendations

- Ability for the student to modify and customize a degree plan by moving courses to different semesters, while maintaining pre-requisite rules
- Ability for the advisor to view and edit the plans, approve changes to the plans and communicate with the student about their plans
- Ability for students to “what-if” to see how already completed or planned courses apply to alternate majors
- Ability to extract data from the plans for the purposes of assessing student demand and to identify students who are off-track for on-time graduation

- **Next Steps:** While SIS includes a course planner, after having evaluated it, it was determined that it is deficient and would not meet our requirements. A team of advisors, and Dean’s Delegates, led by members of the Registrar’s Office and the University Advising Office, is defining the requirements for a course planning solution. Based on these requirements a recommendation will be made to purchase a third-party planner tool or to modify the existing SIS Course Planner. Either solution is likely to require a significant investment.

At present we have reviewed a third party system called *Smart Planner*, which is a “bolt-on” to our SIS and is integrated with the SIS Student Center. The University of Arizona, Boise State University, NYU and a number of California State Universities use this system. University of Arizona and Boise State have packaged Smart Planner as a part of a comprehensive advising program.

University Arizona - http://advising.arizona.edu/content/smart-planner
Boise State - http://sspa.boisestate.edu/advising/degree-tracker/

In addition, we have begun to evaluate the Degree Planner that has been developed by Hobsons/Starfish, which would be integrated with our Starfish Early Alert system.

http://www.starfishsolutions.com/home/starfish-enterprise-success-platform/starfish-degree-planner/

The review of these alternatives will continue and a formal proposal would be brought forward at the end of fall semester 2016.

5) **Academic Advisors must be provided on-time graduation diagnostic tools to make it feasible for them to identify students potentially off-track for graduation (Graduation Alert System).**

- **Background:** Monitoring on-time graduation relies heavily on information. Flagging students at risk of getting off track necessitates data presented in an easily discernable manner and dynamic systems designed to provide up-to-date and reliable information to advisors. We need to have efficient ways to identify, collect and communicate when students have an event that triggers a need to review the student’s on-time graduation path and advisors need to be provided with tools to access and act on these data. We have identified the following triggering events or statuses that should be considered as a part of the comprehensive on-time graduation tracking system:

  - Pre-entry data to assess whether or not students are at-risk upon entry. (HS GPA, test scores, entering student survey)
  - If students are taking a course or are planning to take a course that does not fulfill degree requirements based on degree audit
  - Students that are enrolled for less than an on-time load of 15+ credits per semester
  - Students with any early alerts
On-Time Graduation Working Group 1
Team A: Registration/Scheduling - Recommendations

- Students not registered for all possible upcoming terms
- Students with D, F, or W
- Students who will be repeating courses. Do they “need” to repeat the course? Has the course been successfully completed? Is it the right time to repeat the course?
- GPA – determine a threshold (term and/or cum) and provide to advisors for outreach
- Students on academic action (probation specifically)

**Next Steps:** This recommendation has been purposely put last on this list because we believe that time will need to be devoted to fully understand the range of systems and data services that may support this effort. There is a possibility that some of this could be integrated with our Starfish Early Alert system, or that we should consider EAB options, or some of this could be homegrown. To understand the information needs, requirements need to be drafted, vetted and documented. This will provide a framework from which to identify potential tools, whether they need to be purchased or developed in house.
On-Time Graduation:
Working Group 1B
APRIL 1, 2016 REPORT

End of year summary report and recommendations from Working Group 1B, charged to look at Policy and Procedure issues related to On-Time Graduation.
Committee Charge & Goals

On-Time Graduation Committee Charge (Summer 2015)

RIT’s Strategic Plan: “Greatness through Difference (2015-2025)” articulates the continuing importance of student success to RIT as it moves into the next decade. The dimensions and objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan place on-time graduation of undergraduate and graduate students as a highly visible priority and campus imperative.

This priority is certainly not unique to RIT. National attention is increasingly focused on the affordability, accessibility and student success outcomes of higher education. The federal government continues to wrestle with ways to make institutions more accountable for demonstrated outcomes. These external forces in combination with RIT’s mission and historical commitment to fostering student success provide the appropriate context for RIT to redouble its efforts and distinguish itself as a leader in the “completion agenda.”

The Student Success Steering Committee is directed to provide leadership for implementation of RIT’s strategic objectives with respect to on-time graduation goals for undergraduates. In particular, the steering committee is asked to provide recommendations for how the following strategic plan objectives should and can be implemented:

Objective 1.7.2: Identify existing and new policies, procedures, practices and conditions that support progress toward on-time degree completion

Objective 1.7.4: Eliminate existing policies, procedures, practices and conditions that impede progress toward on-time graduation (e.g. revision of the “W” policy; investigation of pass/fail option, etc.)

Objective 1.7.5: Incorporate the on-time graduation priority into recruitment and marketing materials

Objective 1.7.1: Students and their advisors will develop comprehensive, multidimensional educational plans designed to ensure that students maximize RIT’s learning resources while also graduating on time

DM IV.2: Publicize and deliver on a guarantee that no student in good standing within 15 credits of graduation will drop out because of insufficient funds for remaining tuition.

DEFINITION OF ON-TIME GRADUATION

On-Time Graduation is defined as degree completion according to the expected years as outlined in the University Bulletin and as registered with New York State Education Department. Four year programs will be completed in four years. Five year programs will be completed in five years.

GRADUATION GOALS

RIT has set the following targets for accomplishing this on-time graduation imperative for bachelor’s degree-seeking students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On-Time Graduation Rate (4/4, 5/5)</th>
<th>63%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150% Program Time Graduation Rate (6/4, 7.5/5)</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be recognized that these completion goals are both bold and aspirational given where RIT’s current graduation average rates stand: Current average on-time graduation rate: 45%
Working Group 1B Vision

To review current University Policies which may, in the current form, hinder on time graduation. If identified, this team will recommend policy changes and/or referrals for full policy review through governance channels. Additionally, this team may offer recommendations for the implementation of policy and/or adjustments to procedures which do not require policy changes but which would enhance on time graduation efforts. It is noted that some policy changes may need to be coordinated in association with other on time graduation initiatives currently under review by other committees.

Policies Identified for Review

- Course Withdrawal
- Leave of Absence & University Withdrawal Policy Alignment
- Probation & Suspension Policies
- Pass/Fail Options for Credit Courses
- Overload Credit Policies

Committee Membership

- Nicole Boulais, Associate Vice President, Student Affairs
- Mohan Kumar, Professor and Chair, Department of Computer Science
- Lynne Mazadoorian, Director, University Advising Office
- Rebecca Roberts, Assistant Dean, College of Health Sciences and Technology
- Verna Hazen, Associate Vice President and Director, Financial Aid & Scholarships
- Belinda Bryce, Director, Arthur O. Eve Higher Education Opportunity Program
- Raja Kushalnagar, Assistant Professor, Information and Computing Studies
- Nicholas Giordano, Student Government President
- Stephen Turner, ACE Fellow
- Megan Fritts, Academic Advisor, B. Thomas Golisano College of Computing and Information Sciences
Course Withdrawal

Policy: Course Withdrawal D.05 IV

Review Team: Lynne Mazadoorian, Belinda Bryce

Topic and Location: RIT Policy Manual D.05 IV

Key issues to course withdrawal in relation to ON TIME GRADUATION:

RIT’s current course withdrawal policy is very liberal and contributes to students not earning sufficient credits to graduate on time. Students must earn a minimum of 30 credits per academic year in order to graduate on time. Based on our research, the number of course withdrawals is significant. Additionally, the number of students who withdraw from at least one course in an academic year and don’t earn 30 or more RIT credits in the same academic year is also significant. (See Appendix A).

- For both the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 academic years, more than 25% of our bachelor degree seeking full time (cohort) students withdrew from at least one credit bearing course.
- Of the students who withdrew from at least one course in the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 academic years, less than 20% earned 30 or more credits in the academic year (fall through summer).
- Over 80% earned 29 or fewer credits at RIT for the academic year.
- Within a term, the majority of students who withdrew did so from only one course (>80%).
- Students who take one course withdrawal a year comprise the majority; however, the majority of these students are still not earning the 30 credits (minimum) necessary for on-time graduation.

Our current process allows students to withdraw from courses without receiving information about the possible impact. We suspect that students are frequently unaware of the impact of their decision to withdraw from one or more courses. A real-time mechanism that provides guidance before the course withdrawal occurs may result in fewer course withdrawals and more students positioning themselves for on-time graduation.

Benchmarking from other colleges/universities:

Course withdrawal policies for all of RIT’s 21 benchmark schools were reviewed are summarized in the following table. Additionally, four EAB papers on course completion rates, guiding student choice, course withdrawal timelines, and insights for the “completion investment” were reviewed. There was a range of deadlines for filing course withdrawals, from early in the term to the last day of the term. The following themes were noted:

- Many schools had late course withdrawal policies and procedures that required approval signatures from an administrator/instructor/advisor.
- Some schools required all students filing a course withdrawal to meet with their advisor/instructor, others required signatures as well.
- A number of schools prohibited students from dropping below 12 credit hours in a semester.
- Purdue University and Lehigh University require instructors to indicate whether the student is passing or failing at the time of the course withdrawal if it occurs after a certain date in semester.
- Gallaudet University does not allow students to withdraw from the same course more than once.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Link</th>
<th>Semester Course Withdrawal Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Mellon University</td>
<td><a href="http://coursecatalog.web.cmu.edu/servicesandoptions/undergraduateacademicregulations/">http://coursecatalog.web.cmu.edu/servicesandoptions/undergraduateacademicregulations/</a></td>
<td>After add/drop, students must see their advisor and submit a Course Withdrawal form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Western Reserve University</td>
<td><a href="http://bulletin.case.edu/undergraduatestudies/policies/">http://bulletin.case.edu/undergraduatestudies/policies/</a></td>
<td>Students in good academic standing may withdraw from courses through SIS before grades are posted provided they remain in at least 12 credit-hours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarkson University</td>
<td><a href="http://www.clarkson.edu/sas/student_records/adddrop.html">http://www.clarkson.edu/sas/student_records/adddrop.html</a></td>
<td>Students may drop or withdraw from a course through the last class day. A &quot;W&quot; will appear on the transcript for all drops which occur between the 5th and 10th weeks of the semester. An &quot;LW&quot; will appear on the transcript for all drops which occur after the 10th week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornell University</td>
<td><a href="http://as.cornell.edu/policies#adding/dropping-classes">http://as.cornell.edu/policies#adding/dropping-classes</a></td>
<td>Drops allowed through the 57th calendar day of the semester. Between the 7th and 12th weeks, students may petition to withdraw from courses, with advisor and dean approvals, if it does not result in fewer than 12 credits. Students must meet with an advising dean to obtain petition forms. No W request after the end of the 12th week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drexel University</td>
<td><a href="http://drexel.edu/drexelcentral/courses/adjustments/course-withdraw/">http://drexel.edu/drexelcentral/courses/adjustments/course-withdraw/</a></td>
<td>Withdrawal period lasts from 15 days after the first day of the semester until the last day of the semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallaudet University</td>
<td><a href="https://www.gallaudet.edu/academic-catalog/registration-and-policies/undergraduate-policies/course-withdrawals.html">https://www.gallaudet.edu/academic-catalog/registration-and-policies/undergraduate-policies/course-withdrawals.html</a></td>
<td>May withdraw from individual courses within the first half of the semester. No withdrawal from a course after the first half of the semester without permission from dean and instructor. May not withdraw from the same course more than once.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois Institute of Technology</td>
<td><a href="http://web.iit.edu/registrar/registration">http://web.iit.edu/registrar/registration</a></td>
<td>Students may withdraw from one or more courses by the withdrawal deadline – approx. 60% point of the term. W/D from all courses is leave of absence or withdrawal from the university.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kettering University</td>
<td><a href="https://my.kettering.edu/academic-s/academic-resources/office-registrar/academic-policies-and-regulations/undergraduate-19">https://my.kettering.edu/academic-s/academic-resources/office-registrar/academic-policies-and-regulations/undergraduate-19</a></td>
<td>Withdrawal requests will be accepted and honored during the course withdrawal period. Students must have form signed by course instructor (and advisor if the student is a freshman or sophomore).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lehigh University</td>
<td><a href="http://catalog.lehigh.edu/undergraduatestudies/guidetoacademicrulesandregulations/coursewithdrawal/">http://catalog.lehigh.edu/undergraduatestudies/guidetoacademicrulesandregulations/coursewithdrawal/</a></td>
<td>After the 11th day and before the end of the 11th week with advisor and instructor permission. After the 11th week and before the end of classes receives a “WP” or “WF” at the discretion of the instructor. A “WF” is considered to be a failing grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York University</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nyu.edu/life/resources-and-services/nyu-studentlink/registration-records-and-graduation/forms-policies-procedures.html">http://www.nyu.edu/life/resources-and-services/nyu-studentlink/registration-records-and-graduation/forms-policies-procedures.html</a></td>
<td>Students can request to withdraw from eligible class(es) using SIS. Must be reviewed and approved by advisor/department before processing. This process is not for dropping all classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeastern University</td>
<td><a href="https://www.northeastern.edu/registrar/courses/cat1516.pdf">https://www.northeastern.edu/registrar/courses/cat1516.pdf</a></td>
<td>Drop through the 3rd week of the semester. Between the 4th week and the last day of classes, course withdrawals are permitted. No financial adjustment is made for courses receiving a W grade.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pace University</td>
<td><a href="http://www.pace.edu/osa/registration-faqs">http://www.pace.edu/osa/registration-faqs</a></td>
<td>May withdraw from a class during the first 8 weeks without special permission, but are required to speak with advisor and/or instructor. During the 9th and 10th weeks, students must have instructor approval to withdraw without academic penalty. After the 10th week, withdrawals are only permitted when there are extenuating personal or medical circumstances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>Website</td>
<td>Policy Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purdue University</td>
<td><a href="https://www.purdue.edu/registrar/currentStudents/students/addDrop">https://www.purdue.edu/registrar/currentStudents/students/addDrop</a> Courses.html</td>
<td>If 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; year, may drop weeks 3 through 9 with 'W' grade. If 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; year or higher, if course is dropped during weeks 3 or 4, then grade of 'W', if dropped during weeks 5 through 9, the instructor must indicate passing or failing at the time, and the appropriate grade of 'W' (passing), 'WF' (failing), or 'WN' (not passing).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPI</td>
<td><a href="http://registrar.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=27">http://registrar.rpi.edu/update.do?artcenterkey=27</a></td>
<td>Students have 8 weeks to drop courses. To drop classes after the published deadline, need instructor's signature (if required); the form must also be approved by either the Advising and Learning Assistance Center (for undergraduates) or the Office of Graduate Education (for graduate students). If approved, a &quot;W&quot; grade is recorded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology</td>
<td><a href="http://www.rose-hulman.edu/offices-and-services/registrar/rules-procedures/drop-add.aspx">http://www.rose-hulman.edu/offices-and-services/registrar/rules-procedures/drop-add.aspx</a></td>
<td>Until the end of the 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week of a term, a student may withdraw from a course. Requires signature of the advisor, instructor, the Dean of Students (or designated representative), and the Registrar (as representative of the Dean of the Faculty), indicating that they have been notified of the change. The grade in the course will automatically be recorded as &quot;W&quot; non-penalty grade. After 8&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week, must have permission from the Admissions and Standings Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevens Institute of Technology</td>
<td><a href="https://www.stevens.edu/about-stevens/university-policy-library/undergraduate-academics/undergraduate-academics-policies-and-procedures/policies-through-d#ChangeEnrollment">https://www.stevens.edu/about-stevens/university-policy-library/undergraduate-academics/undergraduate-academics-policies-and-procedures/policies-through-d#ChangeEnrollment</a></td>
<td>Students may withdraw from a course up to one week before the end of the semester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syracuse University</td>
<td><a href="https://www.syr.edu/registrar/students/registration/reg-acadwd.html">https://www.syr.edu/registrar/students/registration/reg-acadwd.html</a></td>
<td>After the Academic Drop deadline, students may withdraw from classes by filing a petition and obtaining required signatures. Generally, only the dean's office signature is required, but individual school/college requirements may vary. Withdrawal deadline approx. week 12.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University at Buffalo</td>
<td><a href="http://registrar.buffalo.edu/registration/howtoregister/drop-add-resign.php">http://registrar.buffalo.edu/registration/howtoregister/drop-add-resign.php</a></td>
<td>From the 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; day of classes until the end of the 11&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week of classes, may resign from one or more classes. The result of this action is an “R” grade as neutral indicator of the action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University</td>
<td><a href="http://www.registrar.vt.edu/resignation_withdrawal/">http://www.registrar.vt.edu/resignation_withdrawal/</a></td>
<td>Policy unclear; contact VTU for clarification but did not hear back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worcester Polytechnic Institute</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wpi.edu/offices/registrar/course-change.html">http://www.wpi.edu/offices/registrar/course-change.html</a></td>
<td>Undergraduate add/drop may occur through the 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; day of the term, not including weekends. On days 6-10 of the term, add/drops are permitted with instructor approval. No add/drops are allowed after day 10. Graduate add/drop without penalty may occur prior to the 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; meeting of the course. A late fee will be charged for changes made after the 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; &amp; before the 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; meeting. Course changes after the 4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; course meeting will result in a grade of W (withdrawal) and will be issued until the 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; week of the term. No tuition or fees will be refunded during the withdrawal period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS:

Given the large number of course withdrawals that occur every term, we recommend implementing a course withdrawal request process within SIS. The request process would require a student to review statements about the potential impact of course withdrawals, acknowledge their understanding, and identify the reason for the course withdrawal before submitting their request. This would require a custom build in SIS, and could be modeled after a similar process at NYU. We believe that this would ensure that students are making informed decisions regarding their course withdrawal, and we suspect that some students may choose not to process their request once they read through the impact statements. In order to accomplish this, we recommend that a supplemental group consisting of 2 members of the current Team 1B (Lynne Mazadoorian and Belinda Bryce) work with representatives from the Office of the Registrar, ITS, and the Office of the Senior Associate Provost over the summer to build the mechanism to provide information on the multiple implications of course withdrawal.

After implementing this new process, we also recommend this group with Academic Senate to re-evaluate the course withdrawal policy which is relatively permissive and counter to on-time efforts. We recommend the following limitations be considered for implementation:

- Prohibiting full-time students from dropping below 12 credit hour without departmental approval
- Prohibiting students from withdrawing from the same course more than once
- Placing a maximum credit withdrawal limit for a student’s undergraduate career (4-6 credit bearing courses)
  - Refer to Texas state university system’s six drop rule, where students starting as a first time undergrad at a Texas institution cannot drop more than six courses during their entire college career.
Leave of Absence & University Withdrawal

Policy: Leave of Absence & University Withdrawal

Review Team: Megan Fritts and Nicholas Giordano

Topic and Location: RIT Policy Manual D02.1  https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d021

Key issues for consideration as specifically relevant to ON TIME GRADUATION:

- Is there a clear date that a student must say they are coming back to RIT from a LOA, before they are dematriculated. Thus, then needing to go through admissions and reapplying
- Is there clear information out there for students to understand that a LOA could impact financial aid, which could affect them returning and affording school. (A student has 3 terms LOA until they are dematriculated from RIT. Why are they being dematriculated in their third term, and not in the fourth when they didn’t return?)
- Those taking a leave of absence are obviously taking away from on-time graduation rates

Benchmarking from other colleges/universities:

- Carnegie Mellon*
- Columbia*
  - http://bulletin.columbia.edu/general-studies/undergraduates/academic-policies/leaves-absence-withdrawals/
  - http://registrar.columbia.edu/content/withdrawal
- Cornell
  - http://courses.cornell.edu/content.php?catoid=12&navoid=2089
- Northeastern
  - http://www.northeastern.edu/oir/pdfs/LeaveWithdrawalPolicy.pdf
- RPI*
  - http://studentlife.rpi.edu/student-experience/leaves-and-withdrawals

*Documents were shared to review and see how it could be incorporated into our resources.

In addition to the schools listed above, we also looked at LOA forms and policies from the following schools:

- Case Western Reserve
  - http://bulletin.case.edu/undergraduatestudies/policies/
- Drexel
  - http://drexel.edu/provost/policies/withdraw_from_university/
- University at Buffalo
Possible considerations/options for change that would address concerns specific to ON TIME GRADUATION:

1. If the policy states students can be gone 3 terms, then they should be dematriculated in the 4th term after add/drop.
2. More specific details on dates a student will be dematriculated from RIT, based on LOA vs. non enrollment. This way communication can go to students prior to the dematriculation, and them needing to reapply through admissions.
3. RPI has a wonderful Q/A available to anyone to access on Leave of Absence and University Withdrawals: http://studentlife.rpi.edu/student-experience/leaves-and-withdrawals/leave-absence-faq. RIT should look into creating this for the university as a quick easy reference for students/faculty/staff on campus.
4. Be more transparent on financial aid implications for both students and advisors, to assist in guiding students to the best path. If a student were to lose financial aid due to a leave of absence or owe more money based on a form being filled out incorrectly, it could impact a student’s ability to return to RIT.
5. Writing of the University Withdrawal policy.

RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS:

A University Committee, led by Tina Sturgis and Stephanie Bauschard and joined by Megan Fritts co-chair of this working team, has already begun work to both update the Leave of Absence Policy as well as to address the needs for clarification and alignment between LOA and Withdrawal actions. It is recommended that this committee address any items in its current charge as well as the recommendations outlined in this report.
Probation & Suspension

Policy: D05.1 Academic Actions and Recognitions
II Academic Probation and Suspension

Review Team: Rebecca Fletcher Roberts and Dr. Mohan Kumar

Topic and Location (where can the policy be found):
https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d051

Key issues for consideration as specifically relevant to ON TIME GRADUATION:

The key issue we discussed include:

- Student load when they are on probation
- Remedial measures when they are on probation
- Reasons for students going from probation to suspension and
- Impact of probation and suspension on ON-TIME GRADUATION

In order to make meaningful recommendations we would need the following data from preceding years/semesters.

- Number of students suspended after they were on probation
- Number of students completing their degree after being placed on probation
- Number of students completing their degree after being placed on suspension
- Number of students placed on probation after they were suspended

At this time, we are still awaiting data.

Benchmarking from other colleges/universities:

We reviewed the Academic Probation and Suspension Policies for the following peer institutions -

- Carnegie Mellon
- Case Western
- Clarkson University
- Cornell University
- Drexel University
- Lehigh University
- MIT
- Northwestern
- RPI
- Stevens Institute
- Syracuse University
- University at Buffalo
- Virginia Tech
Possible considerations/options for change that would address concerns specific to ON TIME GRADUATION:

Based on the peer institution policy review, we are recommending the following pending further information regarding RIT specific data.

- Limit academic probation students to no more than 15 credit hours during the term of probation.
- In addition, we discussed the importance of a centralized academic intervention for students on academic probation. Interventions should be developed based on individual student needs. However, it is not recommended that we integrate this in the Academic Probation and Suspension Policy.

Potential impact of these changes (be as specific as possible as to how they would remove a barrier, increase timeliness to degree, etc):

- Limiting credits hours during the academic probation term will allow students to focus on a reasonable academic load which should result in positive outcomes for the academic term.
- Encouraging students to utilize academic support resources to further develop skills in areas such as time management, and study skills, as well as utilize tutoring and other academic support services during the probation period will provide students with an appropriate level of support.

RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS:

As the baseline data has not been received/analyzed, we recommend that this item continue to be studied by the working group until further recommendations can be outlined.
Pass/Fail Options for Credit Courses

Policy: Pass/Fail option in credit course investigation.

Review Team: Stephen Turner (ACE Fellow) and Nicole Boulais

Topic and Location (where can the policy be found): Pass/fail type grading is not currently allowed in RIT Grading Policy (https://www.rit.edu/academicaffairs/policiesmanual/d050) for credit bearing courses. It is allowed and used in some non-credit courses such as wellness, YearOne and labs.

Key issues for consideration as specifically relevant to ON TIME GRADUATION: This issue was raised as part of the on time graduation considerations as a possible way to increase flexibility for students related to courses not in their major areas of study. This option might allow a student to be successful in a course at the pass/satisfactory level while focusing on other academic requirements.

Benchmarking from other colleges/universities: A number of other colleges/universities currently have some type of pass/fail option for students, sample policies include:

- Vanderbilt University
- Illinois State University
- University of Michigan
- The College of William and Mary
- Rensselaer
- Carnegie Mellon University
- MIT

Summary (high level) of data analysis completed related to this topic (RIT specific data):

There is no RIT data available on this topic as this practice is not currently allowed.

Possible considerations/options for change that would address concerns specific to ON TIME GRADUATION:

There are potential benefits for students in the pursuit of on-time graduation given the flexibility of potential pass/fail credit course options. Based on benchmarking, the greatest flexibility and overall impact on course completion is achieved within models that have SIGNIFICANT number of course options with pass/fail, such as the MIT model for first year students. More limited models with only non-major and non-general education courses having a pass/fail option, are positive options for students related to course exploration but not aligned with
significant gains toward on-time graduation. As RIT is not currently looking at revamping first year curricular pathways, creating this option may be less beneficial as it relates to the on-time graduation initiative.

RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS:

Given the relatively low potential impact for on-time graduation rates, it is recommended that this item be tabled at this time. However, it may be beneficial to revisit this topic in 2-3 years after other on-time graduation initiatives are underway as its impact may be assessed differently at that time. Additionally, this item may align better with other strategic planning items related to curricular flexibility, innovation, and interdisciplinary work. As such, a copy of this report may be useful for consideration for teams working this area now or in the future OR may be beneficial to an Academic Senate committee for consideration under general policy review.
Overload Credit Policies

Policy: Credit Overload

Review Team: Raja Kushalnagar, Verna Hazen

Policy Location: http://www.rit.edu/fa/sfs/tuition-assessment-policies

Tuition Assessment Policies.

...Degree seeking undergraduate students registered for over 18 credit hours are charged full-time tuition plus the applicable credit-hour rate for each hour over 18....

The Institute reserves the right to change its price and pricing policies without prior notice.

Key issues for consideration as specifically relevant to on time graduation: If we assume that a normal course load is five courses, as the policy stands, an undergraduate student can take six courses without an overload charge only if they are all 3 semester credit hours each. A significant number of courses are 4 semester hours instead of 3. Given that so many of our baccalaureate programs require a student to successfully complete anywhere from 15 credits (120 hours) to 16 (129 hours) credits per semester, there is little to no room to take an additional class without incurring a $1,331 per credit hour fee.

Benchmarking from other colleges/universities:

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute ($48,100)

Undergraduate students who are allowed to take more than 21 credit hours in any term will be charged an additional $2,000 for each credit hour in excess of 21. Overload charges will be based on the student’s registration at the end of the eighth week of classes. No appeals due to late drops will be accepted. Retrieved from http://catalog.rpi.edu/content.php?catoid=14&navoid=328

Boston University ($47,422)

All students taking 12–18 credits (with the exception of certain Metropolitan College students) are charged the basic full-time tuition rate for their school or college of registration. Each credit over the 18 basic credits carries a charge of the standard per-credit rate ($1,482). Seniors who receive authorization from their school may be eligible to take a course overload without additional cost (see individual schools for details). Retrieved from http://www.bu.edu/studentaccountingservices/your-bill/tuition-fees/

Syracuse University ($41,794)

All SU full-time undergraduates are allowed to register for up to 19 credits each semester without incurring additional tuition charges. The per credit charge for 20 or more credits is $1,256.
Clarkson University ($44,630)

Undergraduate students enrolled in 12 to 19 credit hours (inclusive) are designated as full-time students and are charged at the full-time rate. Students exceeding the full-time load of 19 credit hours will be charged at the credit hour rate ($1,457) for each credit hour over 19.
Retrieved from http://www.clarkson.edu/sas/student_accounts/tuitionfees.html

Northeastern University ($44,620)

Undergraduate day tuition is charged on a flat per-term basis which includes the cost of each student’s normal academic curriculum requirements for that term.

Adjustments for course work greater than the prescribed curriculum for the term is calculated at the overload rate. Students taking more than 16 credits will be charged an additional per credit hour rate ($1,394) for each credit hour beyond the prescribed curriculum for that term.

Case Western Reserve University ($44,156)

Any schedule of more than 19 credit-hours requires a dean’s approval. Continuing students may enroll for 20-21 hours in a semester if they have a cumulative grade point average of 3.200 or better. To register for 22 or 23 hours, a minimum grade point average of 3.500 is required. Graduating seniors may be approved for overloads if they need such a schedule in order to graduate at the end of the semester in question.
Retrieved from https://www.case.edu/registrar/registration/how-to/undergraduates/ and http://bulletin.case.edu/undergraduatestudies/policies/

Summary (high level) of data analysis completed related to this topic (RIT specific data):

It is our understanding that the Budget Office conducted a thorough review of the policy and the financial implications of the current overload policy at the time RIT was conversing to a semester credit hour academic calendar. That information should be part of the review.

Possible considerations/options for change that would address concerns specific to ON TIME GRADUATION:

The group recommendation is to change the policy to read: Degree seeking undergraduate students registered for over 19 credit hours are charged full-time tuition plus the applicable credit-hour rate for each hour over 19.

This affects the university’s tuition assessment policy and should be discussed with the Budget Office. The timeline for implementation will be impacted by the evaluation of the budgetary impact of the change.
Potential impact of these changes (be as specific as possible as to how they would remove a barrier, increase timeliness to degree, etc):

Students would be able to enroll in 6 or more courses (including those with 4 semester credit hours) without incurring an overload charge

RECOMMENDATION AND NEXT STEPS:

- The group recommendation is to change the policy to read: Degree seeking undergraduate students registered for over 19 credit hours are charged full-time tuition plus the applicable credit-hour rate for each hour over 19.

- Since the recommendation is a change in the tuition assessment policy, the recommendation should be reviewed by the Budget Office. That office would be able to determine the budgetary impact of the change, which will be important in the decision on how to proceed.
## Summary Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Withdrawal</td>
<td>Referral to XXX for further consideration</td>
<td>Procedural/Technology changes recommended for additional work by Lynne Mazadoorian and Belinda Bryce in partnership with Registrar and College Representatives <em>(Spring/Summer 2016)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Policies changes recommended by review by above group with additional members from Financial Aid &amp; Scholarships and Student Financial Services <em>(AY 2016-2017)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave of Absence &amp; University Withdrawal</td>
<td>Referral to XXX for further consideration</td>
<td>Recommended for merge with committee led by Tina Sturgis and Stephanie Bauschard to address needs identified by both teams. <em>(Spring/Summer 2016)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation &amp; Suspension</td>
<td>Recommended for continued work by On-Time Graduation Working Group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pass/Fail for Credit Courses</td>
<td>Recommended for tabling/future consideration</td>
<td>Recommended to revisit in 2-3 years OR pass along for further review to either Academic Senate OR strategic planning teams looking at broader curricular reform, innovation, and interdisciplinary work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overload Credit Policies</td>
<td>Referral to XXX for further consideration</td>
<td>Recommended for financial review by Budget Office as the next step.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Count of Course Withdrawals & Unique Students with Withdrawals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>Number of Ws Received</th>
<th>Number of Students Who Received at Least One W Grade</th>
<th>Number of bachelor degree seeking full-time (cohort) students enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013-14</td>
<td>2205</td>
<td>1729 (18%)</td>
<td>9670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2013-14</td>
<td>1832</td>
<td>1466 (16%)</td>
<td>9020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014-15</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1574 (16%)</td>
<td>9804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014-15</td>
<td>1771</td>
<td>1422 (16%)</td>
<td>9165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

W Grade Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM</th>
<th>Number of Ws Received</th>
<th>Number of Students Who Received at Least One W Grade</th>
<th>Number of Students Who Received at Least One W Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>One</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013-14</td>
<td>1414</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2013-14</td>
<td>1197</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2014-15</td>
<td>1308</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2014-15</td>
<td>1176</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percent of Students Received at Least One W and who Earned 30 Credits or more

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Number of Students Who Received at Least One W Grade and Earned 30 or More Credits</th>
<th>Number of Students Who Received at Least One W Grade and Earned 29 or Less Credits</th>
<th>Number of Students Who Received at Least One W Grade</th>
<th>Number of bachelor degree seeking full-time (cohort) students enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14</td>
<td>442 (4% of total)</td>
<td>2326 (24% of total)</td>
<td>2768</td>
<td>9824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15</td>
<td>444 (4% of total)</td>
<td>2168 (22% of total)</td>
<td>2612</td>
<td>9952</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:
Data only include bachelor degree seeking full-time undergraduate cohort students.
Courses with zero credit hours are excluded.
Course component types of Activity, Colloquium, Continuance, Co-op, Critique, Equivalency, Independent Study, Internship, Study Abroad, and Thesis are excluded.
Student Affairs courses are excluded.
Graduate level courses are excluded.
Students from International locations are excluded.
Students with leave of absence, discontinued or deceased status were removed from the W grade counts, but were included in enrollment counts.
Rochester Institute of Technology
On-Time Graduation Working Group 1
Team C: Holistic Retention Modeling

Final Report
April 1st 2016

Working Group Members:
Nilay Sapio, Sr. Research Associate, Institutional Research (Chair)
Stephanie Bauschard, Assistant Director, Institute Advising Office
Jodi Boita, Director, Assessment, Research & Tech Services
Kevin Dudarchik, Director, ITS Applications Development
Joan Graham, Assistant Vice President, Institutional Research
Mike Long, Data and Research Analyst, Office of the Registrar
Dave Pecora, IT Manager, ITS Support
Rachel Silvestrini, Associate Professor of Industrial and Systems Engineering, KGCOE
Executive Summary

As part of the Working Group 1, our team was assigned to prepare recommendations related to the strategic plan objective 1.7.2: Identify existing and new policies, procedures, practices and conditions that support progress toward on-time degree completion. Our sub-group (Team C) was specifically charged to examine the possibility of developing a holistic retention modeling process aligned with 2nd and 8th SSSC priorities. In summary, these two priorities indicated the need for:

- Design and implementation of a holistic risk model.
- Predicting persistence/graduation early with a system to identify at-risk students through use of academic, personal, and motivational characteristics.
- Using available swipe/student data.
- Retention modeling on mid-career attrition.
- Redirecting resources and efficiencies better for 1st year at risk students so we can re-allocate toward “Murky Middle” and high performers.
- Using analytics to efficiently examine the details behind how academic achievement relates to retention.

Throughout this year our working group systematically investigated various resolutions to provide the best recommendations for developing an end-to-end solution that identifies at-risk students. We envision that this solution will consist of obtaining relevant data, conducting analytics with sophisticated statistical models and delivering an individualized student success or a risk score that can be utilized for early intervention. To consider all the elements that goes into building such a system, we:

- Examined factors that might contribute to student success (see appendix A).
- Investigated best ways to obtain non-academic data elements through use of surveys (see appendix B).
- Outlined retention solution options and what they can offer to RIT (see appendix C).

After our investigation, we have come to the decision that the most suitable and feasible solution (see figure 1) would entail:

- Expanding our understanding of student success through combining non-academic indicators (collected via a beginning career student survey) with academic indicators.
- Developing models in house to holistically predict student success beyond first year.
- Leveraging already capitalized retention platforms to deliver the results.

Aligned with our solution needs, summary of our specific recommendations that would lead RIT towards utilization of a holistic retention modeling to identify at-risk students and help them maintain on track towards graduation can be seen in figure 1.
Figure 1. Summary of solution needs and specific recommendations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOLUTION NEEDS</th>
<th>RECOMMENDATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expanding our understanding of student success through combination of non-academic (collected via a beginning career student survey) and academic indicators.</td>
<td>• Purchase and administer a comprehensive beginning career survey that provides predictive scores for first year academic success and retention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leverage underlying data in MyCourses to predict student success and retention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Utilize student engagement data in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities to predict student success and retention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Strengthen tracking of student engagement with faculty and staff and use these data to predict student success and retention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue investigating how to utilize big data elements such as swipe data and/or location data for future retention modeling efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing analytics in house to holistically predict student success beyond first year.</td>
<td>• Build additional statistical models to provide predictive scores for academic success and retention beyond first year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create multiple statistical models to accommodate differences in specific groups of students (low performers, murky middle vs. high performers).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluate and periodically update the statistical models to stay up to date with changes in the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leveraging already capitalized retention platforms to deliver the results.</td>
<td>• Enhance existing retention solution (i.e. Starfish) to deliver predictive scores for academic success and retention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop intervention strategies regarding how the analytics results will be utilized and explore necessary resource requirements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations and Next Steps

Holistic Data:

**Purchase and administer a comprehensive beginning career survey that provides predictive scores for first year academic success and retention.**

*Justification:* A comprehensive beginning career student survey is a tool that is administered early in a student’s careers (from orientation to a few weeks after classes start) that measures non-cognitive skills, dispositions, and/or behaviors and delivers predictive indexes of student success and retention. Majority of the available beginning career surveys focus on measuring concepts around academic engagement, social and campus engagement, resiliency and general coping strategies, confidence and self-efficacy, and commitment to institution. Current literature and research supports the fact that non-academic factors play a crucial role in predicting student success. In a meta-analysis, ACT policy report provided a review of 109 studies to examine the relationship between non-academic and academic factors and student retention (Lotkowski, Robbins, and Noeth, 2004). Their analysis indicated that strongest relationship was modeled when academic measures were combined with non-academic factors such as institutional commitment, academic goals, social support and engagement, and self-confidence.

Traditionally only high school and college academic measures (which are only available later in the year) were utilized to identify students who are at risk of dropping out during the first year. However, using academic measures only tells us one side of the story and do not provide a detailed portrait of the problems a student might be facing. In addition, compared to other time points, we lose most of our students (12% on average) during the first year. To decrease this rate and support on-time graduation, we need *early indicators* to successfully predict who is at risk and provide assistance to them.

To alleviate this issue, we are proposing to purchase and administer a beginning career survey that measures attitudinal and non-cognitive topics such as academic engagement, social and campus engagement, resiliency, self-efficacy, commitment to college, and study skills, etc. The survey data will not only improve the power of prediction in our retention models but will also provide detailed information on types of problems a student might be struggling with. With a beginning career survey we can identify these problems early on and potentially mediate the issues before a student might make up their mind regarding leaving RIT. Another benefit of this survey would be to help advisors to have informed conversations with the students. If the advisors can understand the type of problems (academic, social, financial, confidence, or motivational, etc.) a student might have, they can provide more targeted solutions to assure that the student is getting the help they need and stay on-track for graduation.

As part of our process to identify which beginning career survey best meet our need, our working group sent out a request for information (RFI) to 10 survey vendors in early February. Currently we are considering Noel-Levitz’s College Student Inventory and ETS SuccessNavigator Surveys as the strong contestants. Detailed examination of received materials and comparison of the surveys are provided in appendix B.
Resources Needed:
- $23,000 for purchasing a survey tool (See appendix C for cost details).
- Personnel to provide a student list to the survey vendor.
- Personnel to monitor administering of the survey.
- Student Advisor training to understand how to utilize the survey reports.
- [If applicable] ITS assistance in providing current student system data (test scores, HS GPA) to the survey vendor (for predictive scores).

Recommended Next Steps:
- Quickly form an advisory committee to further inspect the selected surveys to make a final decision. If the survey is expected to be administered in fall 2016, then the final decision needs to be made by the end of May 2016.
- Develop guidelines regarding how to administer the survey and select responsible organization who will be responsible to administer the survey by end of June 2016.
- Investigate CSI survey retention predictive scores of 2011 and 2012 and their relationship to actual retention behavior to help decide between selected surveys.
- Engage selected survey vendors in further conversation and request trials or demos.
- Develop formal intervention strategies to use the reports and predictive scores provided by the survey. In the earlier phases of survey implementation, intervention can be done informally via using the survey reports as an information source if the student elects to bring their reports into their meetings with advisors. More information on intervention strategies is provided in the final recommendation on pg. 9.

Leverage underlying data in myCourses to predict student success and retention.

Justification: Learning analytics, which is commonly defined as collection and analysis of data about learners and their learning behavior to improve learning (Long & Siemens, 2011), is also another topic that is gaining traction in Higher Education. Learning related data such as frequencies that a student participates in a class, posts in discussion forums, gives feedback to other students, access the reading materials, etc. can generally be obtained through learning management systems. Various universities that are data-driven and analytics oriented have made use of their learning management systems to understand how the learning analytics can contribute to the student success and retention. Among those are Purdue University with their Course Signals System (Arnold & Pistilli, 2012), Arizona State University with MyASU (Phillips, 2013), and University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) with their Blackboard learning management system (Fritz, 2013).

At RIT we currently use myCourses (i.e. Desire2Learn) as our leaning management system. Although the use of myCourses is not consistent across courses and instructors, when well utilized it contains valuable learning analytics data which could be used to assess academic engagement and potentially predict retention and student success. Utilizing these type of data in a retention modeling comes with its challenges including but not limited to missing and messy data points due to lack of common utilization practices of instructors. However, the rewards can outweigh these challenges if we can explore the power of prediction when learning analytics data elements are utilized in retention and student success modeling. In recognition of this, Desire2Learn (D2L) has developed Insights, which is a data mining and reporting service. We have recently been informed that ILI has arranged for a nine month pilot of D2L’s Insights analytics capabilities beginning in January 2017. This could be a great opportunity for Student Success Steering Committee to engage in conversations regarding how to utilize learning analytics in relation to student success.
Resources Needed:
- Involvement of ITS, ILI, IR and Academic Affairs

Recommended Next Steps:
- Follow up with ILI to develop a plan for investigating the potential use of D2L’s Insights.
- Selected members of Student Success Steering Committee should participate in ILI’s pilot process to understand how RIT can benefit from using data behind myCourses.

Utilize student engagement data in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities to predict student success and retention.

Justification: Extensive literature supports the benefits of college student engagement in co-curricular activities. Relationships have been noted between student involvement in non-classroom experiences and student satisfaction and retention (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Additionally, more recent literature summarizes the role co-curricular activities play in development of skills influential to attaining positive educational and workplace outcomes, such as critical thinking and teamwork (Nicoli, 2011). Greatness Through Difference, RIT’s 2015-2025 Strategic Plan, calls for the development of T-shaped graduates who possess boundary crossing skills, which are introduced, practiced, and demonstrated through experiential learning opportunities in and outside of the classroom. While there are many complexities to collection of a comprehensive engagement data set, tracking engagement in activities, organizations, and events provided by the University is important to our ability to understand and promote the experiences identified as influential to student success outcomes. We currently are investigating the viability of more comprehensively understanding student engagement patterns and pathways but do not have a strong co-curricular involvement data set. Data sets including student organization and team rosters, event attendance, and leadership roles would be critical to identifying students who have made connections to campus activities and those who have not.

Resources Needed:
- Technology - Multiple groups are currently investigating the requirements and potential solutions associated with tracking and utilization of data related to co-curricular and experiential learning engagement, including the T-Shape Tiger Team and The Division of Student Affairs.
- Human Resources - There are considerations of human resources including time spent on policies, training, management of equipment and technology, data manipulation, and reporting.

Recommended Next Steps:
- Sharing information among different teams to develop an understanding of the outcomes of investigations by the teams looking into solutions for engagement tracking.

Strengthen tracking of student engagement with faculty and staff and use these data to predict student success and retention.

Justification: Research has indicated that student interactions with instructors and advisors increases student satisfaction and student efforts in educationally purposeful activities (Kuh & Hu, 2001) as well as contribute to a student’s desire to stay at college (Tinto, 1993; Chang, 2005). Exploration of the functionality in Hobsons’ Starfish Platform, which RIT currently has a contract with, to see what meeting and/or student contact information can be recorded and reported on could be a valuable piece
to the predictive model. A basic place to start would be to count the number of meeting a student has in a term with any or all of the following: Primary Academic Advisor, NTID Counselor/Advisor, Faculty Advisor, HEOP Counselor, and other assigned support advisors.

**Resources Needed:**
- University Advising Office involvement to obtain data from Starfish platform
- Training development and delivery to end users
- Technical functionality either from Starfish or other system

**Recommended Next Steps:**
- Explore capabilities of Starfish CONNECT
  - Build appropriate features to capture interactions in CONNECT
  - Set expectations for data entry so data collection is accurate and consistent
- Explore other data sources that might currently exist on campus
  - Build any needed input or export functionality to capture interactions
  - Set expectations for data entry so data collection is accurate and consistent

Continue investigating how to utilize big data elements such as swipe data, behavioral data and/or location data for future retention modeling efforts.

**Justification:** Our working group understands that currently using big data elements to predict student success has various challenges including but not limited to the ethical predicaments that we might have to face. However, we still hope that RIT will not abandon the pursuit to explore how these unconventional data points can be better used to serve our population in the future. With the changes in technology that will make data more accessible and potentially increased positive attitude towards using data for providing better services, future holds great opportunities to explore the role of big data in retention modeling. Examples of utilizing swipe data to track student engagement (e.g. Montana State University), card transactions data to understand students’ social network (e.g. University of Arizona), mobile app data to collect behavioral information (e.g. University of Kentucky), or purchase transactions to explain campus engagement (e.g. University of Arizona) are already surfacing in Higher Education settings. While the discussions related to challenges and ethical considerations still remain in question, other institutions are pioneering in experimenting with big data use in improving student retention. To keep up-to-date with data-driven strategies in improving student retention, RIT should pay attention to future developments around big data use and should proactively seek to explore opportunities. To achieve this goal, we recommend continuing investigation around how to utilize swipe data/behavioral data (i.e. dining habits, exercise habits, etc.) location data (i.e. library use, on/off campus status, etc.) and transactional data (i.e. book purchasing, admission website activity, etc.) in a systematic way. Exploring how these data might relate to retention behavior could serve as its evidentiary value and can potentially alleviate some of the concerns on campus.

**Resources Needed:**
- ITS involvement to obtain and store data.
- Additional personnel (i.e. analysts and data scientists) to conduct analyses.

**Recommended Next Steps:**
- Hiring/re-assignment of personnel with data analytics experience.
- Creation of a new sub-charge and a data analysis group to explore the potential use of big data elements in predicting student retention.
Analytics:

**Build additional statistical models to provide predictive scores for academic success and retention beyond first year.**

*Justification:* Even though modeling for first year retention is very important to detect students at risk and intervene early, by itself it may not be enough to provide strong prediction for retention behavior after second and third years. Therefore, additional models should be developed to predict retention behavior and academic success probability after the first year of a student’s career. The group of students who come back after their first year are generally overlooked and not considered under high risk of attrition. However, at RIT on average we lose additional 13% of our students between beginning of their second year and at the end of their 3rd year. This group of students, part of whom are often labeled as “Murky Middle” (a term coined by EAB for students with 2.0 to 3.0 GPA) does not get the attention that they need due to limited resources. Developing additional statistical models to predict which of these students are more likely to drop out could help with allocating resources to the most in need students. The increased efforts in Higher Education field to identify issues and provide targeted solutions to murky middle students can also be seen in EAB’s Student Success Collaborative initiative.

*Resources Needed:*
- ITS involvement to obtain and store data (See appendix C for cost details).
- Additional personnel (i.e. analysts and data scientists) to conduct analyses (See appendix C for cost details).
- Software platform to conduct the statistical modeling (See appendix C for details).

*Recommended Next Steps:*
- Hiring/re-assignment of personnel with data analytics experience.
- Forming an Analytics Action Team that can structure and lead the analytics effort related to student success.
- Conducting a data exploration phase to evaluate the importance of data elements in predicting retention and to evaluate different modeling techniques.

**Create multiple statistical models to accommodate differences in specific groups of students (low performers, murky middle vs. high performers).**

*Justification:* Our goal with creating predictive models is partially to explore and understand the underlying causes that drives students to leave RIT. Factors that can explain why some students leave are shown to be different for students with different academic achievement levels. At RIT, two thirds of students who leave within the first three years have shown to have a GPA of 2.0 or above (RIT Registrars Brief, April 2015). This group with GPA above 2.0 is especially vulnerable after the 1st year. The factors that influence these students’ retention behavior are more likely to be different from those with lower academic achievement or even very high academic achievement. To account for the differences among these groups, our committee recommends to develop multiple statistical models with potentially different factors are predictors.

*Resources Needed:*
- Same resources listed above for analytics needs can be also utilized for this effort.
**Recommended Next Steps:**

- During the data exploration phase, account for the variances in groups with different academic achievement levels and test the hypothesis that retention behavior for these groups are predicted by different factors.

**Evaluate and periodically update the statistical models to stay up to date with changes in the environment.**

*Justification:* The initial phases of developing and implementing predictive analytics might require the majority of the resources. For the first a few years of its life cycle, a newly developed model should be reinforced and updated with additional data to get better results. During this early phases regular monitoring of the models’ performance is important to build confidence. In addition, maintaining an evaluative system beyond first a few years to make sure the model prediction is functioning as expected and to update the models as needed is also crucial. As everything around us, including technology and human nature, is changing rapidly, developing predictive models that do not evolve would cause us to become stagnant in understanding the current issues that leads students to dropping out. This could result in poor decision making and the value added to the organization by having predictive models would be reduced.

**Resources Needed:**

- Maintaining a Data Scientist position to conduct analyses after the completion of the initial model building (See appendix C for cost details).

**Recommended Next Steps:**

- Planning and creation of a predictive model updating and evaluating process to identify when and how the models should be fine-tuned or fully rebuilt.

**Delivery of Results:**

**Enhance existing retention solution (i.e. Starfish) to deliver predictive scores for academic success and retention.**

*Justification:* Identifying key factors, and developing predictive models to produce indexes similar to success or risks scores would only be meaningful and valuable if we can deliver this information to necessary parties in a most robust way possible. In this case, we envision predictive scores can be utilized by advisors to understand the problems areas that a student might be facing and provide targeted assistance or intervention. RIT currently have platforms in place to deliver such information to advisors. Therefore, building or purchasing a new platform may not be a feasible option. University Advising Office currently use Starfish, a retention solution product. Despite the non-robust interface to deliver predictive scores, using this platform has some benefits such as end-user’s familiarity with the product, and integration option with survey results. Although this product may provide limited options in how to present predictive scores efficiently, we recommend that further investigation of this possibility should be conducted. If utilizing Starfish to deliver predictive scores fails, then other available alternatives (e.g. Students Information System platforms) can be considered to deliver the results.

**Resources Needed:**
• ITS and University Advising involvement in investigating Starfish as delivery platform.
• ITS, members of Analytics Action Team, and University Advising involvement to configure the current retention system to display and share predictive scores with advisors.
• ITS, members of Analytics Action Team, and University Advising involvement to enhance current alerts in addition to predictive score representation.

Recommended Next Steps:
• Investigation of how to deliver predictive scores using Starfish needs to be conducted. If the investigation indicates negative results, additional inquiry needs to take place to identify which existing platform performs as a delivery mechanism for predictive analytics results.
• After the investigation to decide which delivery platform to use, resources (personnel and time) should be allocated to work on configuration of the delivery system.

Develop intervention strategies regarding how the analytics results will be utilized and explore necessary resource requirements.

Justification: Single most important purpose of trying to identify students at-risk by retention modeling is to give RIT the ability to intervene strategically and efficiently before a student leaves the institution. To achieve this goal, a set of formal intervention strategies around how to utilize predictive scores should be established. Currently RIT does not have a practice of utilizing predictive scores in assessing student risk or intervening accordingly. Therefore, establishing strategies around intervention should address fundamental issues regarding following topics:
• Who will provide the intervention?
• What kind of intervention strategies will be specifically used under what circumstances?
• What kind of training will be provided to the intervention providers?
• Who and how will the effectiveness of the intervention be evaluated?
• What kind of resources would we need to develop a robust intervention?
During the first year of retention modeling, implementing a fully developed intervention strategy might be overly ambitious. Therefore, our group recommends that RIT would undertake this effort to develop intervention strategies during the first year of retention modeling (AY 2016-17) with the hopes that the intervention implementation can take place during AY 2017-18. In the absence of a formal intervention plan (during the first year) the predictive scores and additional information provided by the beginning career survey can still be utilized as an information source by the advisors during their conversations with the students.

Resources Needed:
• Personnel to participate in an “Intervention Strategy Group”

Recommended Next Steps:
• Forming an “Intervention Strategy Group” that will work on outlining an intervention plan for students who are identified at risk by the retention models. This group should be formed no later than early fall 2016, after the data exploration results and delivery platform investigation is concluded.
References:


Appendix A – Identifying Risk/Success Factors

We started with developing an extensive list of factors that can contribute to retention or attrition of a student. This list included 94 factors that represent the areas of academic life, admission profile, campus life profile, engagement/commitment to college, social life on campus, and student characteristic. While the list of factors that we identified as potentially important in predicting student success is provided in the next section, a summary of our conversations and recommendations regarding these factors are provided below:

Institutional Data Elements:
Institutional data refers to the information that is available through the operational data management systems that exists on campus. Such systems include SIS, StarRez, Starfish, and Collegiate Link, etc. We believe that obtaining and maintaining these kind of data might require less effort (than survey or big data) and therefore these can be utilized in earlier phases of the modeling.

Co-Curricular Activity: Co-curricular involvement indicate participating in campus organizations that are non-academic but still supplementary for development of various domains. This refers to belonging to an affinity group rather than just attending an event. These groups might include clubs, Greek life organizations, athletic teams, intramural sports, student government, and leadership programs. The research literature and reports of other universities indicate the importance of these activities in student success outcomes (Pascarelli & Terenzini, 2005; Zehner, 2011). A single comprehensive measure of co-curricular activity might be problematic. Therefore the working group recommends to keep the individual activities as separate metrics. For early models we can include indicators for group whose rosters are accurate including a student athletes and members of the Greek community (these data available in SIS). Intramural rosters are accurate and can be utilized for model. Club rosters are currently not accurate – with future improvements to the “Link @ RIT” we can eventually get more accurate data. Therefore, we recommend to break down this factor into its components and include them as student characteristic variables as accurate data becomes available.

Moving into Housing:
If and when a student selected a room and/or a roommate can be identified. An additional indicator could be the difference between the date that the housing contract became available vs the contract submission date. These factors will be indicators of students’ state of mind in terms of commitment to the university. Data exists in StarRez. Our recommendation is to explore the data further to understand how it influences student success.

Pick up ID:
The majority of the students pick up their university ID during orientation. Some may visit RIT for earlier events or because they live locally and pick up their IDs then. The scenario of commuter students who do not pick up their IDs until very late in the semester or not at all needs to be considered. Previous data explorations at RIT indicated a small difference in retention rates between students who pick up IDs early/on-time versus late/never. We recommend to include this factor.

Request a transcript:
The data on whether a student requested a transcript are available. Requesting a transcript during the freshman year could be a good indicator that a student is considering transferring. We recommend to include this as a risk factor. As an improvement to identify students who are considering transferring out, we can include a box in transcript request form that asks student whether he/she is considering to transfer out. If this data could be collected in SIS it could provide an opportunity for an early intervention or help close the loop by understanding why the student is leaving.

Campus visit before Admission Process: This data is available in Admissions’ CRM system and can be broken into further metrics such as number and type of visits. We recommend to include this as a factor in the model. However, more investigation needs to be completed to identify how we can access the data.
**1st Chosen Major:** Data are available in terms of what a student’s first major was and what major he/she has gotten accepted to. It is possible that majority of the students are placed in their first majors at RIT. Our recommendation is to explore the data further to understand how it influences student success.

**Being on Track toward Degree:** We recommend to include the measures of “making progress” and “taking courses that meet requirements” in our holistic risk model as proxies for being on track towards a degree. A preliminary measure can be used at the beginning of a term when outcomes are not available. **Making (Attempting) Progress:** Earning (attempting) the credit hours expected based on the required number of credit hours by major. For example, if a 5 year major requires 132 credit hours for completion, we can calculate ratio of credit hours completed (x/132) in first year and compare that to criteria (20%) to measure progress. **Completing (Taking) Courses that Meet Requirements:** In addition, being on track also depends on whether the student is taking courses that meet the requirements of the program. Program requirements (i.e. courses needed to complete degree) is recorded in SIS for all undergraduate programs for students from Fall2013 and after. Requirements defined as core courses, elective courses and general education courses that are needed for a major. In a given term we can examine if the student is taking courses that fulfills the requirements.

**Attending Orientation:** New Student Orientation attendance records identify students who checked in at the Resource Fair which is the kick-off event for orientation programming. The fair houses booths with information on a variety of campus services and opportunities for students to complete necessary processes such as obtaining their student ID card. Checking-in does not indicate any further engagement in the resource fair or the other events of the multiple days of orientation activities. Level of engagement can differ and attendance data do not indicate whether the student actually is engaged in any orientation activity. Level of engagement in orientation programs is a better measure, however it is currently not available. One recommendation is to develop a Contact Point System to understand level of engagement. Interactions with academic advisors and faculty can be included in the point system. This data point can be more valuable for mid-career students, as freshman generally are forced to make contact regardless. Our recommendation is not to include orientation attendance as a risk factor, but examine the potential ways to discover engagement levels.

**Attending Pre-orientation:** DiscoverIT is a set of pre-orientation programs for students to engage with faculty, students, and staff in a variety of focused areas with different learning outcomes. Participation in pre-orientation activities (3-day) is optional and requires a fee. Data is available through course registration. Identification of which courses count as pre-orientation needs to be investigated. This data might be skewed for socioeconomic status and family engagement (as it requires a fee). Long term influence of attending pre-orientation events on retention can also be interesting. Our recommendation is to explore the data further to understand whether it is skewed or if it influences student success.

**Engagement with Academic Support Center:** The assumption is that engagement with the Academic Support Center (ASC) is preventative to delay of graduation or attrition. ASC provides a range of services and courses to assist and empower students to achieve academic success: support & tutoring, 1:1 & group instruction, course offerings. The easiest to capture is the course offerings (Critical Math, Applied Study Strategies, Insights on Success, Study Strategies Lab, YearOne). The course data can be found in SIS, but we will need to verify the subject code and other identifiers to get the data. YearOne success is already an established indicator. The data on other courses need to be examined. More research needs to be done for other ASC offerings, such as tutoring. Roster information for these offerings exists in different formats and there is currently an effort to digitalize them. Our recommendation is to examine course offerings data for the early stages of risk modeling. Supplemental instruction can be very different than other support & tutoring programs. Lumping them all together might not make sense. Also going through tutor training and being an SI leader can count
as a leadership opportunity. These type of leadership opportunities can have a different effect on high achieving upper class students.

**Big Data Elements:**
Big data elements refer to the unconventional data that might be unstructured and large in nature (e.g., ID swipe data or location check data). Overall consensus is to continue examining how we can utilize these types of data elements in our modeling efforts. Due to the complicated nature of the data, further investigation and experimentation will be required. We plan to review this topic more in our future meetings. So far, the big data elements that we have identified and discussed include lab use, library use, purchase of needed books at Barnes & Noble, dining facility use, admissions website activity, and myCourses participation.

**Survey Data Elements:**
Survey data refers to the information that we hope to gather through a beginning career student survey that can be administered before, during or after the orientation program (within first few weeks of school year). We strongly believe that the addition of these risk factors into a model will improve predictive ability greatly. Below are some of the self-reported data points that we would want to collect from a survey. However, this list does not comprehensively represents all the other factors that we would want a gather data on. Such factors are included but not limited to academic and social engagement, resiliency, motivation to graduate, and academic self-efficacy, etc.

**RIT 1st Choice (Commitment to College):** This data point is not currently available. However, these type of data can be collected through a survey and we will consider this factor when purchasing or creating a survey. Additionally, surveys can collect data on different metrics that can also help identify a student’s commitment levels to RIT.

**Study Habits:** Study habits refer to students’ behaviors, strategies, actions, manners, and attitudes when preparing for class, test or learning new academic content. It is well established in the literature that study habits play an important role in predicting academic performance (Crede & Kuncel, 2008). This information is valuable but will require self-reported data (survey), therefore it could only be utilized in the model in later phases.

**Attitude toward College & Graduation:** This factor refers to the questions of “Is a student motivated to be at college?”, “Does a student believe they will graduate from (this) college?”, or “Does a student value graduation from a college?” These would need to be self-reported and collected. Currently RIT does not have a way to gather this information. Past research indicate the importance of this factor in prediction of student success (Noel, 1985; Terenzini, 1986; Howey, 2008). Therefore during survey selection this factor will play an important role.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Factor/Concept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Being on Track Towards Degree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Class locations, schedule (Day/Time), size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Class Participation/myCourses Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>College Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Poor College Grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Early Alerts Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Fail Year One course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Lab Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Library Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>ASC Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Requested a transcript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Staff and faculty engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Engagement with Academic Advisor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Studying Habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Switching Majors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Undeclared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Low Placement Exam Scores (Math &amp; Writing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Number of Withdrawals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Student Satisfaction of Course/Instructor (Course Evals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Engagement</td>
<td>Campus visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Engagement</td>
<td>Date of deposit (Is earlier correlated with higher persistence?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Engagement</td>
<td>Visit website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Profile</td>
<td># AP credits or college transfer credits (taken while in hs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Profile</td>
<td>Geographic churn/origin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Profile</td>
<td>HS GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Profile</td>
<td>Pre-college clubs, activities, sports, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Profile</td>
<td>Rank in high school/size of class/etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Profile</td>
<td>Rating of high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Profile</td>
<td>Size of High School Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission Profile</td>
<td>Test Scores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Student orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Attend Pre-Orientaton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Barnes &amp; Noble textbook or other purchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Co-curricular involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Commute distance (Commuter/On Campus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Dining habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Exercise habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Move into housing (regular/early)</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Move into housing (regular/early)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Move into housing (regular/early)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Pick up ID (when?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Residence hall profile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Residence Hall Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Roommate Relationship/Compatibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Sleeping Habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Student Conduct Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Student Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Student Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Life Profile</td>
<td>Vending Machine Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement/Attitude/Commitment</td>
<td>1st chosen major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement/Attitude/Commitment</td>
<td>Attitude towards college &amp; graduation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement/Attitude/Commitment</td>
<td>BCSSE data (future?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement/Attitude/Commitment</td>
<td>Engagement Levels (NSSE)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement/Attitude/Commitment</td>
<td>Motivation to be at college (CSI survey)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement/Attitude/Commitment</td>
<td>RIT (not) 1st Choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement/Attitude/Commitment</td>
<td>Student Affairs survey data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Conditions</td>
<td>Stress (financial, social, academic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Conditions</td>
<td>Weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Attributes</td>
<td>Home climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Attributes</td>
<td>Number of siblings currently in college, or recently graduated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Attributes</td>
<td>Parent involvement, contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Attributes</td>
<td>Parents' Marital Status (Single Parent, Divorced, re-married, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Attributes</td>
<td>Financial Readiness (FASFA, Job) Parents’ experience with financial aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Life @ Campus</td>
<td>General location (on campus – where? Off campus – how often?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Have a car or not</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Social activities, attending campus events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Life @ Campus</td>
<td>Social Networking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>1 or 2 working parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>Amount of financial aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>Education of parents (high-school, some college, college degree, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>Family Income or income class (lower, middle, upper, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>Financial Need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>Financial unmet need</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>Parents’ existing debt, including student debt such as PLUS loans for other children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>Pell eligibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>AALANA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>Distance from Home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>Employment (Working more than 20 hrs - How often? Where? What?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>English Proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>First Gen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>Grit/Resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>Honor students, scholarship, awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>In/Out of State</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>Native Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Characteristics</td>
<td>Health/Mental health concerns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B – Beginning Career Survey Investigation

During our investigation of beginning career student surveys we have accomplished following tasks:
- Identifying the requirements
- Identifying potential survey vendors (table 1)
- Developing and Request for Information (in collaboration with the Procurement Department)
- Reviewing and evaluating materials submitted by the survey vendors
- Outlining positives and negatives of surveys

Our group developed a requirements document that listed the criteria we were looking for in a survey under five categories: Content/Areas of Measurement, Administration, Structural & Functional Considerations, Cost, and Support, Training & Implementation Resources. Each category included standards that were important in developing a process for collecting non-academic data and utilizing these data for a holistic retention modeling. A list of potential surveys were obtained through previous knowledge, review of the current market, and inquiring list serves. The request for information (RFI) document that included our listed criteria was sent to the 10 beginning career survey providers that our investigation resulted in.

Table 1. List of surveys investigated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stand-alone Surveys:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Indiana University - BCSSE – Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Ruffalo Noel-Levitz - CSI – College Student Inventory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ACT - (ACT Engage College) SRI – Student Readiness Inventory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. HERI - CIRP Freshman Survey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Old Dominion University - TCI – Transition to College Inventory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Cengage Learning - CSFI 2.0 – College Success Factors Index</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Jenzabar - College Readiness Inventory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ETS – Success Navigator Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surveys as part of a retention solution product:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Beacon – CampusLabs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Mapworks -- SKYFactor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In return, we have received responses from five survey vendors and conducted an additional analysis for one survey, which resulted in total of six surveys. While reviewing the RFI responses our team members with survey experience scored the surveys on a scale of 1 (Do not meet needs/Not satisfied) to 3 (Meet needs/Satisfied). One of the most essential criteria that we were hoping to find in a survey was the variety and the depth of the measured factors. Therefore, we initially examined if the surveys scored high enough on the first category in our requirements document (i.e. Content/Areas of Measurement). Each survey was rated on the extend they provide ability to measure following areas:

- Academic Motivation & Engagement
- Academic Self-Efficacy
- Campus Engagement
- Social Comfort & Engagement
- Educational Commitment
Based on the evaluation of the areas of measurement, top three surveys were (Averaging 4 members’ responses):

1- Beacon Campus Solutions (23.5 out of 24)
2- Noel- Levitz CSI (22 out of 24)
3- ETS – Success Navigator (21.5 out of 24)

After that, we categorized the surveys based on their similarities in deliverables and identified pros and cons associated with each survey:

**Table 2. Surveys without predictive indexes and reports:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCSSE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score = 16.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Well established and reputable organization</td>
<td>• No strong measures of social and campus engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong on measuring academic engagement, perseverance, preparation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has a question about commitment to graduation and first choice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides recalculated scale scores (avg. after standardization)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reports for advisors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comparison Reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• BCSEE to NSSE combined reports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenzabar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score = 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong on measuring academic engagement, and self-efficacy.</td>
<td>• No comparison group other than national comparison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong on measuring campus and social engagement.</td>
<td>• No delivery platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Has series of questions that measure institutional commitment and valence.</td>
<td>• Reputation of the company unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Measure resilience and other obligations that could interfere with college.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allows custom questions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides composite scores on 7 areas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3. Surveys with predictive indexes and reports**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noel-Levitz CSI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Score = 22</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong measurement of academic, social and general receptivity to help.</td>
<td>• Predictive scores are just based on non-cognitive survey data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Specific recommendations for each student</td>
<td>• Predictive scores only appear in coordinator reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 9 category predictive index.</td>
<td>• 9 category predictive index.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>Integration with Starfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ETS SuccessNavigator                      | - Includes Cognitive (HS GPA and Test Scores) and Non-Cognitive (Survey Items) measures in predictive indexes  
- Detailed Advisor reports  
- Additional information collection (student future plans, or plans to utilize college services)  
- Strong on social, campus, commitment and self-management measures.                                                                 | - 3 category predictive index (Low, Moderate, High)  
- Academic Skills measure actual in-class behavior – might mean later administration of the survey.  
- Not very strong on academic engagement measure but covers it up with additional engagement related questions. |
| Score = 21.5                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Beacon Campus Labs Student Strength Inventory | - Measure areas of academic, social, campus engagement, educational commitment, and resiliency.  
- Provides composite scores in 6 areas and 2 predictive indexes.  
- Additional mid-career student surveys.                                                                                     | - Potential overpromising of what they can deliver.  
- Another retention product is already in use.  
- Reservations with the provider’s assertive sales approach                                                                 |
Appendix C - Why We Need Retention Solution with Predictive Modeling and What Options are Available:

In recent years, many business sectors including Higher Education has started to use analytics for effective and efficient decision making and to provide better services to their customers. In addition to using analytics to improve operational effectiveness, Higher Education field also focused on how to use analytics to help students. Developing and utilizing analytics strategies meant that we can now assess which students are at risk of dropping-out and assist in intervening with targeted solutions before the student leaves. Examples of using analytics to help improve student retention are abundant in Higher Education. However, how it works and what strategies are utilized can be very unique to each institution.

Here are some examples of how other institutions are using analytics to enhance student success and retention:

Case #1 - Example of 3rd Party Modeling Support: University of Arizona
University of Arizona has recently partnered with Civitas Learning, a data analysis company, to take advantage of predictive analytics in improving retention and student success. Through combining data from their student information system (People Soft), learning management system (D2L), and tutor management system (Tutor Track), they are generating predictive models that explain where actions need to be taken. As a result of these predictive analytics, they were able to hone in on at-risk groups that are traditionally overlooked (e.g. female non-resident students with GPA between 2.4 and 3.0).
(Source: https://uaatwork.arizona.edu/qp/using-data-analytics-increase-student-success)

Case #2 - Example of Developing Risk Modeling in-House: Temple University
Temple University used risk based models to identify students at risk and help students in need through their improved advising team. A team of Intuition Research professionals conducted series of statistical modeling and analyses to build the risk models. Their models included institutional data (such as high school performance, academic major, gender, race/ethnicity, financial information, housing, and in-state or out-of-state status) as well as self-reported attitudinal data from a freshman survey (such as commitment and engagement). Their team indicated that engagement, commitment, and connection were all key predictors of their models. The results of their risk modeling were shared with advisors in each college and additional support were provided to enable advisors to better support students. As a result of their improved advising that is enhanced by the risk modeling, Temple University claims that their first year retention rates have increased from 84% to 90% after 6 years.
(Source: http://guidebook.ihep.org/data/chapter/four/)

Case #3 - Example of Utilizing Non-Traditional Data Points: University of Kentucky:
University of Kentucky’s efforts to utilize analytics to improve student retention started in 2012. Team of institutional researchers, business intelligence analysts and data scientists, they developed their own unique models that represent their campus. Through collecting data from a gateway mobile app about student’s behavior and disposition (via mini surveys) and pulling engagement data from their learning management system (Blackboard Learn) they have created alerts systems that help identify students that are at risk. Without making a causal connection between the implemented system and the retention rates, it is important to note that Kentucky’s first year persistence rates have increased 1.3 percentage point in the recent year.

Case #4 - Example of Developing an End-to-End Solution in-House: New York Institute of Technology
New York Institute of Technology has developed a Student At-risk Model (STAR) to generate retention risk scores for first year students. Their end-to-end solution, created by using Microsoft SQL, builds a database, runs models, and provides a front end to users all in one platform. Through data mining techniques the NYIT team selected 25 variables across areas of admissions, registration, placement exams, survey data and financial data. Despite all challenges, their efforts have been valuable for their advisors to provide targeted interventions and help at-risk students early in their career.


Our working group considered a few alternatives as a solution. We have imagined that an ideal solution would provide predictive indexes for success and retention in real-time (i.e. a student’s success score will change immediately as their data is SIS changes). However, a real-time solution is not currently available as a product on the market, and developing one would require immense amount of resources. We have then, more reasonably, considered a solution which provides periodic predictive indexes such as a success score that will stay stable for the first year, but then changes based on selected factors for the second year and third year. We also investigated if any commercially available retention solutions would provide us with modeling across different years. During our initial investigation we have not come across with a retention solution that would model beyond first year. In addition, to model in a holistic sense we have considered many factors that can potentially be used as predictors. However, the retention products that we have examined did not allow addition of other factors outside of what they have pre-packaged. Possibly additional research can be conducted to survey the rest of the retention solutions available. Our preliminary examination only included Beacon Campus Labs, and Hobsons Starfish. Since RIT’s Academic Affairs division has already purchased and used Starfish, our group recommends a hybrid solution where we purchase an external beginning career survey that has ability to integrate with Starfish and ability to provide predictive scores for the 1st year, develop additional models in-house for 2nd and 3rd years, and use Starfish to deliver the result. However, this will require additional investigation in Starfish’s ability to deliver the predictive scores. If Starfish cannot be configured to deliver predictive scores, other existing systems such as those that exists in SIS should be investigated. In following sections, we have outlined a detailed breakdown of required tasks and procedures for the proposed solution and an estimated cost plan for 5 years. Along with this information, a comparison of two types of solutions are provided to explain pros and cons of each strategy.

**Statistical Software Analysis:** In addition to the platform available from Civitas Learning mentioned above, the Team also recommends further consideration of three additional analytic platforms: Rapid Insight, R, and SAS Enterprise Miner. **Rapid Insight, Inc.** provides a two package set that consists of a data preparation part with an interface to R and an analytics part that does predictive modeling using linear and logistic regression with decision tree capabilities under development. The initial cost for both parts is $8000 with and a $3500 annual maintenance fee. Although statistical capabilities are limited, it is most likely can be used with limited statistical or data management knowledge. The **R Project for Statistical Computing** is a powerful free, open-source platform and has many add-on routines capable of often-used statistical calculations. Tutorials, documentation, and even classes exist from universities including RIT and third party vendors. The **SAS Institute Inc.** provides a many platforms from basic programming language to a powerful and comprehensive suite for predictive modeling called **Enterprise Miner.** Tutorials, documentation, and classes are available directly from SAS and classes from RIT. These packages are available at RIT through the university wide license.
Schematic Representation of Data Flow for the Proposed Solution:

**Data Exploration Phase**

- **Data A**
- **Data B**
- **Data C**
- **Data D**
- **Data E**

**Beginning Career Student Survey**

**Institutional Data** (Test scores, ITS & Admission)

**ITS & University**

**Group**

**Raw Data**

**Predictive Scores Reports**

**DATA**

**Delivery Platform (E.g. Starfish)**

**Database**

**Predictive Scores (2nd & 3rd Years)**

**Alerts**

**System Configuration**

**Other Institutional Data** (Identified as essential by data exploration)

**ITS Data Integration**

**ITS Analytics Team**

**Purchase a Comprehensive Survey + Build In-house Modeling + Use Existing Platforms (e.g. Starfish) to Deliver**

**Survey Examples:**
Noel-Levitz – CSI
ETS SuccessNavigator

**Modeling:**
- 1st Year: Use Survey Predictive Scores
- 2nd & 3rd Years: Build in-House

**Delivery Platform:**
Starfish
RECOMMENDED SOLUTION
Purchase a Comprehensive Survey + Build In-house Modeling + Use Existing Platforms (e.g. Starfish) to Deliver

Survey Examples:
Noel-Levitz – CSI
ETS SuccessNavigator

Modeling:
• 1st term: Use Survey Predictive Scores
• 1 year: Use Survey Predictive Scores
• 2 year: Build in-House

Delivery Platform Examples:
Starfish
SIS Solutions (MyAdvisee /Student Center)

Survey:
• Surveys provide scores that predict first year academic success and retention.
• Surveys provide additional reports and integration with existing retention solution (i.e. Starfish)
• Survey can be administered and the predictive scores will be available as early as fall 2016.

Modeling:
• Flexibility in how we build the models after 1st year.

Retention Platform:
• Academic Affairs already uses Starfish. Therefore, the advising staff are familiar with the product and will not require extensive training.

Modeling:
• Building and maintaining statistical models for after 1 year in house might become resource consuming and require an additional hire.
• Integrating data into the existing retention solution might be resource consuming.

5 Year Cost Estimates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One Time</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2 (+3%)</th>
<th>Year 3 (+3%)</th>
<th>Year 4 (+3%)</th>
<th>Year 5 (+3%)</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>$23,000</td>
<td>$23,690</td>
<td>$24,401</td>
<td>$25,133</td>
<td>$25,887</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provides retention modeling for first year (with limited factors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyst (0.5 FTE +Benefits)</td>
<td>$47,000</td>
<td>$48,410</td>
<td>$49,862</td>
<td>$51,358</td>
<td>$52,899</td>
<td></td>
<td>Especially required for retention modeling after first year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Scientist (0.5 FTE + Benefits)</td>
<td>$67,500</td>
<td>$69,525</td>
<td>$71,611</td>
<td>$73,759</td>
<td>$75,972</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITS (0.25 FTE + Benefits)</td>
<td>$33,750</td>
<td>$34,763</td>
<td>$35,805</td>
<td>$36,880</td>
<td>$37,986</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provides continues support for data integration to Starfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITS Contractor Services</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>$171,250</td>
<td>$176,388</td>
<td>$181,679</td>
<td>$187,130</td>
<td>$192,744</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$321,250</td>
<td>$176,388</td>
<td>$181,679</td>
<td>$187,130</td>
<td>$192,744</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION – not recommended

**Purchase a Full Retention Product with an Integrated Survey**

**Full Retention Product Example:**
Beacon Campus Labs  
MapWorks

**Retention Platform:**
- Provides visually appealing and easy to digest information
- Different modules of CampusLabs are already integrated and in use at RIT by Student Affairs.

**Modeling:**
- We would have to trust their modeling strategies.
- May not allow us to integrate all data elements that we want (e.g. myCourses data)
- Might still require us to conduct our own modeling.

**Retention Platform:**
- Requires additional RFI and researching process. We won’t be able to recommend a product by May.
- Implementation may be delayed until after 2 years (due to both the need for additional research and RIT’s existing contract with Starfish).
- May require additional training for end-users.

### 5 Year Cost Estimates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>One Time</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2 (+3%)</th>
<th>Year 3 (+3%)</th>
<th>Year 4 (+3%)</th>
<th>Year 5 (+3%)</th>
<th>Notes:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product</strong></td>
<td>$6750</td>
<td>$45000</td>
<td>$46,350</td>
<td>$47,741</td>
<td>$49,173</td>
<td>$50,648</td>
<td>Provides retention modeling for first year (with limited factors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Analyst</strong> (0.5 FTE + Benefits)</td>
<td>$47,000</td>
<td>$48,410</td>
<td>$49,862</td>
<td>$51,358</td>
<td>$52,899</td>
<td></td>
<td>Especially required for retention modeling after first year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Scientist</strong> (0.5 FTE + Benefits)</td>
<td>$67,500</td>
<td>$69,525</td>
<td>$71,611</td>
<td>$73,759</td>
<td>$75,972</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ITS</strong> (0.25 FTE + Benefits)</td>
<td>$33,750</td>
<td>$34,763</td>
<td>$35,805</td>
<td>$36,880</td>
<td>$37,986</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provides continues support for data integration to Starfish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ITS Contractor Services</strong></td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>$193,250</td>
<td>$199,048</td>
<td>$205,019</td>
<td>$211,170</td>
<td>$217,505</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: $293,250 | $199,048 | $205,019 | $211,170 | $217,505
On-time Graduation Task Force
Group #2 Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ed Lincoln</td>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>Jenny LaFlam</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Finnerty</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Shawna Lusk</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Auburn</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td>Ellen Shady</td>
<td>Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chelsea Petree</td>
<td>Member</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overview
Group #2’s was charged with developing a set of recommendations designed to ‘embed’ on-time graduation into the Culture at RIT. More specifically, the group was asked to examine the following difference maker and objective from the strategic plan, “Greatness Through Difference:"

**Objective 1.7.5: Incorporate the on-time graduation priority into recruitment and marketing materials**

**DM IV.2: Publicize and deliver on a guarantee that no student in good standing within 15 credits of graduation will drop out because of insufficient funds for remaining tuition.**

**Objective 1.7.5: Incorporate the on-time graduation priority into recruitment and marketing materials**

Initial observation: Marketing to prospective students and families cannot occur until RIT’s commitment to on-time graduation is a more tangible and visible element of the university’s culture. That said, once the commitment is more tangible, incorporating the information into recruitment and marketing materials (print and web) will be relatively easy and inexpensive.

**Recommendation #1. Develop a robust and comprehensive web page devoted to RIT’s commitment to on-time graduation.**

Rationale: Assembling all of the information and tools related to on-time graduation in a single web page will facilitate the campus’ understanding and implementation of RIT’s commitment to on-time graduation. A preliminary theme and outline for the site is found in Appendix 1.

**Recommendation #2. Incorporate the on-time graduation priority into all recruitment and marketing materials.**

Rationale: Once the campus has achieved demonstrable progress in achieving its on-time graduation goals, general information and metrics can be incorporated into graduate and undergraduate recruitment and marketing materials (print and web).
**Recommendation #3. Develop an appeal process (analogous to Semester Conversion Impact Claim process) for reviewing cases where students nearing graduation are experiencing financial difficulty.**

Rationale: Before additional financial assistance can be provided, it must be determined that a student a) is in good academic standing, b) done their part to maintain appropriate degree-completion progress (i.e., met periodically with an advisor, enrolled on-time, maintained an appropriate hours attempted/hours earned ratio, etc.) and c) is aid eligible.

**Recommendation #4. Identify sources of incremental funding to support students who demonstrate financial difficulty via the appeal process referred to in Recommendation #1.**

Rationale: Preliminary estimates indicate that, assuming no significant changes in federal or state aid policies and/or appropriations, supporting these students will require an additional $300,000 to $400,000 per year. One source of incremental funding is identified in the university’s campaign.
LEARN. GROW. GRADUATE.
RIT’S COMMITMENT TO ON-TIME GRADUATION

1) An institutional commitment expressed by the President and Provost

_Lea[n. Grow. Graduate._

_Three simple words on their own. Yet, working together, these words are an imperative to ensure student success at RIT. The RIT community is committed to on-time graduation. We’ve made this a priority in RIT’s 2025 Strategic Plan — “Greatness Through Difference” — in our efforts to foster a culture of student success. Both the university and the student share a responsibility in this effort. We have established several key advising and support systems along the way to help students navigate a successful path. This is our pledge that RIT students will learn, grow and graduate on time._

2) A ‘compact’ that included stated responsibilities for RIT and for students in the comprehensive commitment to on-time graduation

a) Student responsibilities
   i) Follow the curriculum of their declared major
   ii) Meet with an academic advisor a minimum of once per academic year
   iii) Complete the enrollment process in a timely manner [Note: Specific details of this will need to be developed at a later date.]
   iv) Monitor academic progress using degree audit
   v) Earn a minimum of 30 to 32* credits per academic year (*varies by major – see table below)
   vi) Maintain good academic and financial standing at RIT [Note: There will be links to the appropriate definition of ‘academic standing’ and ‘financial standing.’]

b) RIT responsibilities
   i) Provide academic advising each semester
   ii) Offer the required sections and seat capacity as required in curriculum plans
   iii) Monitor student’s academic progress each year and conduct outreach regarding progress
   iv) Suggest interventions and strategies when necessary for students to stay on track to on-time graduation

3) Rationale for the importance of on-time graduation

a) Costs of additional time-to-degree
b) Expiration of financial aid eligibility
c) Delay in entering career or graduate school

4) The difference between “full-time” and “on-time”

a) Full-time – Undergraduate students who are registered for 12 or more and graduate students who are registered for 9 or more credit hours are considered to be full-time students. This designation determines a student’s tuition and fee levels and financial aid eligibility. Correspondingly, a part-time student is one who falls below the credit hour thresholds listed above.
b) On-time – Undergraduate and graduate students who are completing the appropriate number and distribution of credit hours each semester in order to graduate in the designated “time-to-degree” for their program. For example, completing a four-year baccalaureate degree program in four years; a five-year baccalaureate degree in five years.

**Important Note:** The number of successfully completed credit hours in order to stay on-time will differ by **academic major**. Baccalaureate degree programs require between 120 and 129 credit hours. Students should, on average, earn between 15 and 18 credit hours per semester. The specific number of credits hours earned per semester will vary by program.

[Will need a similar statement for associate degree and graduate degree programs]

5) A set of key ‘points in time’ when on-time graduation will be an important consideration:

a) Enrollment
b) When grades are posted
c) Last day to withdraw from classes
d) Drop/add period
e) Orientation
f) Enrollment planning and advising meetings
g) Meetings with financial aid counselor

6) Links to RIT sites critical to on-time graduation

a) University Advising Office 
b) SIS/Degree Audit 
c) Student Financial Services
d) Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships 
e) MyCourses 
f) College-based Student Support Services offices 
g) Academic Support Center 
h) Ombuds Office 
i) Parent/Family Programs 
j) Programs of Study web site
ON-TIME GRADUATION TASK FORCE
PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM DESIGN STRATEGIES
March 25, 2016

Final Report


Introduction:
The Program and Curriculum Design Strategies sub-committee of the On-Time Graduation committee has explored numerous avenues of how program and curriculum designs impact student’s on-time graduation.

The four tables below look at all of the avenues which were discussed by this working group, sources of data used, recommendations, and any budget implications.

Table #1 List of Items Recommended to put Forward
Table #2 Clear Impact on Sub-Committee Group Charge-Needs to be Looked at Further
Table #3 Items Reviewed that did not Impact OTG
Table #4 No Direct Cause and Effect Right Now

Table #1 “List of Items Recommended to put Forward”
Examines the list of items considered, reasons why the committee is “putting forward these items,” and any source of data used in the decision making.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Items Put Forward For Recommendation Numbered by importance</th>
<th>Suggested Recommendations on Items Being Recommended to Move Forward</th>
<th>Source of Data used in Decision Making</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. | Intrusive Advising* | -Advising sessions for each semester  
-More mandatory touch points in junior/senior years  
-Required use of accessing on-line degree audits  
-Increase visibility | Survey results (48% response rate out of 85 advisors) conducted by Lisa Boice on “perception of why students don’t graduate on time” |
| 2. | Co-op | Some students have a difficult time securing a co-op for a variety of reasons, therefore, the committee suggests that:  
-Redefine what counts as co-op  
-Examine the issues that students face in not securing a co-op and identify ways to broaden the interpretation of this important requirement | Survey results( 48% response rate out of 85 advisors) conducted by Lisa Boice on “perception of why students don’t graduate on time” |
| 3. | Internal Transfers | -Clearly articulate internal transfer pathways  
-Touchpoints/checklist for Advisors while working with students who are internally transferring  
-Advocating for additional advising resources for internal transfer students  
-Develop “right brain” “left brain” tracks for undeclared students to ensure math/science course sequencing remains in-tack until students designate a major | Institutional Research-Joan Graham’s report stated “The on-time graduation rates for students who transfer out of their original college are lower on average than students who remain in their original college” |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Items Put Forward For Recommendation Numbered by Importance</th>
<th>Suggested Recommendations on Items Being Recommended to Move Forward</th>
<th>Source of Data used in Decision Making</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>D,F,W Rates</td>
<td>-Suggest Associate Deans provide a common methodology-and</td>
<td>My Analytics Data, Institutional Research Data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Develop a standardized analysis/improvement procedure for course with high D,F, W rates- involve Wallace Center Instructional Designers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 5. | Learning Assistants (Not to be confused with Teaching Assistants) | -Encourage faculty to use Learning Assistants                        | Scott Franklin shared data of how the use of learning/teaching assistants help D,F, and W rates
|     |                                                            |                                                                     | Scott also provided strong evidence/research based strategy that has been successfully implemented at other schools and here at RIT |

*Notes budget implications

**Table #2—“Clear Impact on Sub-committee Charge, but needs to be looked at Further”**

Examines list of things considered (areas explored), sources of data in decision making, and reasons for the committee not moving these items forward.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Items Explored</th>
<th>Reason(s) for not moving item forward</th>
<th>Source of Data used in Decision Making</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Course Sequencing</td>
<td>Other sub-committee looking into this.</td>
<td>Registrar’s Office data, Joe Loffredo visit with committee, and survey conducted by Lisa Boice on “perception of why students don’t graduate on time”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Redistribution of General Education Courses</td>
<td>Other sub-committee looking into this.</td>
<td>Registrar’s Office data, Joe Loffredo visiting with committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Low Enrollment Resources to More High Enrollment Courses</td>
<td>Other sub-committee looking into this.</td>
<td>Registrar’s Office data, Joe Loffredo visiting with committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table #3 “Items Reviewed That Did Not Impact On-time Graduation”**

Examines list of things considered (areas explored), sources of data in decision making, and reasons for the committee not moving these items forward.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Reason(s)</th>
<th>Source of Data used in Decision Making</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Study Abroad</td>
<td>There is no statistically significant impact on study abroad and on-time graduation.</td>
<td>Dr. Michael Long, Data &amp; Research Analyst, Registrar’s Office provided statistical data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Programs Greater than 120 sch</td>
<td>In consultation with Joe Loffredo, Registrar, on the correlation between graduation rates on courses over 120 credit hours after 6 years from entry and found no significant difference.</td>
<td>Registrar’s Office</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table #4 “No Direct Cause and Effect Right Now”
Examines list of things considered (areas explored), sources of data in decision making, and reasons for the committee not moving these items forward. This area is not to be ruled out but does not seem to be a contributor right now.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Reason(s)</th>
<th>Source of Data used in Decision Making</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  | MyCourses          | Recommending a call for additional study (data) of the use of MyCourses by faculty on how this impacts OTG.  
- Recommending increasing use of MyCourses by faculty-some items of which to include in MyCourses:  
- Syllabus, Course outline (schedule)  
- Gradebook updated throughout the term | Multiple sources within the university as well as the On-time Graduation committee as a whole          |
| 2  | Starfish           | Recommending broadening use of Starfish at key points during student experience | Multiple sources within the university as well as the On-time Graduation committee as a whole          |
| 3  | Spatial Visualization | - Explore a common approach across the university to determine the interest and needs of each college for spatial visualization assessment and training. | Statistics from Spatial Visualization report from David Wick  
Evidence/research based retention and graduation strategy that has been successfully implemented at other schools |

Additional Materials Reviewed are as follows:
- Internal Transfers into Academic Plans-Institutional Research Provided
- IHEP Report “Driving Toward Greater Postsecondary Attainment Using Data
- Florida State Report “Practical Steps to Improving Retention and Graduation Rates
- D, F, W, Report-Institutional Research Provided
- Study Abroad Informational Email-Dr. Michael Long
- Spatial Visualization Skills-Dr. Wick