



*The Year Ahead:
Proposed Improvement Plan for Florida Atlantic University's
Performance Based Funding Model Scores*

June 18, 2014

2014, Florida Atlantic University (FAU) scored zero points in the following two metrics common to all universities in the State University System (SUS):

Metric 4 - 6-year graduation rate for full- and part-time First-Time-In-College (FTIC) students; and

Metric 5 - Academic progress rate, which is measured by the 2nd year retention of students with at least a 2.0 grade point average.

Moving forward under the direction of newly-appointed President John Kelly, Florida Atlantic University intends to place strategic emphasis on improving these metrics, both of which can be classified under the category of

current vision is to be a university known for excellent and accessible undergraduate and graduate education, as well as an institution distinguished for the quality of its programs across multiple campuses. This vision can only be attained through a thoughtful and robust plan to promote student success. Accordingly, FAU developed short-term and long-term strategies related graduation and a (rettu-3(ir th)stra)4ross

The Year Ahead – Strategies and Rationale

above-specified SUS metrics would result in achieving this broad goal to promote student success. It should be noted that a short-term increase in retention would likely coincide with long-term increases in graduation rates, and the identified strategies might accomplish dual objectives. Therefore, it would be appropriate for these two SUS metrics of *6-year graduation rate* and *2nd-year retention rate* to serve as a single institutional objective for the coming year.

Per the tables below, specific actionable strategies will be implemented with measurable targets, in order to accomplish this objective of *promoting student success*.

A. Increase the number of academic advisors

| Deadline | December 2014 | May 2015 |
|-------------|--|---|
| Target | Hire 13 new academic advisors | Hire 13 additional academic advisors |
| Measurement | Number of new academic advisors hired | Number of new additional academic advisors hired |
| Expectation | 13 new academic advisors are hired and strategically placed in University Advising Services (5) as departments (8) | 13 additional new academic advisors are hired and strategically placed in departments (8) |

Rationale: Hiring a total of 26 academic advisors in the next year would enable FAU to achieve 300 students to 1 advisor ratio, which is recommended by the National Academic Advising Association. This ratio represents the minimum number of advisors that is adequate for offering students the personal connection to the institution. Studies indicate that these personal connections are vital to retention and success (Nutt, 2010)

B. Purchase and implement advising software

| Deadline | December 2014 | May 2015 |
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| Target | Select and purchase advising software | Implement new advising software package |
| Measurement | Advising software purchasing process completed | Advising software implemented and functional for use |
| Expectation | Starfish advising software is installed on university servers. Training is coordinated | 100% of advisors (83) are trained and using new advising system with students |

Rationale: FAU currently has no campus-wide advising software in place. Individual units have maintained their own software, and some units have maintained advising notes on paper only. The purchase of new software will enable us to do the following.

1. Create a more seamless advising system. Notes about students in their first two years that are kept by the central advising office will be visible to advisors within the academic units. This will facilitate a global strengths and areas that require improvement.
2. Monitor participation in tutoring sessions and Supplemental Instruction, which is an integral component of the advising software. Advisors will be able to see the extent to which students have availed themselves of academic support services and better monitor those who have not followed the recommendations of advisors.
3. Identify at-risk students. Faculty will use the system to identify students at risk. The system also links to Blackboard, where many faculty members maintain grades. Advisors can use the information to commence an intervention program with the student.
4. Monitor the success of advisors in working with students. Advising units will be asked to meet metrics (meetings with students, meeting with students deemed at risk, etc.) deemed necessary to improve student retention and timely graduation.

C. Launch Jump Start pilot for undergraduates admitted in summer

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| Deadline | December 2014 | May 2015 |
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| Target | First cohort will have completed summer portion of pilot and initiated special advising process | First cohort will have received special advising, and FAU will conduct assessment of program |
| Measurement | Number of students in first cohort who have completed summer portion of pilot and initiated special advising process | Number of students in first cohort who have completed spring semester with at least 2.0 GPA Assessment of program completed |
| Expectation | 125 Students have completed summer portion of pilot and initiated special advising process | 50% of the 125 students are retained and complete spring semester with at least 2.0 GPA or higher |

Rationale: Currently, 30 percent of FAU freshmen enter the second year with a GPA below 2.0. The Jump Start program, which focuses on first-year students, is modeled

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| Measurement | Percentage of baccalaureate programs with completed Flight Plan templates | Percentage of baccalaureate programs with completed Flight Plans templates |
| Expectation | 65% (64 of 98) of baccalaureate programs have completed Flight Plan templates | 100% of baccalaureate programs completed Flight Plans for all enrolled 2014-15 FTIC students |

Rationale: Students need step-by-step roadmaps and intrusive guidance to on-time completion. Such tools save students time and money and significantly boost their success. National models for guided pathways to success have resulted in positive outcomes (Complete College America, 2012). Similarly, a recent report on undergraduate trends in enrollment m

strategy for four-year public universities (Noel-Levitz, 2013). At FAU, these Flight Plans will enable advisors to track student progression through a program, as well as notify advisors and students when they have deviated from their plans.

E. Launch bachelors of general studies degree program

| Deadline | December 2014 | May 2015 |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Target | Approval of new degree program by FAU Faculty Senate Committees | Approval of new degree program by FAU Board of Trustees |
| Measurement | Initiated approval process for new degree program with FAU Faculty Senate Committees | Initiated new degree program approval by FAU Board of Trustees |

F. Launch "Major KnOWLedge" early career exploration module

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| Deadline | December 2014 | May 2015 |
| Target | First cohort will have completed module | |

forward to identifying and removing barriers to graduation, in order to ensure that even more of