

October 8, 2019 REVISED

Student Success Initiative – Foundational Courses Task Group

Kelly Ritter, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, *co-chair*
Tim Stelzer, Grainger College of Engineering, *co-chair*
Ann Abbott, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Robert Baird, Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning
Teresa Farr, Division of General Studies
Ivan Favila, Grainger College of Engineering
Rhonda Kirts, Office of the Dean of Students
Kristi McDuffie, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Kristin McMurray, Office of the Registrar
Jennifer McNeilly, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Melissa Michael, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences
Shelly Schmidt, College of Agricultural, Consumer & Environmental Sciences
Brian Siemann, Disability Resources & Educational Services
Diana Steele, Center for Innovation in Teaching & Learning
Nicole Turner, College of Fine & Applied Arts
Nancy Walsh, Office of Undergraduate Admissions
Jon Welty-Peachey, College of Applied Health Sciences
Matthew West, Grainger College of Engineering
Craig Zilles, Grainger College of Engineering
Kristi Kuntz, Office of the Provost, *ex-officio*

Dear Colleagues,

In keeping with our land-grant mission, and building on our Strategic Plan goal to provide transformative learning experiences, as a campus we are committed to closing the graduation gap and giving every student the chance to meet their goal of attaining an Illinois degree. As we embark on this effort to better understand what constitutes, supports, and carries forward undergraduate student success, the perspective of those who work directly with our students is critical. We hope you will accept our invitation to serve on the Foundational Courses Task Group. Kelly Ritter, Associate Dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Tim Stelzer, Professor of Physics, have agreed to co-chair this task group. Kristi Kuntz, Executive Associate Provost for Academic Programs and Policies, will serve as Student Success Initiative Steering Team liaison.

We ask the task group to focus on foundational courses with the ideal that these courses should provide all students with a solid foundation to support success throughout their college career. I ask that you consider practices and actions that can help ensure that every student is given every chance to succeed. Your work should consider the exemplar programs and best practices already employed, as well as the exploration of innovative and novel approaches for improving graduation rates and enhancing the

overall Illinois experience. Your task group is empowered to boldly consider opportunities to improve and expand our efforts to help students achieve a degree at Illinois.

As you examine the various impacts of foundational courses, please explore current offerings on campus, the recommendations of the 2018 Undergraduate Education Strategy report, the work of appropriate peers, and the relevant literature on student persistence and success. Your work should culminate in a set of recommendations for the institution to foster and grow a successful undergraduate student experience. These recommendations may include re-evaluation of existing policies and procedures, broadening access to exemplar programs, and/or investment in the creation of new programmatic offerings.

Student voices are undoubtedly critical to this process and students will be named to your task group. In addition, your work should reflect engagement with the various student advisory groups active on campus. The task group is encouraged to consult broadly, to consider the use of smaller teams to target efforts in particular areas, and to invite additional members to serve on smaller teams. Feedback from the Initiative kickoff event will be available to your group, and the upcoming lunch sessions will be an opportunity to engage stakeholders from across campus. Your team will have access to administrative support through Teresa Spence in the Office of the Provost who is ready to assist with scheduling and other related tasks. In addition, a Box folder pre-populated with a number of documents is available to serve as a resource as your discussions unfold.

Access to data will be a critical aspect of your work. A data team, with representatives from across campus, is in place to help the task groups form questions and gather data to inform your recommendations. We ask that the task group focus on questions, and the data team will assist with refining these questions and determine how best to proceed. The task groups are reminded that the Campus Profile, a number of standing reports from undergraduate admissions, the Registrar's office, and Student Affairs are readily available. A guide to those data sets and reports is in the Box folder.

Vice Provost Kevin Pitts will attend your first meeting to formally charge your group and answer any questions you may have about the work ahead. We are grateful for your willingness to serve, and we look forward to the task group recommendations. An update to the Council of Undergraduate Deans and Student Affairs Leadership Team will be due on January 17, 2020 with a full report following by May 22, 2020.

We appreciate the many demands on your time, if you are unable to accept our invitation, please let Teresa Spence (tcspace@illinois.edu) know by Friday, October 4.

Sincerely,



Andreas C. Cangellaris
Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs and Provost
M.E. Van Valkenburg Professor of Electrical and
Computer Engineering



Danita M. B. Young
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs