



## 2022–2027 Retention and Graduation Plan

### Initiative Updates

Fall 2024

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***\*Focus on Initiatives/Action Items In Progress as of Fall 2024 – Institutionalized and Completed Items have been removed from this document***

#### **Initiative 2: Improve Visibility and Marketing of Student Support Programs**

- **2.1: Develop a branded strategic marketing campaign to showcase student support services; refresh website content and placement and perform regular page audits. (In Progress)** Suggested reframing of Action Item: **Develop a branded strategic marketing campaign to showcase student support services; refresh website content and placement and perform regular page audits.** Initiative Leads suggested that UCAM become the primary office responsible for moving this Action Item forward, with input from student support offices.
  - Given changes within UCAM, progress on this item is on pause.
- **2.2: Evaluate and update messaging/outreach to students by streamlining communications within various software programs. (In Progress)** Suggested reframing of Action Item: **Evaluate and update messaging/outreach to students by streamlining communications within various software programs.** Initiative Leads have suggested developing consistent language for communications as well as assessing activities and events. The sub-committees discussed in 2.3 will likely address streamlining communications for both faculty/staff and students.
  - Sub-committees are meeting in Fall 2024.
- **2.3: Identify and respond to gaps in student support and campus resources. (In Progress)** Initiative Leads are calling for the creation of two sub-committees: one to focus on addressing gaps in resources and services for students, one to focus on raising faculty and staff awareness of student resources and services. Initiative Leads will move this work forward over the next few months.
  - Sub-committees are meeting in Fall 2024.

#### **Initiative 4: Mitigate Barriers for Matriculation, Registration, and Course Scheduling**

- **4.1: Revise course scheduling processes to predict course demand, increase access and success by providing clear curricular pathways to employment, graduation, and post graduate opportunities. (In Progress)** Implementation is under way for multi-term course

scheduling and transparency of course availability and schedules for students and Advisors. The “Take 30” credit momentum campaign expanded in Spring 2024 with messaging to incoming students, continuing students, faculty and staff, and external stakeholders regarding the feasibility and benefits of credit momentum. Credit momentum messages were shared with incoming Fall 2024 students during Summer 2024 registration events. Institutional Research conducted additional analysis on outcomes for students who take 30 credits in a year in conjunction with the DFWIX Committee.

- **4.2: Mitigate MSU system holds by identifying a strategic approach to address barriers that prevent MSU Billings students’ ability to register. Integrate an Everfi holds campaign early in the first term for first-year students. (In Progress)** Conversations with other MUS campuses continue regarding shared campus holds, with progress occurring slowly. The Registrar’s Office, Retention Director’s team, Advisors, and others actively communicate with students regarding holds. Institutional Research is also developing an Intranet site to help faculty and staff assist students in navigating holds.
- **4.3: Establish a formal procedure and implementation plan for course placement. (In Progress)** In Fall 2023, two pilots were soft launched for internal Math and Reading/Writing placement. The Math pilot utilizes EdReady, which is free to students and campus, does not require proctoring, and allows students to work within the software to improve their math placement scores. The Reading/Writing pilot utilizes a Qualtrics prompt scored by English faculty and then communicated to Advising for appropriate placement. Pilots will continue through Summer and Fall 2024 and success rates in math, writing, and reading courses will be assessed to determine the appropriateness of these placement processes.
  - The Math and Reading/Writing placement tools are functional and placing students appropriately as of Fall 2024. Next steps include analysis of data on student outcomes and continued gathering of feedback from stakeholders.

### Initiative 5: Implement High-Impact Student Success Strategies in the Classroom

- **5.3: Establish best practices to improve timely adoption of textbooks and required course materials to advance student preparedness. (In Progress)** With the campus moving to Barnes & Noble First Day Complete textbook procurement, this Action Item will need to be revisited to determine a process for timely adoption of textbooks integrated with this new system.
  - Fall 2025 implementation of B&N First Day Complete.
- **5.6: Improve pedagogical practices that promote active and student-centered learning. (In Progress)** Pedagogical Wellness Initiative promotes instructor and student well-being to improve student outcomes. Spring 2024 workshops focused on student belonging and wellbeing. The Center for Teaching and Learning will also offer workshops on Regular and Substantive Interaction for online courses in Fall 2024.
  - Faculty Wellbeing Initiative - focus groups done by CTL, gathering feedback

- Various workshops designed to help faculty best support students
- Close to institutionalization

### Initiative 6: Implement Strategies to Improve Degree Completion

- **6.1: Develop academic roadmaps and pathways for degree completion for all programs. (In Progress)** Initiative Leads met with the Executive Academic Senate regarding plans of study in Spring 2024, and it was decided that all plans of study will follow the same format/template. Academic Senate will be responsible for managing and maintaining the academic portions of plans of study as part of the regular curriculum processes.
- **6.2: Develop 4-year course rotation schedules for all academic departments. (In Progress)** Initiative Leads recommend that Academic Senate identify a course rotation template or maintain this information within the course description area of the catalog. Conversations continue regarding a process for ensuring that these course rotations remain current and accurate.
- **6.3: Identify student populations near graduation or certificate completion and provide assistance to facilitate program completion. (In Progress)** A category has been created in EAB Navigate for students who have applied for graduation in an upcoming term. Support staff can pull reports of students with this category for the purposes of outreaching to and monitoring students who are close to completion. Navigate may also prove useful for targeted progress report campaigns for students identified as close to completion. Additional conversation around this Action Item is needed to better develop the data infrastructure used to identify students who are close to degree completion but may not have applied for graduation yet.
- **6.4: Provide support and outreach strategies to improve degree and certificate completion. (In Progress)** Career & Employment Services maintains Major Sheets for all programs. Career & Employment Services also outreaches to students, particularly transfers and students without a designated major, at multiple points throughout the academic journey. The “Take 30” credit momentum campaign also serves this Action Item as a method of decreasing time to degree for full-time students who earn additional credits throughout the academic year by enrolling in higher course loads.

### Initiative 8: Implement High Impact Practices to Address DFWI Rates

- **8.1: Constitute a DFWI working group to prioritize and coordinate strategies to reduce the number and impact of DFWI courses. (In Progress)** The Initiative Lead has been included in the work of the DFWIX Committee established by the Provost last year. The Committee will present recommendations to the Provost by the end of the 2023-2024 academic year for the subsequent year.
  - The DFWIX Committee is in the process of drafting recommendations.

- **8.2: Develop appropriate pedagogical approaches for courses with high rates of DFWI grades. (In Progress)** The larger DFWIX Committee has identified a need to provide faculty with enhanced training on pedagogical and administrative approaches to address DFWI rates. This may include a “mini conference” for faculty during Fall 2024 Convocation with topics such as Navigate Early Alert usage, the benefits of Supplemental Instruction, the First Year Experience course, coaching students on withdrawals, etc. Conversations continue as the Committee meets throughout the Spring semester.
  - The DFWIX Committee is in the process of drafting recommendations in conjunction with the CTL.
- **8.3: Increase awareness, internal marketing, and overall presence of Supplemental Instruction (SI) Leaders in courses with high DFWI rates utilizing data dashboards from Institutional Research. (In Progress)** Supplemental Instruction has overall been effective in increasing success rates in courses with high DFWI rates and retention for students who participate in SI sessions. The number of courses supported by SI has fluctuated over the last few semesters and work continues to increase faculty buy-in/support and identify eligible SI Leaders.
  - New for Fall 2024, the SI Coordinator in the Academic Support Center worked with departments to develop an agreement for internship credits for eligible SI leaders.

### Initiative 9: Cultivate Strategies to Increase Students’ Sense of Belonging

- **9.1: Expand and enhance student engagement through integration of academic support, co-curricular, and social aspects of campus life. (In Progress)** A small committee with interest in a student engagement platform met in Spring 2024 to demo several products. The next steps in this process are to request quotes from vendors and continue conversations with stakeholders regarding funding and essential elements that the chosen platform must provide.
- **9.2: Reevaluate and enhance first-year experience course(s) to promote college skill development, increase student engagement, and sense of belonging. (In Progress)** The redesigned, faculty led First Year Experience course still needs to go to the General Education Committee for approval. The initial offering of this course is scheduled for Fall 2025 to allow for continued conversations regarding the substitution of a 1-credit general education science lab requirement for 1-credit for the First Year Experience course.
- **9.3: Revitalize new student orientation for first-time freshman, transfer, and non-traditional learners. (In Progress)** In 2024, Orientation will be completely decoupled from course registration. Orientation has also been reimagined as one large, two-day offering for all incoming students, with the goal of creating a sense of belonging at MSUB and forming new connections prior to the start of the term. Fast Pass Registration events will continue throughout the Spring/Summer leading up to Orientation, with the first event in April dedicated to Dual Enrollment students.

- As in Summer 2024, there will be one main Orientation program held in Summer 2025 for incoming students. Orientation for incoming Spring 2025 students will be held in January.
- **9.4: Engage faculty, staff, and student support areas to proactively connect students to mentoring programs, such as the Peer Navigators, TRIO Mentors, Montana 10 Scholars. (In Progress)** Using the Fast Pass Registration process and resulting early analytics, New Student Services is working to connect matriculating students with care teams, such as TRIO SSS, the Honors Program, Disability Support Services, and MT10, early in the pipeline to foster connections and reduce summer melt. Once students are registered for courses, Navigate will also be used to streamline communication between students and care teams. Conversations continue as to how best connect students with care teams early and intentionally.
  - The Office of Academic Success sends students monthly newsletters, highlighting student support areas and resources.

#### **Initiative 10: Strengthen Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

- **10.1: Develop Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) systems, structures, and processes to serve the campus community equitably through coordinated strategies to improve student retention and graduation rates. (In Progress)** Diversity Statement and Land Acknowledgement have been shared across campus for widespread use. La Plaza and Women’s and Gender Studies Center are establishing Care Units in Navigate to streamline outreach, communication, registration campaigns, and support of students. The Native American Achievement Center is supporting the ongoing efforts of the MUS AIMA Council, as outlined in the [8 recommendations from the AIMA Council](#). Campus Action Plans under these recommendations were due to OCHE in June 2024.
  - Ground-level work is being done related to DEI. For example, the Women’s & Gender Studies Center staff is using Navigate360 to outreach to students and promote services. La Plaza staff are also using Navigate360 to outreach to students regarding Early Alerts and promote services.