Strategic Retention Master Plan
2005-2011

Presented to:

Dr. Patti Ota
Vice President for Enrollment Management

By the:

Retention Coordinating Group

University of Arizona

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Introduction: What is Retention?

On one level student retention is about numbers – the numbers of incoming first-time, full-time freshmen who make it to their sophomore, junior, and senior year, and the time it takes them to graduate. These numbers are important to know because they allow us to gauge our effectiveness in serving our students and assisting them in reaching their goal of graduation. On another level, student retention is about the moral and ethical commitment that we, the faculty and staff of the University of Arizona, make to every student who enrolls here – a commitment to engage them in the life of the university – the intellectual life including discovery of new knowledge and understanding of existing knowledge; the social life of sports, clubs, friends, activities; and the developmental life, maturation, and self-exploration that accompany the college years.

By every measure, a college graduate has greater potential than a non-graduate – earning potential, life span, quality of life and quality of health. Therefore, we recognize that what happens in the years a student matriculates at the University of Arizona determines in many ways his or her future. We state unequivocally our commitment to facilitate the successful journey of every student who comes here.

The factors that influence persistence and graduation are as varied and multifaceted as the lives of students themselves. Hallberg, Hallberg, and Sauer in their 25 years of work with college enrollment programs, called Student Success Central, have isolated eight factors they have found to be essential to success in college. They are:

- Responsibility vs. control – first year students believe their instructors have more control over their performance, while upper classmen increasingly accept responsibility for their own success. Students perceive themselves as more in control when they are involved.
- Competition – the competitive student, defined as academically prepared and assertive, is more likely to persist to graduation based on his/her commitment to the goal of college competition and his/her commitment to the institution.
- Task Precision – expecting to do well at class projects or tasks is directly related to persistence within the institution.
- Expectations – successful students set their own goals and expectations, seek and discover new and challenging experiences in college, and adopt a relative posture towards knowledge development.
- Wellness – increasing awareness that psychological factors impact student success have led to campaigns to inform students about the detrimental effects of stress, sleeplessness, poor nutrition, depression, and high levels of anxiety.
- Time Management – Planning ahead and determining time constraints in completing assignments is critical to success in college.
- College Involvement – the strong correlation between college involvement and student success is evidenced in residence life, campus jobs, friendships and informal peer interactions, extra-curricular activities, and faculty interaction – these elements of campus life provide important social rewards that become part of a student's generalized evaluation of the costs and benefits of college attendance.

- Family Involvement – encouragement and/or participation of one's family in the college experience is an important factor in success in college.

Student retention is about providing both an academic experience as well as a social and cultural experience that addresses successfully the factors above. It is easier to think about increasing retention by adjusting course scheduling or the timing of financial aid applications than it is by interacting with students personally around issues of time management, expectations, and psychological wellness. However, successful retention efforts must address the whole student, and the whole environment in which the student is negotiating their college experience.

Where Does the UA Stand Nationally?

According to the Consortium for Student Retention and Data Exchange (CSRDE), the University of Arizona is classified as a *selective* institution. The selective category encompasses ACT scores in the range of 22-27, and SAT scores of 1030-1220. The average SAT of incoming freshmen at the U of A is 1098 and the average ACT is 23. The average retention rate of selective institutions for first-time, full-time students to the second year is 77.6% (UA's retention rate is 77%). The five-year graduation rate for selective institutions is 58%; the U of A's five-year rate is 52%.

There are a number of ways to look at how the U of A compares to other institutions, and not surprisingly when a different yardstick is used, a different picture emerges. When comparisons are made to our "aspirational peers," or institutions we aspire to be like, it becomes clear that we still have work to do. Our aspirational peers represent a cohort of 31 schools in the Association of American Universities, selected for distinguished undergraduate and graduate education and research. When compared to these schools, the U of A ranked last in first year retention of first-time freshmen. Similarly, the U of A ranked near the bottom in six-year graduation rates and SAT/ACT scores.

Institutional Mission and Goals

In 1998, a report entitled *The University of Arizona: Student Retention – Toward a Culture of Responsibility* was prepared by the offices of Undergraduate Education and Student Research for the University Enrollment Management Committee. This report outlined programs that had an impact on student retention and called for the development of a campus-wide *culture of responsibility* in which everyone at the University – faculty, staff and students – accepts responsibility for student retention.

The report made 14 recommendations that were reviewed in April 2003 and reported in a paper, *Update on 1998 Student Retention White Paper: Status of Recommendations.* The findings are enumerated below.

Recommendation made in 1998	Status of the initiative in 2003
1. Comprehensive, standardized evaluation of all retention programs	Extend the current limited emphasis on program evaluation
2. Assign each entering freshman a faculty advisor and assess the quality of faculty advising.	Advisor advisee ratio improved from 1:1200 to 1:300; Finish in Four Program improved graduation rates
3. Double the number of both Faculty Fellows and University Partners Advisors.	Faculty Fellows increased from 24 in 1998-99 to 31 in 2002-03; Spring 2002 Dean of Students surveyed students (345) regarding interactions with Faculty Fellows – 52% had talked with a Fellow.
4. Add sufficient residence hall space to meet freshman demand; consider requiring all freshmen to live on campus.	Capacity increased from 4,736 in 1997-98 to 5,583 in 2002-03. Projected future capacity by 2004-05 will be 6,037.
5. Finish Gatekeeping Course Study.	Updated February 2005.
6. Increase preparation of incoming students: SAT of 1150, GPA of 3.50	Current SAT 1100, up from 1090 in 1999; current GPA is 3.28, up from 3.10 in 1999.
7. Increase both merit and need-based student financial aid substantially.	Substantial increases in financial aid have taken place.
8. Expand Early Outreach with feeder schools in low-income areas.	Substantial expansion has taken place. Existing data from H.S. and M.S. participants who attend U of A has not been explored.
9. Expand transition programs with Pima and Maricopa Community Colleges.	22 programs have been enhanced or initiated.
10. Enhance and expand New Start program.	6 aspects of the program have been enhanced.
11. Provide academic tutoring for mathematics, languages, writing skills, and T1 courses, setting as a goal the availability of tutoring for any student from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.	There has been a 78% increase in tutoring hours, as well as 7 additional areas of tutoring that have been developed more fully, but funding has decreased.
12. Complete the Integrated Learning Center (ILC) project.	Completed in 2003.
13. Expand efforts to meet the needs of minority students by enhancing retention-focused activities of colleges and support units.	DMPS has developed retention/tracking programs for MERITS and Student Enrichment Program. The data collected from these programs need to be compiled and presented.
14. Convene "University Conversation on Retention " for spring 1999.	This was not held, however formation of RCG and campus-wide presentations by Noel/Levitz have been held.

Research-Based, College-Based Retention

The retention efforts at the U of A are undergirded by two facts that separate our decision making processes from other smaller institutions with different foci than ours. The first is the availability of considerable existing data relevant to student retention, and the second is the leadership role that the colleges play is establishing policy.

Because the University of Arizona is a Research Institution, with well-established, ongoing mechanisms for gathering, housing, and analyzing data, it was important early on for a foundation of existing data to be brought to bear on the establishment of the retention agenda. Thus, the Retention Analysis Group (RAG) was formed and chaired by Dr. Rick Kroc, Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Research and Operations, and Dr. Gwen Johnson, Director of the Office of Instructional Assessment. This group prioritized a number of initiatives and data gathering projects resulting in the *Summary of Retention and Graduation Rate Data* (See Appendix). This document along with other data provided by RAG has continually informed the work of the Retention Coordinating Group. In January, 2005, two additional reports were compiled: *Gatekeeping Course Study* and *Performance of Transfer Students in Upper Division Courses*. These reports will inform the work of the Goal Groups in operationalizing Action Plans relevant to these topics.

A second aspect of the retention plan at the University of Arizona results from the strong leadership role of the individual colleges and their willingness, ability, and proclivity to bring university-wide initiatives into the colleges and tailor them to the unique needs of the students in that college. Once the Retention Strategic Plan is approved, it will be taken to each college and "customized." A College Retention Development Specialist has been hired to work closely with each college in providing to them retention and graduation data on their students, creating a college-specific retention plan, and studying their departments, programs, and course sequencing for improvement in retention and graduation rates.

Organizational Structure For Retention Leadership

Retention Coordinating Group and Retention Working Group

Early in 2004, a group of 45 individuals was brought together to form the Retention Coordinating Group. Members of this group represent key campus constituencies. This group created the vision and implemented the policy for the retention effort at the U of A. Within the larger RCG, a smaller group was formed and named the Retention Working Group. This group accomplished much of the leg-work for the larger group by engaging in a number of research projects and pilots, resulting in the Intervention Options document (See Appendix for RCG and RWG member lists).

Partnership with Noel Levitz
The national consulting firm of Noel Levitz has worked with U of A Administration
beginning in Fall 2004. Their wide experience in both recruitment and retention plans for
universities across the U.S. continues to bring a wealth of information, direction, and
feedback to our efforts.

What we have learned about the UA:
Strengths

The University of Arizona has many strengths. The following strengths were identified
through three data-gathering processes: 1) focus groups conducted by Noel Levitz
consultant Dr. Courtney Stryker; 2) the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI); and 3) the
Institutional Priorities Survey (IPS). These strengths -- areas that students, staff, and
faculty indicated were important and also areas they were satisfied with -- form the
foundation of the strategic plan for retention.

- Students indicate that **course content** within their major is valuable.

- Students describe **faculty as knowledgeable** in their field.

- **Academic advisors** are knowledgeable about requirements in student majors.

- Students experience **intellectual growth** at the UA.

- Students report **faculty availability** after class and during office hours as a
  strength.

- The **campus environment** is well maintained, aesthetically pleasing, and
  conveniently laid out.

- **The people** -- students, staff, and faculty – are dedicated and involved. Faculty
  care, staff members are motivating, the leadership in strong, and students like
  their institution.

- **The administration** provides strong, directed leadership and positively influence
  the general mood of the campus.

- New efforts to improve and decentralize **advising** have demonstrated a student-
  centered focus to the advising process.

- There are many **undergraduate research opportunities**.

- A **wide range of services** are available to students.

- **Student diversity** was mentioned consistently as a strength at U of A.

- **Residence life** staff were highly praised for providing great places to live.

- There are ample opportunities for **student involvement** in clubs and interest groups.

- The U of A was characterized as **upwardly mobile** with an infectious mood of change that is positive, ambitious and progressive.

- The high quality **Honors College** is an important "showcase" program at U of A.

- Both students and faculty expressed appreciation for the variety and number of **community service projects**.

- The availability of **learning communities** makes what could seem like a large, impersonal institution into a cluster of smaller, more personal communities.

- The U of A was characterized as a **positively charged campus community** in which there is a new energy, enthusiasm, and momentum for positive change.

- Faculty, staff, and administration agree that the institution should place priority on instructional effectiveness, concern for the individual, academic advising, and recruitment and financial aid.

Challenges

Along with our many strengths, the University of Arizona has a set of challenges that have been identified as contributing to student retention, persistence and graduation. Challenges were identified as areas with high importance scores and low satisfaction scores. These challenges will form the foundation for the strategies that will facilitate the accomplishment of our goals.

- Quantity of **student parking**.

- **Registering for classes** with few conflicts.

- Getting **the "run-around**" when seeking information on campus.

- Assistance in **financial aid** issues.

- The worth of the investment of **tuition**.

- The value of **activity fees**.

- Lighting and **security** of parking lots.

- Availability of channels for expressing **student complaints**.

- Helpfulness of **financial aid counselors**.

- Teaching competence of **graduate teaching assistants.**

- Quality of **instruction** in some areas.

- Timeliness of **communications by financial aid** office.

- Concern for **students as individuals**.

- Adequacy of **billing policies**.

Interestingly, in the SSI, students place greater importance on each scale than students in the comparison group, suggesting that students, especially females, at the U of A may have higher expectations of their overall undergraduate experience. Juniors were the least satisfied chronological group, and African Americans the least satisfied ethnic group. Hispanic students were the most satisfied.

Consultant Visits, Recommendations, and Action Taken

The Noel Levitz consultants made six visits to the U of A Campus. The first visit was made by Dr. Courtney Stryker, and the following five visits were all by Dr. Charles Schroeder. During these visits, they met with key personnel, made presentations, conducted focus groups, and were available for strategic planning. In between visits, Dr. Schroeder was available by email and phone for conferences and questions. His input and the expertise of the Noel Levitz staff have contributed greatly to the overall organization of the strategic plan for retention.

Visit One (April 5-6, 2004, Dr. Courtney Stryker)

The following are the recommendations made upon the conclusion of Visit One, and the actions taken to address the recommendation.

Recommendation	Action Taken
Gather additional data	Retention Analysis Group, formed for the purpose of ascertaining what we know and what we don't know about retention at the U of A, resulting in the Summary of Retention and Graduation Rate Data.
Continue to make new advising procedures known to students	Completed by Advising Resource Center

Establish an Early Alert system	Piloted programs for specific at-risk groups, in collaboration with selected Colleges. Students targeted were non-engaged students at the end of Fall 2003 and non-registered students at the end of Spring 2004. Future initiatives in this area covered in specific Action Plan.
Develop clear communication channels for students and faculty in the campus decision making process	Addressed in recommendations from Visit Three.
Address course availability	Worked with VP for Instruction for timely release of general education courses for continuing students and pre-scheduling of courses during orientation, resulting in increased advisor and student satisfaction with registration process. Future initiatives in this area covered in specific Action Plan.
Conduct a systematic review of the university processes, identifying where students receive the "campus run-around"	Conducted focus groups of staff and students during Visit Three on these issues. Future Initiatives in this area are covered in specific Action Plan.
Conduct a communications audit, and create increased communication to faculty and students regarding campus activities	Will conduct a workshop on communication strategies in February, 2005 with the Retention Working Group.
Ascertain whether or not recruiters are "over selling" the U of A to prospective students, creating a mismatch between their expectations and reality.	Added to the Recruitment Coordinating Group retention personnel to facilitate cross-communication between the two groups. Also, adapted traditional recruiting message to include more of an emphasis on how we will deliver on the promises made during recruiting.
Conduct additional focus groups with transfer students, and compile retention data on this subpopulation	Held focus groups with transfer students and RAG gathered information on the performance of transfer students in upper-division courses. Future initiatives in this area are included in Action Plans under Goal IV.

Critical Retention and Graduation Issues

Resulting from the recommendation to gather additional data, the Retention Analysis Group compiled a report that identified several critical retention and graduation issues.

- 20% of first-time, full time freshmen are on probation after their first year.
- First-time, full-time freshmen on probation after the first semester have a one-year retention rate 23 percentage points less than the total first-time, full-time freshman population; they also have a six-year graduation rate 27 percentage points less.
- First-generation college students, who make up about ten percent of the total first-time, full-time freshmen population, have a 5 percentage point lower retention rate, a 3 percentage point lower four-year graduation rate, and a 5 percentage point lower six-year graduation rate.
- Males have a lower six-year graduation rate compared with females (50% vs. 57%).
- Honors students have a one-year retention rate 13 percentage points higher than the total first-time, full-time freshman population.

Their report, dated August 2, 2004 and compiled by Anthony Restar, Research Specialist, Enrollment Management, can be found in the Appendix.

Visit Two (June 21-11, 2004, Dr. Charles Schroeder)

Noel Levitz Senior Consultant, Charles Schroeder, visited the U of A on June 21-22, 2004. After reviewing Anthony's report and meeting with the Retention Analysis Group, Dr. Schroeder made the following recommendations in his Visit Two report. Action Taken is also given.

Recommendation	Action Taken
Conduct a classroom utilization study comparing classroom capacity and actual utilization by each class period	This is an ongoing initiative being conducted by the Office of Curriculum and Registration. To date, analysis of this data has not yielded any areas of concern for retention.
Conduct a three-year comparison of the number of first-time, full-time freshmen required to take developmental math through Pima Community college, their subsequent success/failure and retention rates to the second year.	Completed and results used in Action Plans under Goal I.
Conduct a three-year analysis of the number of freshmen who attend summer orientation but subsequently chose not to attend classes in the fall.	Referred to Orientation Task Force
Address the issue of course availability,	Addressed through specific Action Plan.

perhaps in the context of curriculum planning and management as it plays out in access to majors.	
Create a "philosophy of advising" that clearly highlights the purpose, role, and scope of advising; identify best practices in advising; have the Task Force on Undergraduate Orientation examine the role of advising from orientation through the first year	Completed by Task Force on Academic Advising in 2002 and currently being reviewed by the Orientation Task Force.
Explore issues concerning expectations and institutional imaging and the degree of incongruence between what students expect when they come here and the reality they find.	Addressed by newly created Enrollment Management marketing position in concert with the AVP for Student Retention.
Appoint a "quality service team" to conduct audits of key service areas focusing on policies, practices and processes and the degree of "value added" to the student experience by these service units	Addressed by the formation of the Customer Service Committee. Also, a full day for Customer Service Unit Leaders in February, 2005.

High Priority Recommendations From Visit Two

Recommendation	Action Taken and Results
Determine if there are common characteristics among students on probation	Research gathered on characteristics of probationary students by RAG. These results are contained in a portfolio for advisors and counselors in a Summit on Probationary Students, January 25, 2005. This portfolio includes best practices for retention interventions at college and unit level, as well as a catalog of available resources.
Survey transfer students regarding their satisfaction	Not completed to date but will be included in Action Plans under Goal IV.
Organize and conduct student focus groups in the fall of 2004 to further explore items with large gap scores on the SSI	Focus Groups conducted for student leaders, minority students, transfer students, parking, and other areas with large gap scores by Charles Schroeder during Visit Three. Results in Visit Three Report have been used in the formation of Action Plans.

Start a "recruit back" program in the fall of 2004	All Fall 2004 students who did not register for Spring 2005 were contacted by their college for the purposes of ascertaining why they left, if they planned to return, and to give them the name and number of a personal contact to facilitate re-admission. Data from these calls have been included in the Action Plans under Goal II.
Explore formal methods of communicating progress on retention planning	A formal communication plan is on the agenda for Feb 16-18 visit from Dr. Schroeder.
Evaluate the potential effectiveness of an Early Alert Program	One year of data has been collected to date in a three-year study of Early Alert.

Recommendations Specific to the Retention Coordinating Group
Specific suggestions made by Dr. Schroeder to the Retention Coordinating Group that have not been addressed earlier in this report, and the corresponding actions taken.

Recommendation	Action Taken
Review policies and practices regarding preparation, training, supervision and evaluation of Teaching Assistants or TA's	Completed, resulting in the creation of a TA Task Force, chaired by the Associate Dean of the Graduate College. Also, a report of this initiative will be given to the Parent's Association at their Annual Meeting in May, 2005.
Develop a financial aid estimator	Referred to Recruitment Coordinating Group.

Visit Three (September 2-3, 2004, Dr. Charles Schroeder)

Noel Levitz Senior Consultant, Dr. Charles Schroeder, made his third visit to the U of A on September 2-3, 2004, during which he conducted a series of focus groups with administrators, faculty, staff, and students. He also conducted a Quality Service Audit of the business practices at the UA, and made a series of recommendations specific to the movement of students through the layers of business services. In the report from this visit, Dr. Schroeder made 10 sets of recommendations; those not addressed earlier in this report are listed below.

Recommendations	Action Taken
Regarding general institutional strategies -- develop a quality service strategy with measurable quality service standards for each administrative work unit. • Assign responsibility for planning and executing an institution-wide quality service management program. • Establish ad hoc teams, including cross functional teams, to review processes such as incorporating new students into the institution. • Expect all staff to identify and work on common service problems in their areas. • Form a staff committee of front-line staff to identify service problems, suggest effective approaches, and gather information from staff for use in training. • Make staff orientation, training, and develop top priorities of the institution, enlisting the expertise of HR personnel. • Develop a systematic approach to recognizing and rewarding quality service. • Develop systematic assessment programs that provide continuous feedback from students and other customers, such as a "mystery shopper program."	These recommendations are part of the charge given to the newly formed Quality Service Committee, who will be reporting on their progress on these recommendations in the Fall 2005.
Regarding access to classes and course scheduling -- determine if clear course scheduling guidelines exist in all academic areas and the extent to which they are adhered to.	None to date; our recommendation is that this be conducted by the VP for Enrollment Management.
Carefully examine current policies related to the admission of undeclared transfer students.	Referred to and incorporated into Action Plan under Goal IV.
Regarding improving communication, cooperation, and collaboration within and among departments:	Referred to Orientation Task Force, Recruiting Coordinating Group, and Customer Service Committee.

- Develop formal orientation programs at the departmental level. Create formal, departmental liaisons to work with admissions and other critical student service areas to ensure effective communication. - Departmental clusters develop comprehensive cross-functional training programs. - Create cross-functional teams to improve processes such as orientation.	
Regarding electronic technologies: - Systematically evaluate the effectiveness of Web sites and other technology communications. - Determine the 10 "most frequently asked questions" (FAQ) about each department and develop a FAQ site for each department. - Establish student "advisory councils" for each department. - Form a partnership with student leaders to communicate changes in policies before they occur and solicit feedback.	Referred to Retention Coordinating Group member, Barb Hoffman, Director of Office of Student Computing Resources
Regarding simplifying major policies and Procedures -- form a small quality assurance team to evaluate each step in the petitioning process in order to reduce the length of time involved and create a feedback mechanism for advisors.	University Petitions Office is currently conducting a study which will yield the above information.
Redesign the housing/residence life application/contacting process.	This redesign is underway
Redesign math placement for new students.	Recommendation considered and declined. The whole issue of math placement is being studied under Goal I.
Develop the use of multiple digit "pin numbers" for students to initiate 800 calls from campus.	Referred to Quality Service Committee.
Redesign the billing process.	No action taken on this recommendation.
Redesign financial award letters for returning students.	A more customer friendly letter has been drafted and now includes information on specific help for students experiencing academic difficulty

Redesign the interface between advising for first-year students and students in the major.	The issues in this recommendation are being addressed by both Goal Groups I and II.
Regarding Enhancing Academic Advising -- develop an institution-wide educational philosophy and statement of purpose concerning the role and scope of advising.	Completed by the Orientation Task Force.
Appoint a cross-functional team to address the problems between advising and course availability and scheduling.	Responsibility for advising and course scheduling are both now under the supervision of the same VP for Instruction.
Create more ongoing training and development for advisors in all advising processes, and evaluate them every semester.	*Train the Trainer* Workshop for advisors, February 17, 2005 will address the above issues.
Shift the focus from "academic advising" to "educational planning" in which students create a comprehensive educational plan integrating curricular and co-curricular components. This requires a 1:400 ratio of advisor to advisee.	The responsibility for an ongoing process of improving advisor training resides with the VP for Instruction.
Have advisors play a role in the training and development of admissions representatives, student ambassadors, and resident life advisors.	Referred to UAAC for their recommendation
Evaluate the placement process for students in math, Spanish 101-102 and other "high demand courses."	Completion of Gate Keeping Course Study by RAG, January 2005. Results to be shared with academic advisors through UAAC
Regarding Financial Aid -- Explore opportunities for using the student information system to communicate financial aid information to students in a timely fashion. • Develop a comprehensive communication plan regarding the various challenges associated with financial aid and how the university is attempting to address these challenges. • Create a cross-functional team of financial aid staff to explore ways to streamline office processes.	Referred to Director of Financial Aid for his recommendations.

• Cross-train admissions staff to assist financial aid staff "after hours" to respond to the high volume of calls and inquiries. • Ensure that staff understand how to use appropriate "screens" to serve students. • Communicate frequently and effectively with student leaders.	
Regarding systematic assessment: • Undertake a comprehensive "assessment of assessments" and identify all current and previous assessment and evaluation projects and their key findings relevant to unites involved in providing services to students. • Create clear linkages between goals, objectives, priorities, assessment, feedback loops, and performance improvement in all service units. • Foster a "culture of evidence" by employing surveys (electronic, print, telephone), mystery shoppers, and other means of collecting information regarding service performance.	Formation of Retention Analysis Group that is responsible for studying these recommendations in light of existing data.

Visit Four (October 7-8, 2004, Charles Schroeder, Ph.D.)

Noel Levitz Senior Consultant, Dr. Charles Schroeder, made his fourth visit to the U of A on October 7-8, 2004, to facilitate a two day Retention Planning Workshop during which goals for retention activities were set (See Appendix). Members of the Retention Coordinating Group attended the two day workshop and engaged in a SWOT Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to improved retention. The group then created six retention goals and several potential strategies for each goal. Additionally, Charles made the following recommendations:

Recommendation	Action Taken
Explore electronic mediums for ongoing communication between team members.	Placed on the agenda of the RWG Retreat, February, 2005.
Place additional emphasis on meeting the needs of transfer students.	Goal IV added to Retention Strategic Plan.
Improve the "handoffs" between lower and upper division advisors.	Advising restructured to eliminate separate advising responsibilities for lower and upper division students, thereby eliminating the need for "handoffs" between advising units.
Study the early alert and recruit back program descriptions for the purpose of applying them to particular subgroups.	Completed.
Identify additional stakeholders.	Ongoing process as Action Plans are operationalized.

The week following Dr. Schroeder's fourth visit, on October 14, 2004, the Retention Coordinating Group met to review the six goals from the Retention Workshop. It was decided to condense the goals into three chronological goals – the first regarding first-time, full-time student retention, the second regarding retention of sophomores and juniors, and the third regarding four-, five-, and six-year graduation rates. RCG members self-selected onto three teams, one for each goal, to begin the process of identifying strategies necessary for achieving each goal.

Visit Five (October 28-29, 2004, Charles Schroeder, Ph.D.)

Dr. Schroeder again visited the U of A campus on October 28-29 to conduct a workshop on writing action plans and further facilitate the development of the retention plan. Charles made the following recommendations:

Recommendation	Action Taken
Maintain momentum.	Continuous involvement.
Prioritize plans requiring funding.	Included in Strategic Plan
Create implementation timetables.	Included in Strategic Plan
Support teams writing action plans.	Completed.
Explore the feasibility of creating a Web site.	Retention Website now online.
Give monthly updates to campus community.	Will be part of the Retention Communication Plan.

The Retention Coordinating Group, now divided into three Goal Groups, spent the month of November 2004 writing Action Plans. In January, 2005, at the time of this report, there are 51 Action Plans. A fourth goal, pertaining to transfer students, was added at the December RCG meeting. A complete list of Guiding Principles, Goals, Strategies, and Action Plans follows.

Guiding Principles

Underpinning the work that has been done thus far is a set of guiding principles – statements representing the philosophy upon which all the goals, strategies, and action plans rest. These guiding principles must be evident in the actual implementation of the retention plan if it is to represent the heart of the commitment we make to students at the University of Arizona.

1. *Student retention is an outcome of a quality student experience and includes student satisfaction and student success.*
2. *Student success is a critical part of the academic work of every college and is based on learning strategies for success built into the disciplines of each college.*
3. *Connectedness to faculty and staff, both within and outside of the classroom, is critical to student success; thus all areas of the university share the responsibility for facilitating these connections and eliminating barriers to them.*
4. *Student success is a core value at the University of Arizona, the result of a culture that engages diversity and values student participation. It is to be celebrated and rewarded.*
5. *Optimal student retention can only be fully achieved when all students – including students of color, first-generation students, transfer students, and students with disabilities – experience success in degree completion at the same rate as the majority population.*
6. *Interactions at all levels and among all participants in university life can be enhanced by a web of technology that connects students, faculty, and staff.*

Summary of Retention Goals, Strategies and Action Plans

Goal 1: Increase the retention rate for all first-time, full-time freshmen to 85% by 2010.

    A. Reduce number of students on academic probation after their first year to 15% by 2007 and 10% by 2010.
        1. Use a pre-enrollment instrument to identify potentially at-risk students prior to their enrollment at the UA.
        2. Distribute a mid-semester survey to "gauge" the academic and social integration of students.
        3. Develop a student success course to be made mandatory for probationary students.

4. Develop a contractual obligation with specific corrective actions for students on academic probation after the first semester.
5. Develop an early alert on-line system to identify students who are struggling at any time during the semester.
6. Contact students who have failed to register during their priority registration period.

B. Increase engagement of new students.
1. Send "Welcome" postcard from President Likins and ASUA President.
2. Link Wildcat Welcome website to New Students tab on UA home page.
3. Create a UA specific common book: How to be Successful at the UA.
4. Coordinate notification of existing/new events through Finish in Four Calendar.
5. Expand Student Link to become the central means of dispersing information to students by 2007.
   a. Implement an archive of messages to students which is accessible on-line to all staff and faculty.
6. Develop Meet Your Faculty program.
7. Expand the use of learning communities at the UA.
8. Increase student participation in academic support services.
9. Establish a tutoring advisory committee consisting of representatives from UA tutoring centers/programs.
10. Increase the frequency and quality of ongoing non-alcoholic late-night social activities for students living on campus.
11. Engage students in out of class social activities and opportunities.

C. Improve student satisfaction with UA administrative processes.
1. Continue to Increase availability of seats high demand courses.
2. Provide better training to staff so gaps in "run around" dissatisfaction decrease.
3. Establish a competitive grants program to fund quality improvement initiatives campus-wide.
4. Provide prompt decisions and communications in matters of Financial Aid.
5. Revise and modify, as needed, existing student surveys. Increase the dissemination and availabilty of results for program evaluation and research purposes.

D. Assist the UA community in understanding the importance of student retention and to have all make significant contributions to it.
1. Create the "The IMJ Difference: It's My Job to Make a Difference" permanent campaign.
2. Introduce a presentation on retention in both new faculty and new staff orientations.
3. Create and maintain the "University of Arizona Retention Guide."
4. Develop the "This College Makes A Difference" campaign.
5. Develop the "Why is Retention Important and How Do You Contribute" Presentation

E. Reduce number of students placing at pre-college level Mathematics.
  1. Expand early math readiness assessment.
  2. Provide non-credit alternatives for students to sharpen their basic mathematical skills.
  3. Continue to develop innovative ways of Teaching Entry Level Mathematics at the UA.

Goal 2. Increase persistence rates of sophomores to 77% and juniors to 73% by 2010.
  A. Determine why sophomores and juniors leave, and intervene.
    1. Examine data on sophomore/junior departure
    2. Work in collaboration with Goal Group I to extend the Early Alert System to potential upper division students that show signs of potential departure.
  B. Compile and present information on upper division course availability, including access to majors, minors, and exploration
    1. Compile and examine data on course accessibility.
    2. Explore the possibility of a report format directed at deans and department heads that would anticipate course availability issues on a regular basis
    3. Expand approaches to working with departments that have multiple course availability issues
  C. Assist students with the discovery of connections between their undergraduate academic program(s), pre- professional opportunities as students and academic and professional opportunities after graduation.
    1. Create a team to explore how academic advising and career planning is provided to students
    2. Identify best practices that currently exist in providing career information to specific majors and determine how these practices can be replicated in other departments
    3. Develop and implement on-going training for academic advisors on career planning and resources
    4. Develop discipline-specific career materials to be used by academic advisors and major-specific materials to be used by career counselors
    5. Develop a replicable discipline-specific course co-taught by an academic advisor and a Career Services counselor
    6. Develop a replicable module for general education courses that would outline the practical applications of the course content to a student's life and future career
  D. Develop opportunities for students who move off campus to stay connected and engaged in campus life.
    1. Gather information about the needs of commuter students
    2. Expand the Moving On / Moving Out Program to include information and resources to remain connected on campus.
    3. Expand and support of the Commuter Assistant in Residence Program.
    4. Incorporate commuter students into academic learning communities
    5. Create a mechanism for informing the campus community about the needs of commuter students

E. Inform and engage students more in on-campus employment opportunities by developing student employee support system
    1. Develop a structure responsible for student employees
    2. Establish processes for promoting and publicizing on-campus employment
    3. Establish support system for student employees and their supervisors.

Goal 3: For first-time, full-time freshmen entering in 2009, increase four-year graduation rates to 45 percent, five-year rates to 65 percent, and six-year rates to 70 percent.

A. Create more efficient and effective processes for attaining advanced standing.
    1. Study the effect of pre-majors on retention, progress and graduation.
    2. Identify students not making sufficient progress and develop interventions
    3. Update the 1998 Gateway Course Study and implement processes for improving success in these courses.

B. Create ways to focus on seniors and help them finish.
    1. Develop an automatic Student Academic Progress Report (SAPR) for students with 90 units.
    2. Intervene with students who have 130 or more units.
    3. Create exit and re-entry interventions for students who withdraw.

Goal IV: Study transfer students' persistence and graduation rates to learn where interventions are needed.

Top Priority Retention Strategies

The following are the highest priority strategies as determined by the Retention Coordinating Group, 1/27/05:

- **Provide non-credit alternatives for Freshmen placed into pre-college math**

- Compile and examine data on course availability.

- **Develop faculty-staff online referral system to identify students who are** early **struggling early in their first semester.**

- Develop a contractual obligation with specific corrective actions for students on academic probation after their first semester.

- **Create exit and re-entry interventions for students who withdraw voluntarily.**

- Determine transfer student persistence and graduation rates by college.

- Use a pre-enrollment instrument to identify potentially at risk students prior to their enrollment at the UA.

- Develop a student success course for all students during their first semester here… or a mandatory course of a similar nature for students on probation afer their first semester.

2005-2006 Initiatives

In collaboration with the colleges' retention committees, and with the assistance of direct student service units, the following three strategies will be implemented in 2005-2006:

- Early Alert/Success Net

- Math Boot Camp

- Exit Intervention

Summary

While it is clear that the UA has come a long way toward identifying the ways in which it can strengthen the student experience, most of the hard work lies ahead. The implementation of the 52 Action Plans for Retention will involve additional "fine-tuning," a commitment of time and energy by a broad constituency of UA employees at all levels, and the hiring of additional personnel who are skilled at and committed to the realization of the Retention Goals.

We thank the many individuals who are members of the Retention Coordinating Group, Retention Analysis Group, and Retention Working Group and who have contributed to the ideas in this Master Plan. Their contribution and hard work have made this possible. We also thank Dr. Charles Schroeder and the staff at Noel Levitz, whose experience and wisdom have helped to craft the vision for Retention at the UA.

Appendices:
Members of Retention Analysis Group
Members of Retention Working Group
Retention Workbook for Oct 7-8, 2004 Workshop
      Summary of Retention and Graduation Rate Data
      Student Satisfaction Inventory Executive Summary
      Institutional Priorities Survey Executive Summary
      Faculty Focus Groups Summaries
      Intervention Options
Performance of Transfer Students in Upper Division Courses Report
Gatekeeping Course Study Report
Retention Progress Report to the Enrollment Management Policy Group (Contains
      working draft of goals, strategies and action plans as of Dec 10, 2004)