



Retention-Graduation Mapping Report Indiana University Bloomington (IU Bloomington)

A) Retention-Graduation Mapping Project Undertaken:

In Spring 2016 through Summer 2016, Halualani & Associates analyzed the currently active retention-graduation efforts that have been implemented by Indiana University Bloomington (hereafter IU Bloomington). We define a “retention-graduation effort” as “an institutional activity, program, or action that indirectly and directly contributes to the student success and completion of college for historically underrepresented and diverse undergraduate students.” Moreover, Halualani & Associates has created a preselected list of 63 optimal retention-graduation effort types (22 standard, 36 targeted, and 5 signature) that according to higher education research studies and demonstrated institutional record analyses (as concluded by scholars like Estella Bensimon, Sylvia Hurtado, Vincent Tinto, among others), significantly factor in college completion for diverse students in terms of academic preparation, the creation of campus belonging and connection, and the development of academic and social support systems for students of various backgrounds (and with varying entry points into higher education).¹ This preselected list of retention-graduation efforts include the following categories:

- **standard (baseline-impact potential) practice:** an activity, program, or action that all higher educational institutions typically implement for student success (for e.g., academic support centers, orientation sessions, peer mentoring). These are practices that most to all colleges and universities should have in place;
- **targeted (moderate impact-potential) practice:** an activity, program, or action that is specific to and customized for various diverse and historically underrepresented students (for e.g., ethnic cultural centers, scaffolded financial support-course offerings-leadership development programs for specific gender, racial, ethnic, first generation groups of students); these practices carry moderate impact potential;
- **signature (high impact-potential) practice:** an activity, program, or action that is unique, innovative, ground-breaking, and or potentially more impactful in its approach to college completion, student success, and the creation of stepping stones for excellence for diverse students (for e.g., research collaboratives that connect faculty with students, special initiatives, strategic retention planning); these practices carry high impact potential.

We used the aforementioned preselected list (and categories of practices) to examine the quantity, quality, and range of current (active) retention-graduation efforts at IU Bloomington.

¹ Martínez-Alemán, A. M., Pusser, B., & Bensimon, E. M. (Eds.). (2015). *Critical Approaches to the Study of Higher Education: A Practical Introduction*. JHU Press.

Examples of categories of practices from Halualani & Associates' preselected list **include (but are not limited to)** the following:

Halualani & Associates' Preselected Optimal Retention-Graduation Effort/Practice Types

Standard Practices	Targeted Practices	Signature Practices
Academic Outreach	Academic Goal Setting & Planning Sessions	Research Institutes with Direct Student Links
Academic Resource Center	Accelerated/ Fast-tracked Developmental Education	Strategic Retention Planning
Academic Support Services	Cultural/Ethnic Centers	Student-Faculty Research Projects
Advising Through Majors	Customized Financial Aid/Scholarship Programs	Targeted Initiatives That Arise From the Institution-of-Focus
Assessment/Tracking System	Ethnic-Based Advising Centers	Faculty Trainings on Pedagogy, Engaging Students, & or Advising (all of those terms)
Disability Services	Faculty Training	Structures of Belonging
First Year Experience Programs (Low-Level/Basic)	Instruction at Cultural/Ethnic Centers	
Formal Advising Center	Learning Communities	
Intensive Early Advising	Living Learning Communities	
McNair Scholars	Peer Advising Effort	
Peer Mentor Efforts	Programs/Efforts Specifically for: All Students of Color (African American, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, Latino/a), Commuter Students, Female Students, First Generation Students, Foster Care Youth Students, LGBTQIA Students, Military/Veteran Students, Older Aged, Students With Disabilities, Transfer Students	
Referral Process	Remediation/Instruction	
Retention Report(s)	Retention Administrators/Roles	
Specialized Orientation Programs/Sessions	Retention Grant	
Stress Management Sessions	Retention Task Forces	
Student Clubs/Organizations	Rigorous Data Dashboards, Metrics, & Benchmarks	
Study Skills Training/Workshops	Specialized Retention Evaluations of Services	
Summer Bridge/Pre-College Preparation Programs	Specialized Technology for Tracking/Self-Assessment	
TRIO Programs & Departments	Student Employment Programs	
Tutoring	Supplemental instruction	
Writing Center/Instruction		

B) Key Findings:

Through the retention-graduation effort analysis, we conclude that **IU Bloomington has 172 active retention-graduation efforts for diverse students in place which covered an astounding 94% of our preselected list of optimal retention-graduation practices.** More specifically, IU Bloomington has 95% (21) of the standard practice/effort types, 92% (33) of the targeted practice/effort types, and 100% (5) of the signature practice/effort types in our preselected list of optimal retention-graduation practices. **Our mapping underscores that IU Bloomington has clearly built up an outstanding and multi-layered infrastructure for college completion.**

Specifically, we found the following:

- **IU Bloomington’s current retention-graduation efforts are institutionalized for the “long haul.”** 98% (120) of these efforts were institutionalized in the university infrastructure and appear to have a life span of 5-7+ years (beyond the next strategic planning cycle). Thus, these efforts were not temporary, one-shot occurrences, thereby demonstrating a sincere commitment on the part of IU Bloomington towards academic success and college completion of its diverse students.
- **IU Bloomington currently possesses a foundation for ensuring the student success and college completion of diverse and historically underrepresented students.** We found that IU Bloomington had 122 retention-graduation efforts that spanned our preselected list of optimal retention-graduation practices. Only 8 practices in our preselected list, were not present or fully developed. 46% (56) of these current retention-graduation efforts were targeted practices customized for specific diverse groups and ones that indicate moderate impact on student success, inclusion, and belonging. 35% (43) were standard practices or typical, expected retention-graduation efforts that most (if not all) higher educational institutions have in their infrastructures. 19% (23) of IU Bloomington’s current retention-graduation efforts were signature practices or ones that are uniquely focused on college completion and represent novel, high-impact potential approaches to fostering student success and excellence (as identified below).
- **As a significant finding, IU Bloomington features ALL of the signature, high-impact potential practice types in our preselected list as delineated below.** For example, IU Bloomington featured 23 of these signature (high impact-potential) practice types

Signature (High Impact-Potential) Practice	Student-Faculty Research Projects
Signature (High Impact-Potential) Practice	Trainings on pedagogy, engaging students, & or advising (all of those terms)
Signature (High Impact-Potential) Practice	Targeted Initiatives
Signature (High Impact-Potential) Practice	Strategic Retention Planning
Signature (High Impact-Potential) Practice	Research Institutes with Direct Student Links

- **When compared to Halualani & Associates' optimal retention-graduation efforts, IU Bloomington featured a varied range of key retention-graduation effort types.** For example, IU Bloomington has implemented more summer bridge/pre-college programs (12%, 15), targeted retention-graduation initiatives (11%, 13), retention grants (7%, 8), living learning communities (5%, 6), and retention administrators/roles (4%, 5), among other retention-graduation practices.
- **IU Bloomington's current record of institutional retention-graduation actions reflects a concerted effort to create an infrastructural pathway of student interest/motivation, access, academic preparation and on boarding, and identity-based connection and social support.** This can be seen in the number and quality of strong summer bridge/pre-college programs, academic support programs, retention-graduation initiatives, identity-based programs and centers, and mentoring/peer mentoring mechanisms at IU Bloomington.
- **The majority of IU Bloomington's retention-graduation efforts are customized for specific diverse groups as opposed to the generalized mainstream audience.** 66% (80) of these efforts focus on various identity-based groups while 34% (42) of the efforts were for all students. More specifically, of the efforts that emphasize diverse groups, these were geared for: multiple historically underrepresented students (African American, Hispanic/Latino/a, Asian American, Native American), female students, first-generation students, GLBT students, international students, veteran/military students, and students with disabilities.
- **On a positive note, IU Bloomington's retention-graduation efforts placed the "onus" on the institution to create a pathway for the students to join and participate in such an effort as opposed to having it completely fall on the shoulders of the student to locate this effort and take it up on her/his own.** 84% (103) of IU Bloomington's current retention-graduation efforts are actively propelled by IU Bloomington (the institution) to reach students in need.
- **IU Bloomington's retention-graduation efforts mostly target the larger undergraduate level of students.** 83% (101) of the active retention-graduation practices target the undergraduate stage of college in general while the remaining efforts focus on pre-college and first-year stages of college.
- **The active retention-graduation efforts at IU Bloomington work to develop the behavioral and social/interactional aspects of the undergraduate student experience.** 55% (111) of these efforts strive to develop the needed behaviors of IU Bloomington students for student success such as study skills, time management, planning one's major and academic study, and academic preparation in core areas. 38% (77) of these efforts aim to provide the social/interactional support and climate for IU Bloomington students to create peer connections and develop campus belonging, especially for historically underrepresented and marginalized students. Behavioral and social/interactional aspects of the undergraduate student experience were especially emphasized in efforts that were customized for multiple historically underrepresented students. As a point of contrast, only 6% (13) of current retention-graduation efforts were

focused on developing the affective-emotional aspects of the student experience, or feelings about college, academic self-esteem and self-concept, and coping with pressures. However, the efforts that spoke to the affective dimension of the student experience targeted multiple historically underrepresented students and female students.

- **The majority of IU Bloomington’s retention-graduation efforts are connected to academic departments and units.** 74% (90) of these efforts are integrated with related academic departments and units while 26% (32) are not.
- **IU Bloomington’s current retention-graduation efforts speak to multiple aspects of diversity.** These efforts encompass 13 different definitions of diversity with Race/Ethnicity (24%, 90), Gender, (21%, 79), Intersectionalities (15%, 57), and Socioeconomic Status (14%, 52) representing the leading aspects.
- **In reviewing the language and discursive terms employed by its active retention-graduation efforts, IU Bloomington makes sense of and presents “retention-graduation” in terms of the historical underrepresentation of students in higher education.** 65% (79) of these efforts highlight the importance of creating optimal educational pathways for historically underrepresented students while 25% (30) emphasize academic preparation of all students.

C) Recommended Next Action Steps:

In terms of the delineated findings, we recommend the following next action steps:

Recommended Action Step	Target Population
1. Design a rigorous impact-assessment protocol for all retention-graduation efforts and programs with key performance indicators, milestones, and benchmarks (and a schedule of ideal targets along the way). We recommend that retention services create “built-in” mechanisms for ongoing evaluation of such services.	Students
2. We recommend that retention services create “built-in” mechanisms for ongoing evaluation of such services.	Students
3. Continue to link current and future retention-graduation efforts with academic departments and units for maximum academic engagement.	Students
4. Maintain and increase the retention-graduation efforts that develop the social/interactional aspects of the student experience. These efforts help to establish structures of belonging for diverse students and can make a significant difference in retention.	Students
5. Ensure that your retention-graduation efforts target different student levels especially the 2nd year, transfer year, and book-end years (4th, 5th, 6th years of college).	Students

Recommended Action Step	Target Population
<p>6. Weigh the need for undeveloped targeted and signature (high impact-potential) practices such as: a formal, streamlined referral process through which students are “referred” to the proper office or unit to help with their student success and college completion; formal, multi-year retention task forces; and programs for commuter and foster care youth students.</p>	<p>Students</p>
<p>7. Continue to embed the successful (impactful) retention-graduation efforts in academic majors, General Education, and through the regular routines and pathways of students</p>	<p>Students</p>
<p>8. Activate a strategic retention planning process through which IU Bloomington identifies key areas for improvement (as determined by recommended action step #1) and implements responsive action steps.</p>	<p>Students</p>