KEAN UNIVERSITY
RETENTION PLAN

SEPTEMBER 2014
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Kean University Mission:

Kean University is a public cosmopolitan university serving undergraduate and graduate students in the liberal arts, the sciences, and the professions. The University dedicates itself to the intellectual, cultural, and personal growth of all its members — students, faculty, and professional staff. In particular, the University prepares students to think critically, creatively and globally; to adapt to changing social, economic, and technological environments; and to serve as active and contributing members of their communities.

Kean offers a wide range of demanding programs dedicated to excellence in instruction and academic support services necessary to assure its socially, linguistically, and culturally diverse students the means to reach their full potential, including students from academically disadvantaged backgrounds, students with special needs, and adults returning or entering higher education.

Kean is steadfast in its dedication to maintaining a student-centered educational environment in which diversity can flourish and an atmosphere in which mutual respect characterizes relations among the members of a pluralistic community. The University seeks to combine excellence with equity in providing opportunities for all students.

Kean is a teaching university, and Kean faculty dedicate themselves to student learning as well as academic rigor. The focus on teaching excellence is supported by a commitment to research, scholarship, creative work, and innovative uses of technology. The focus includes the advancement of knowledge in the traditional disciplines and the enhancement of skills in professional areas. Kean is committed to providing global educational opportunities for students and faculty.

Kean is an interactive university, and the University serves as a major resource for regional advancement. Kean collaborates with business, labor, government and the arts, as well as educational and community organizations and provides the region with cultural events and opportunities for continuous learning. Kean is also committed to providing students and faculty educational opportunities in national and international arenas.
Office of Intervention and Retention (OI&R) Mission and Vision

A retention plan, by definition, is a set of clear and unambiguous goals with associated strategies and activities that, when taken in totality, lead to the achievement of the retention program's goals (Webster’s definition). The mission of the Office of Intervention & Retention (OI&R) is to provide leadership for the University’s retention efforts by engaging at-risk students and teaching them the skills and dispositions needed for success. The Office is committed to creating a sustainable culture of active engagement of students, especially those that have demonstrated academic need. OI&R will also be dedicated to advancing a culture of assessment by engaging in data-driven activities that will provide the campus engagement necessary based on data.

The Office of Intervention and Retention will encourage a culture that is student-centered, one that facilitates and celebrates individual success. We will advance models, practices and policies that improve degree completion and persistence. OI&R will lead University training efforts to engage at-risk students as well as celebrate all achievers.

VISION STATEMENT

Kean University will become a model of excellence in retention by advancing cutting-edge intervention models to at-risk students. The Office of Intervention & Retention will lead the University’s efforts to engage students that show signs of problems in academic success. Through best practices, the Office will transform these students from risk to excellence. And we will hold fast to the belief that all of Kean’s students have the ability to succeed. The model will not only focus on early intervention that will lead to retention but the office will provide the university with a map of the pathway to increase retention and graduation rates based on data.

The office of Intervention and Retention has identified seven goals and objectives that are imperative to the comprehensive retention plan of Kean University. These goals will not be realized without the “buy in” from the entire campus since retention is a campus wide responsibility. These goals, along with the comprehensive document from the UPC – University Planning Committee (found at http://www.kean.edu/about/strategic-plan) will form the network needed to be successful in increasing our retention and graduation rates.
Goal 1 - Increase by 2 percent the retention rate of first-time, full-time baccalaureate degree-seeking students using the fall 2014 freshmen cohort. Will be reviewed yearly…

Goal 2 - Increase the four and six-year graduation rates by 3 percent for first-time, full-time baccalaureate degree-seeking students using the fall 2014 cohort.

Goal 3 - To intervene and engage students that demonstrate risk transforming them to excellence. (Works to accomplish goals 1 & 2) Continue to monitor and improve on the Early Warning program already in place to identify at-risk students. Currently, our Entering Student survey and our Early Warning Logbooks are used to generate data on all incoming freshman. Results of surveys are used to activate resources- such as Tutoring, Counseling and Disabilities, Writing Center, workshops and mentorship through the Step-it-Up program. The objective is to engage through constant contact with students demonstrating academic risk indicators. An “honor roll” of students, who benefit from the interventions, are used to conduct or co-facilitate workshops for freshmen alerting them of what it takes to be a successful student. Results from this survey for fall 2014 cohort shows 149 students indicating that they are planning to transfer in the future. Plans are in place to monitor these students using the General Education Mentors in each T2K class. A report will be given of the status of these students by mid-semester and end of semester.

A greater focus on target groups of students who may have more obstacles to success: commuters, first generation students, nontraditional students, athletes, and learning disabled students. According to incoming data, most of our freshmen are first generation college students and this puts them at-risk immediately. Implement forums and “let’s talk” sessions to evaluate how these groups are navigating college starting fall 2015.

Goal 4 – Reduce the number of freshmen students testing into developmental classes with cohort starting fall 2015 (works with goal 1). Data received from Institutional Research department shows that 46% of our incoming freshmen for 2012 cohort, tested into one or more developmental classes. This is a deterrent to on time graduation and will require an in-depth look at the placement test of our incoming students. One solution could be the implementation of a “summer bridge” program that will address the problem areas prior to students starting classes. Collaboration with Admissions department and placement testing area and development of a team that will look at the performance of the students and develop a curriculum that will address the academic, social and adjustment needs of the students prior to starting classes. Students will be allowed to re-take their placement test after finishing the summer bridge. Classes could be taught by graduate Assistants or Academic Specialists depending on the results of the testing. This will diminish the time and cost of taking developmental classes that do not count towards graduation, hence increasing the possibility of graduating on time.

Goal 5 - Increase the retention rate by 2 percent of students who are on academic probation at
the beginning of the academic year starting with 2012 cohort. Currently, the Step-it-up program is being used to work with approximately 20% of the students who are on academic probation. Data shows that 79% of students who received assistance academic year 2012-2013 progressed (GPA increased). Since this model shows such great results, the plan is to increase the number of academic coaches available to our at-risk students. Collaboration with the Kean Graduate Counseling department has resulted in the use of Step-it-Up as an internship site for graduate students in that program. Presently, only 20% or less of our students are able to receive assistance because these graduate students (academic coaches) require “supervision” according to the CACREP accreditation board and this requires extra time by the Director of Retention. Additional “credentialed supervisors” are needed to facilitate this increase of academic coaches. If we are able to create a full internship opportunity to all graduate students in this program we would be able help more students on academic probation, and reinstated into the university and also assist more graduate students with internship / practicum site. Currently this model of intervention is being used in EEO and Passport departments.

Goal 6: Implement a campus wide Early Alert Retention system that will provide data that will facilitate PROACTIVE interventions (works to accomplish goals 1&2) and will help to improve our retention and graduation rates by 3% within 3 years of installation. Collecting reliable and accurate data on our students is central and critical to the retention process. This will give us the proactive advantage that we currently lack. This system will provide feedback not only to faculty and staff but also to students on what needs to be done to improve their probability of retention and graduation. In addition, create a pathway to increased student engagement by forums connecting upper classmen with freshmen of similar major. Another prong of this goal is to connect alumni and student through career forums where students are able to ask questions about careers and jobs available upon graduation. This system could also provide needed data on our graduates, employers of Kean students, and other career data to create greater collaboration between Kean and our workforce community.

Goal 7: To provide administrative leadership by engaging non-registered and students who stopped out for one reason or another. (Works to accomplish goals 1&2). Institutional Research data for academic year fall 2011 to spring 2012 500 students did not return for fall 2012. Phone calls were made to these students with a response rate of 37%. The breakdown of the reasons is attached below. Institutional Research also shows that for academic year fall 2012 to spring 2013, 364 students did not return. Phone calls were made to these students with a response rate of 21%. Reasons for leaving are outlined in a graph below. The response rates are low because most of the student’s information on the list from registrar is outdated and incorrect. For spring 2015 I will be reaching out to a clearinghouse presently used by registrar to assist will cleaning the data – address and phone numbers prior to using it. Also, the office of OI&R will reach out to Student Affairs to see if a contest can be developed for our students to compete in developing an application
that will require students to update their profile prior to accessing their grades for the first time each semester. A prize could be given for the winner. Launch date would be fall 2015. In response to the percentage of students who are leaving because we do not offer their program or the programs are not “strong enough to get them into medical school or graduate school, etc. the OI&R office will spear head the discussion on the creation of honors program across disciplines for fall 2015.

In order for this plan to be successful, the entire campus needs to be supportive and involved. The action plans that have been identified will encompass every campus division in an effort to develop a caring campus and optimum opportunities for students to learn and live in an environment that delivers a World Class Education.

Each goal has a set of strategies and action plans to accomplish it. Some of these strategies and action plans have already been initiated and others will be put into force in spring 2015. Many are short term while others will be in force through the 2015-2016 academic year and beyond. In order to measure the effectiveness, it will be necessary to track a myriad of data - including graduation rates, persistence by major, and involvement of staff and faculty.

This plan is the beginning of the Kean University’s comprehensive retention plan. It is a dynamic and constantly changing plan that will be reviewed annually by the Director of Retention, Retention Committee, Department of Assessment, and Office of VPAA. Strategies and action plans will be assessed and those that are not effective will be replaced.
Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis:

Strengths:

- **Strong academic programs and dedicated faculty and staff.** Kean University has dedicated faculty and staff continue to be productive in their scholarly and creative work, and engaged in improving the learning environment for students. Results from Qualtrics survey sent out to our sophomore population in September 2014 shows that Kean sophomores are happy with the university and are looking forward to graduating from Kean.

- **Diversity in the academic community.** Kean University takes pride in the diversity of its faculty, staff and students with global representation. Kean values people of different ethnicities, orientation, cultures, and perspectives.

- **The potential of the Step-it-Up program to connect with all students with risk-indicators.** The Step-it-Up program is an academic Intervention program designed to assess and work with students who are on or close to academic probation in an effort to retain that student. It consists of needs assessment survey results of which are used to allocate resources and make referrals to resources that the students need. Each student is mentored and monitored by graduate students from the Graduate Counselor Education program who are doing internship or practicum in that program in exchange for supervision by the director of Retention. When students show grade improvement for more than 2 semesters after leaving Step-it-Up, they are recruited to return to the program to assist with co-facilitating “College Survival 101”, a seminar to incoming freshmen. It consists of one-on-one weekly meeting with each student.

Challenges…

- **Lack of reliable data.** Oftentimes the retention department relies on other departments for data which may not be as reliable as can be. For example – our outreach to students whose phone numbers in our DATATEL system are incorrect. The installation of an Early Alert System would circumvent this process and provide up-to-date, real time information that will improve retention and graduation rates.

- **Absence of a structured communications office.** One of Kean University’s major challenges is the lack of a centralized system of communication that transmits accurate information within the campus as well as to the students in a timely manner. Office procedures are often kept within each department and a link between important, relevant information is missing. Development of a “campus bulletin board” – on line - that can be utilized and updated and used for sharing new policies, guidelines, and procedures that affect faculty, staff and students. Currently, when a student request a transcript from registrar there is outreach to the student to try to retain that student. Going forward, I
have designed a form to capture pertinent information and will inform registrar to send
the student to Office of Intervention and Retention as the final step before transcripts are
released. This will be implemented spring 2015.

- **Low retention and graduation rates.** Although enrollment continues to increase each
year, Kean University lags behind peer institutions in student retention (less than 80%) and
four year graduation rates (less than 35%). Offering programs - such as a summer
bridge – that will address the issue of under-preparedness for college before the students
starts the semester. Interventions currently in place will also assist in increasing retention
and graduation rates.

- **Unstable state funding.** When state funding is unstable and reduced, stability of
programs and personnel is threatened. State funding also impacts retention and
graduation rates. With the population of our student receiving financial aid increasing,
plans must be put in place to address costs that exist outside of financial aid offerings.
Financial Aid does not always pay for total student bill and oftentimes students are left
with the cost of books (for example). Having a fund that addresses these and other
“incidental” can be the difference between a student dropping out of school or
persisting. As much as 5% of the freshmen class for spring 2014 asked my office for
assistance with books. Some students were referred to their counselor in EEO or Passport
for additional assistance. Other students without counselors made copies of their
classmate’s books – chapter at a time. Working on collaboration with the Psy.D program
to use some of their students who may be interested in grant writing to explore the
possibility of applying for a grant to assist this group starting fall 2015.

- **Lack of personnel to work exclusively with our Transfer population.** Data on our students
who are dismissed and who are on academic probation shows that Transfers are the
highest percentage. There needs may be different from the first generation full time
native Kean students and so they need to be addressed separately.

**Opportunities…**

- **An Office of Communications and Marketing.**
  Telling the Kean University stories and marketing its accomplishments are critical
strategies. According to the results of our Sophomore Survey, Kean has a lot to offer our
students and they are excited to be here. Telling the stories of the richness in the
interactions, friendships, and lifetime connections made at Kean will enhance our image
in the community and this would increase our admission profile and our retention
probability.

- "**Best and brightest**" students. It is important to establish relationships with school
systems early to promote Kean University’s programs and target high performing
students during recruitment. Presently data from Institutional Research department shows
that the bulk of our student population comes from students with verbal SAT scores of
400-600 and Math SAT scores from the same level. Kean should make greater efforts to
attract students from the upper tier High Schools since we do have a lot to offer these students.

- **Distance Education.** Kean University needs to increase its offering of on-line courses, develop distance education degree programs, and consider joint programs with other institutions. This would allow more students to increase the time dedicated to classes since online offers this flexibility. This will contribute to increase in graduation rate.

- **Develop and implement an intentional comprehensive enrollment management plan that incorporates both ADMISSION and RETENTION.** This could be done when an enrollment manager is in place.

- **Develop a system-wide master plan for excellence.** This process has begun with the process of Advisement Week. This gives all advisors the opportunity to “be on the same page’ and also to learn best practices for advisement. Nationally poor advisement is seen as one of the biggest deterrent to retention.

- **University engagement and outreach:** Having a campus wide early alert system that gives us real-time data on our students’ engagement and progress would greatly enhance our ability to intervene early and increase our retention rate. My research has led me to STARFISH – a product that would interface with DATATEL and provide the data we need. Currently, Student Affairs is piloting a product –Beacon that may be able to be used a retention tool.

- **Extension of the Step-it-up program** to include a greater number of students being assisted by more academic coaches. This would require more “supervisors”, however, the payoff of increase in retention and graduation rate will be worth the initial investment. If personnel are added to the OI&R office, then supervising more academic coaches will be possible along with the creation of a full-fledged internship and practicum site for all Kean University Counselor Education students and even other disciplines as well.

- **Revenue generator:** Currently students who are dismissed are not charged a re-application fee to return to Kean after reinstatement. Fall 2013 spring 2014 we served 162 reinstated students who were offered mentoring, monitoring and additional serves but they did not have to pay for these programs. Designing an application that can be used by this group and develop a code that is specific to this population will be piloted with the fall 2015 group.
First-Time Full-Time Undergraduate Degree-Seeking Student Retention and Graduation Rates from Institutional Research

Cohort Definition:
First Time: Never had any college education before (except for the summer immediately prior to the first time fall enrollment)
Full Time: Enrolled in 12 or more credits at Kean

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort Year</th>
<th>Head Count</th>
<th>Continuation Rates</th>
<th>Cumulative Graduation Rates and Continuation Rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to 2nd Yr</td>
<td>to 3rd Yr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1311</td>
<td>982</td>
<td>821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>1254</td>
<td>961</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1391</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>1394</td>
<td>1078</td>
<td>902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1447</td>
<td>1123</td>
<td>930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1418</td>
<td>1148</td>
<td>945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1518</td>
<td>1226</td>
<td>1024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1731</td>
<td>1386</td>
<td>1115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1794</td>
<td>1294</td>
<td>1090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1381</td>
<td>1017</td>
<td>73.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Retention Rates are based on Fall enrollment.
* Graduation rates are based on the academic year, which includes students who graduated in January, May and August.
Step-it-Up academic probation performance report

*Reinstated students with academic coaches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2012 to spring 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2011 to spring 2012</th>
<th>Fall 2010 to spring 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2009 to spring 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2008 to spring 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students who showed progression</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>76.11%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students who regressed</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>percentage</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>23.65%</td>
<td>23.89%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total # of students</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reinstated academic probation students are students who are allowed to return on academic probation AFTER dismissal.
Graph of academic probation students who were never dismissed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>*Academic Probation Student with Coach</th>
<th>All Other Academic Probation Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009 to Spring 2010</td>
<td>Fall 2010 to Spring 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress (#)</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress (%)</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regress (#)</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regress (%)</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same (#)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same (%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Academic probation students who were not dismissed (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Probation Student with Coach</th>
<th>All Other Probation Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 to Spring 2012</td>
<td>Fall 2012 to Spring 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress (#)</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progress (%)</td>
<td>67.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regress (#)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regress (%)</td>
<td>32.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same (#)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Same (%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results of outreach in goal 7 above.

**Breakdown of Transferred - Fall 2011**

- Transferred Because of Program, 93, 87%
- Transferred Because of Location, 3, 3%
- Transferred Because of Financial, 5, 5%
- Other, 6, 5%

**Reason for Transfer - Fall 2012 (51 students will return to Kean in the future)**

- Transferred Because of Program, 10, 62%
- Transferred Because of other, 3, 19%
- Transferred Because of Financial, 2, 13%
- Transferred Because of Location, 1, 6%