



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

A) Retention-Graduation Mapping Project Undertaken:

Over an eight-month period, Halualani & Associates conducted an innovative type of mapping analysis for IU Northwest. This mapping analysis was a “retention-graduation effort” mapping through which all of IU Northwest’s current college completion efforts, programs, and initiatives for diverse students were examined in terms of the range and quality of institutional activity. The Halualani & Associates team defines 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.” In this retention-graduation effort mapping, 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.

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.

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

B) Key Findings:

The conducted retention-graduation effort analysis reveals that **IU Northwest has a solid foundation of retention-graduation efforts for diverse students. It currently has 62 active retention-graduation efforts for diverse students in place which covered 76% of our preselected list of optimal retention-graduation practices.** More specifically, IU Northwest has 82% (18) of the standard practice/effort types, 56% (20) of the targeted practice/effort types, and 20% (1) of the signature practice/effort types in our preselected list of optimal retention-graduation practices.

Specifically, we found the following:

- IU Northwest's retention-graduation efforts are all institutionalized and framed for the long-term.** 100% (62) of the college completion efforts are fully institutionalized and affixed to permanent programs and pathways for students. In addition, 85% (53) of these efforts are slated to last for the next five to seven years (in terms of the next strategic planning cycle) and possibly longer. Such efforts were attached to IU Northwest's organizational structure and resource centers. All of IU Northwest's main divisions contributed to these efforts with Academic Affairs and Diversity, Equity, & Multicultural Affairs as the leaders.
- IU Northwest has mostly the standard (baseline impact-potential) and targeted (moderate impact-potential) practice effort types.** 52% (32) of IU Northwest's retention-graduation efforts are important standard (or what most institutions have in place) (baseline impact-potential) effort types while 47% (29) represent targeted (or efforts that are designed for specific groups) (moderate impact-potential) effort types.
- IU Northwest features a wide range of retention-graduation impact practices.** For example, 39 different types of impact practices characterize IU Northwest's retention-graduation efforts. These include the following as the leading types: academic support services (11%, 7), programs specifically for military/veteran students (8%, 5), living learning communities (6%, 4), retention reports (6%, 4), support services/counseling services (5%, 3), faculty training (3%, 2), formal advising center (3%, 2), student employment programs (3%, 2), peer mentor efforts (3%, 2), and specialized orientation/program sessions (3%, 2).
- IU Northwest spans a variety of effort types.** More specifically, IU Northwest's retention-graduation efforts can be categorized as: identity-based programs (21%, 13), academic support programs (18%, 11), institutional research reports (10%, 6), advising outlets (6%, 4), academic skill development programs (6%, 4), living learning communities (6%, 4), health & wellness programs (3%, 2), mentoring/peer mentoring (3%, 2), orientation programs (3%, 2), student employment programs (3%, 2), and trainings/workshops (3%, 2), as the leading categories.
- IU Northwest's retention-graduation efforts are mostly framed for the larger (mainstream) student population as opposed to specific groups.** 77% (48) of IU Northwest's retention-graduation efforts are framed for all student to partake in while 23% (14) are designed for specific groups of focus. These specific groups of focus consist of: active duty/veterans/military students, historically

underrepresented students (namely African American and Hispanic/Latino/a students), students with disabilities, and female students.

- **IU Northwest's active retention-graduation efforts are mostly designed for all student class levels (or those in general).** 89% (55) of these efforts are designed for all student class levels (first year, second year, third year, fourth year and above). 10% (6) of these efforts were framed for the first year stage while the remaining was for the pre-college stage.
- **The retention-graduation efforts at IU Northwest focus primarily on building the behavioral skills and cognitive gains of students for student success and college completion.** 49% (61) of the efforts focus on the behavioral dimensions of the student experience in terms of developing academic preparation and study skills. 22% (27) of the efforts emphasize the cognitive dimension of the student experience in terms of honing one's knowledge, comprehension, problem-solving, and decision-making domains. 17% (21) of the efforts touch on the social-interactive aspects of the student experience in terms of providing interactional opportunities and communities for belonging and peer support. Only 12% (15) of the efforts emphasized the affective-emotional dimension which touches upon student self-confidence and feelings about learning, their education, and their future. When the affective-emotional dimension was emphasized, it was done so in the efforts for historically underrepresented students and students with disabilities. The efforts that engaged the social-interactive dimension were also designed for historically underrepresented students.
- **Over half of IU Northwest's retention-graduation efforts were integrated with and connected to academic programs and departments.** As a marker of high impact-potential, 52% (30) of IU Northwest's efforts are linked to academic programs, departments, and units which enables college completion initiatives to be directly connected to student coursework and processes.
- **IU Northwest's retention-graduation efforts speak to many different aspects of diversity.** These efforts speak to 11 different aspects of diversity such as: intersectionalities (29%, 41), broad culture (25%, 35), socioeconomic status (11%, 15), race/ethnicity (10%, 14), gender (9%, 13), active duty/veteran/military (6%, 8), age (6%, 8), disabilities (3%, 4), international/global (1%, 2), language (1%, 2), and nationality (1%, 1).
- **IU Northwest's retention-graduation efforts use language and terminology that emphasizes academic preparation and the need to serve historically underrepresented students.** For example, 44% (27) of the efforts frame college completion in terms of the academic preparation of students while 27% (17) of the efforts highlight the importance of reaching and facilitating the success of historically underrepresented students. 19% (12) of the efforts stress the need to develop the whole student (behaviorally, emotionally, perspective, cognitively).

C) Recommended Next Action Steps:

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

Recommended Action Step	Target Population
1. Conduct an annual assessment of IU Northwest's retention-graduation outcomes across all student demographics and conditions (first year full-time, transfer year part-time, transfer year full-time, stop outs, subsequent years) in order to pinpoint stoppage points, pressure points, and optimal conditions for degree attainment.	Students
2. Continue to connect retention-graduation efforts to academic programs, departments, units, and pathways for the maximum effect of engaging students in their academic majors.	Students
3. Examine the extent to which historically underrepresented students discover and participate in retention-graduation efforts via broad-based (mainstreamed) appeals or appeals/invitations based on their specific identities. Then, as a result of this, plan the most optimal outreach strategy for college completion efforts for historically underrepresented students	Students
4. Explore the possibility of creating any needed interventions for specific student class levels (transfer year, third to fourth year) and or for any critical time period that reveals the most need for guidance and academic/social support for students.	Students
5. Create more specific-group focused retention-graduation interventions for historically underrepresented students (as determined by Recommended Action Step #1).	Students
6. Engage all of the dimensions of the student experience (behavioral, social-interactional, affective-emotional, and cognitive) in retention-graduation efforts for optimal student success.	Students
7. Develop a rigorous and long-term strategic retention plan through which goals, targets, action steps, and performance measures/ indicators are specified in terms of college completion gaps.	Students
8. Examine the extent to which IU Northwest's college completion efforts would significantly benefit from the implementation of the following types of standard (baseline impact-potential), targeted (moderate impact-potential), and signature (high impact-potential) practices for college completion: a formal referral process for students to troubleshoot and navigate IU Northwest policies, processes, and pathways; specific resources and hubs for diverse students, peer advising resources, targeted initiatives, strategic retention planning, and training for faculty members on how best to advise, mentor, and engage students for their success.	Students