

The five initiatives that the Undergraduate Student Success task force recommends are described in detail in the full-length report, which can be found online through the Strategic Planning website (<http://info.ncsu.edu/strategic-planning/>). The report outlines each recommendation in regard to context, goals, specific recommendations, and metrics associated with each. Although each recommendation may be considered in isolation, we felt it important to provide an integrated set of recommendations. Thus the initiatives we present target issues related to academics as well as advising, and students' first semester on campus as well as throughout their undergraduate careers. We strongly believe that the total impact of our recommendations is greater than the sum of the individual parts, and we recommend that they be viewed, and adopted, as a comprehensive package.

• **Initiative 1. Proactive/intrusive academic advising**

The task force recommends a model that uses professional advisors for first-year students in order to provide proactive, hands-on advising the "minute" they step onto campus, and to provide the support they need to find their best academic fit and best career fit as quickly as possible. These professional advisors will receive basic, as well as cross-curricular, training and would be expected to coordinate with the undergraduate director or faculty advisor of the student's intended department (if one is indicated) to best meet each student's advising needs. We recommend a 120:1 student to advisor ratio model currently used in the Division of Undergraduate Academic Programs.

• **Initiative 2. The First-Year Inquiry program**

First-Year Inquiry (FYI) courses provide students with a small class setting that enables them to develop a connection with a faculty member and a group of peers, connections that are vitally important during the first year of the college experience. These courses focus on the development of critical thinking skills and communication skills and help students make the transition from dualistic thinkers to independent learners. NC State data and national data document the positive impact of such programs on first-year students. Currently about 10 percent of our incoming first-year students take an FYI course. We recommend that the figure be increased to 100 percent, i.e., that all incoming first-year students be required to take an FYI course. Our existing FYI approach is easily adapted to introduce students to the fundamentals of creating knowledge in the discipline or the field, what our Office of Undergraduate Research refers to as a "little r" (for research) process and we recommend that we inject the "little r" process into each FYI course we offer. Finally, we encourage the university to use the First-Year Inquiry program, assuming it is expanded to include all new freshmen, as a key component in our next SACS Quality Enhancement Plan.

• **Initiative 3. Living and learning villages**

Currently, about 75-80 percent of our incoming first-year students live on campus and approximately 25 percent of our incoming first-year students live in one of NC State's nine residential villages. We have compelling data that describe the impact of these living and learning communities on the retention rates and academic performance of our first-year students. We

therefore recommend that the participation rate of incoming first-year students in living and learning villages be increased to 50 percent through the development of three to four new villages and the expansion of existing villages as appropriate.

- **Initiative 4. High-impact educational practices**

George Kuh identified 10 educational practices that have a significant impact on students' educational and personal growth, particularly for those from underrepresented populations (see Kuh 2008). Several of these practices (first-year seminars and experiences, common intellectual experiences, learning communities) are addressed in the First-Year Inquiry program and living and learning villages initiatives and others (writing-intensive courses, collaborative assignments and projects) are already integrated within our curricula across campus. The task force's initiative on high-impact educational practices focuses on the remaining five categories by recommending that all undergraduate students be required to participate in at least one of the following: study abroad, service learning/community-based learning, internships/co-ops, capstone courses and projects, and undergraduate research.

- **Initiative 5. First-year transition**

The heart of this initiative is the expansion of the summer START Program, a program that was first piloted in summer 2010. Students in the summer START Program get a jumpstart on their undergraduate careers by taking academic courses as well as workshops on skills that are critical for success.

In addition to these five initiatives, the task force has identified intracampus transfer as an issue that required immediate attention. NC State has already begun to take steps to address the problem. Our multi-pronged approach is described in our full report. We note that our proactive/intrusive academic advising initiative is an integral part of our proposed approach.

Appendix A. Undergraduate student success integrated plan

