



SUCCESS CHALLENGE PLANS

**A Synopsis of Plans
Submitted by Universities
for FY 2006**

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Introduction

As a central component of the Ohio Board of Regents' performance-based *Challenge* funding initiative, the Success Challenge program was established in FY 1998 in House Bill 215, the FY 1998-FY 1999 operating appropriations act.

From its onset, the Success Challenge program has represented a financial incentive for the state's 13 four-year public universities to (1) help undergraduate students successfully complete baccalaureate programs in a timely manner (i.e., four to six years), and (2) to help at-risk students successfully complete baccalaureate programs. An at-risk student is defined as any undergraduate student who is presently eligible or was eligible for a need-based Ohio Instructional Grant during the previous ten years.

As a condition for receiving Success Challenge funds in the FY 2006-FY 2007 biennium, each university is required to submit a plan outlining how its Success Challenge allocation will be used to serve at-risk students. The guiding language can be found in § 209.63.33 of House Bill 66, the FY 2006-2007 budget act:

“An eligible institution shall not receive its share of this distribution until it has submitted a plan that addresses how the [Success Challenge] subsidy will be used to better serve at-risk students and increase their likelihood of successful completion of a bachelor's degree program.”

While the legislation does not establish specific criteria, universities were asked to address the following questions:

1. How have Success Challenge funds generally been used to serve at-risk students?
2. More specifically, how have Success Challenge funds been used to help improve baccalaureate degree attainment by at-risk students?
3. How do the programs and initiatives funded in #1 and #2 above align with the mission of your institution?

The following is a compilation of one-page synopses that summarize the Success Challenge plans submitted by each university for FY 2006. In most cases, the text is taken verbatim from the actual plans.

University of Akron

The University of Akron has undertaken several initiatives to assist students in the attainment of a baccalaureate degree. The University has established numerous programs particularly targeted at first-year students.

The University of Akron has also begun initiatives specifically designed to help at-risk students attain a baccalaureate degree. These initiatives include but are not limited to:

- **New Student Orientation:** This is required for all undergraduate students, and consists of an overview of academic policies, placement testing in math, reading and writing, an individual advising appointment, class registration, and a campus tour.
- **Student Success Seminar:** A required course carrying two baccalaureate credits that focuses on active learning strategies. Coursework includes exposure to and experience with existing and emerging technology.
- **Majors Mosaic:** A fair in which faculty from each degree-granting department participate to provide information on all available majors.
- **Academic Advising:** Success Challenge dollars have helped the University fund six additional academic advisers for undergraduates.
- **Learning Communities:** Though not residential in nature, the University's learning communities focus on active learning strategies, classroom integration and involvement, and focus on specific sets of majors and types of students (i.e., adult and nontraditional learners).
- **Writing and Mathematics Laboratories and the Study Skills Center:** In these labs, students work with instructors to strengthen their basic skills. These services are fee to undergraduates.
- **Learning Assistant Program:** Since 2002, University College has collaborated with the degree-granting colleges to provide a faculty mentor/learning assistant program to help students selected and manage the right learning strategies and navigate through the curriculum.
- **UA Adult Focus:** The University of Akron is the *only* public university in the nation that has been recognized by both the American Council on Education and the Lumina Foundation for academic support services for low-income adult learners.

Each activity supported by Success Challenge dollars is aligned with the University of Akron's mission as an open-access, state-assisted university serving the state of Ohio. In its strategic planning document, student success is delineated as the University's number one priority.

Bowling Green State University

The Academic Plan provides the method for transforming BGSU into a premier learning community. The Plan identifies three dimensions of the “character” of the BGSU learning community: Inquiry, Engagement and Achievement. These dimensions organize the Plan to ensure the success and graduation of all students, particularly at-risk students. Inquiry refers to efforts that promote intellectual growth, particularly in the first year. Engagement refers to efforts to promote student participation and interaction within the academic community. Achievement refers to programs that focus on ensuring student retention through academic support. This Plan is divided into three sections, Inquiry, Engagement and Achievement. Some examples of each are presented below.

Inquiry:

- The **Academic Investment in Math and Science** is designed to increase the number science and math degrees among women and students of color, who are regarded as at-risk because relatively few achieve degrees in these disciplines.
- The **Chapman Learning Community** at Kohl Hall is a living-learning program that offers general education credit courses in a residential setting for mostly first-year students.
- The **Bowling Green eXperience** or **BGX** is designed to help first-year students develop the skills and disposition to think critically about values and prepare them for lives as reflective citizens.

Engagement

- The **Springboard** program pairs first-year students with personal coaches, such as faculty members, staff members, graduate students, or alumnus. Springboard students and their coaches go through a series of interactive exercises designed to strengthen skills in communication, analysis, problem-solving, leadership, and self-assurance.
- The **Admissions Toll-Free Number** provides enhanced access to admissions information and referrals to selected offices critical to enrollment processes.

Achievement

- Serving mostly at-risk students, the University’s Office of **Academic Enhancement** provides academic tutoring and advising in writing, math, and reading.
- One additional **Arts & Sciences Retention Officer** was hired with Success Challenge funds to work with freshmen and sophomores to improve retention.
- The Office of Student Financial Aid receives Success Challenge funding to help improve aid management and expedite the development of online services.

Central State University

As Ohio's only public historically black university, Central State is dedicated to reaching out to underserved populations and at-risk students. The majority of CSU students come from Ohio's urban centers, mainly Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus and Dayton. Most students also come from families with annual incomes of less than \$30,000, and a large proportion of CSU students (35%) receive need-based Ohio Instructional Grants and are thus classified as being at-risk.

Below is a sample of some of the programs CSU has established to help at-risk students earn a baccalaureate degree.

- A **diagnostic and monitoring system** to identify and track students in need of academic help was implemented in autumn 2005. Academic advisors meet with students to develop plans and activities to help them meet academic challenges.
- The **Honors Program** provides third- and fourth-year students with the opportunity to serve as paid tutors for underclassmen in the final two years of their undergraduate study when federal work study funds are not typically available.
- The **Learning Community** offers integrated activities, designated residential space, group study sessions and faculty coordination, which have improved students' academic performance and retention.
- The **Supplemental Instruction Program** is available to all students enrolled in supported course sections. Within this program, the **Tutorial Services Program** emerged as a strong component in helping students complete degrees in a timely manner.
- The **First-Year Experience** program is comprised of two required one-credit courses designed to provide students with the tools needed to succeed academically. The courses focus on study and research skills, problem solving, time management and creativity.
- The **CSU Writing Center** provides students with assistance in writing, computer usage, Internet browsing, word processing and other research tools. The Center allows tutors and associate faculty to help students with any writing project.
- **Student Support Services** is designed to help students acquire the basic knowledge and skills that are essential to timely degree completion. The purpose of this program is to provide an individualized support network that is comprehensive in scope and which encourages students to reach their potential.

The University of Cincinnati

The University of Cincinnati is proud of the assistance it provides through Success Challenge Programs and its impact on retention and graduation rates. First-year retention rates for first-time, full-time students at the University of Cincinnati have shown an increase since the 1999-2000 academic year, the year prior to Success Challenge implementation. UC's analyses show that students respond differently to programs based on their academic preparedness upon entry. Students with weaker academic skills are most impacted by academic interventions. Students on the stronger end of the scale are most positively impacted by programs designed to enhance social and campus integration. Multiple interventions have an enhanced impact on student retention.

As such, the University of Cincinnati has developed a full range of Success Challenge Programs. Some of the programs UC has approved for funding for the 2005-2006 academic year are described below.

The Arts & Sciences Writing Center. \$55,000 The Writing Center is a free tutorial service intended to help students become more effective writers and more complex thinkers. Teachers of writing who are particularly experienced in a one-on-one approach to writing instruction staff the Center.

Math Placement Testing. \$3,000 All new students who are required to take math courses take a placement test similar to the English placement test. This program also standardizes the test across all colleges and allows students to be placed in the appropriate level course.

Honors Orientation and Freshman Seminar. \$31,000 Funding is provided for a portion of the costs of orientation. A redesigned seminar is being offered to get students excited about intellectual matters so students are committed to their studies and so they will be retained and graduated.

Career Navigator and Special Topics in Career Development. \$118,000 Funds are provided for these programs that assist students in choosing a career goal. Career Navigator is a six-step program to assist in selecting a major or choosing a career. The special topics course assists students in their career decision-making.

First Year Experience and Learning Communities. \$388,800 The first year experience programs offer assistance for students to successfully transition to college. Personalized programs of seminars, advisers and college success skills classes assist students. Learning Communities are an integral part of the first-year experience. It provides an exciting way for first-year students to build a network of study partners and friends. These small communities allow for a real-world approach to university life, one that offers unlimited opportunities for growth and success as students pursue their goals

Cleveland State University

In its efforts to assist at-risk students, Cleveland State first set out to identify such students who fall into at least one of the following categories:

- Students eligible for need-based Ohio Instructional Grants
- All first-year students, particularly those with GPAs below 2.0
- Undecided-major students
- First generation college students
- Under-prepared students

Cleveland State employs a variety of programs to help improve the likelihood that its at-risk students will succeed in college. Below is a sample of some of programs and initiatives offered at Cleveland State:

- Through the **First Year Experience & Advising** program (FYE), each student is assigned a personal academic advisor until the student is accepted into an academic department or college.
- In a seamless fashion, the Sophomore & General Studies Advising Office helps transition students from their FYE advisor when students attain sophomore status. Advisors maintain contact with academic departments as their students matriculate.
- The **Collegiate Studies Developmental Instruction** program helps under-prepared students catch up in basic subject areas such as math, reading and English.
- **Tutoring Programs** assist students having difficulty in the successful completion of academic coursework and are available in the majority of first-year academic subjects and for all FYE students.
- The voluntary **Mentoring Program** located in the Department of Student Life provides mentoring by CSU faculty and staff to all interested new students.
- **LINK** is a comprehensive minority recruitment and retention initiative that utilizes career development, academic enhancement, corporate/professional mentoring and external scholarship support to facilitate academic success among minority students.
- The **African, Hispanic, Asian & Native American (AHANA)** program assists under-represented minority students with their transition to and matriculation through the University in a coordinated effort with other CSU services. In an effort to improve retention and graduation rates among these students, AHANA provides academic, social, career and personal support.

Kent State University

During the past two years, Kent State University has used Success Challenge funds to maintain and enhance a number of programs and initiatives that assist at-risk students in completing their degrees. These programs and initiatives span different types of support from basic academic skills improvement, through establishing and maintaining learning communities in residence halls, to providing frequent, intrusive academic advising that keeps at-risk students on track to timely graduation. The success of these programs and initiatives depends upon effective collaboration among all divisions of Kent State University.

KSU's Success Challenge programs align closely with the University's role and mission which is in part to "prepare students for responsible citizenship and productive careers, broaden intellectual perspectives and foster ethical and humanitarian values." More specifically, they align with the four strategic principles that guide strategic planning at Kent State University:

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| Strategic Principle #1 | Build and sustain relationships that foster success. |
| Strategic Principle #2 | Encourage innovation in learning. |
| Strategic Principle #3 | Engage with the world beyond our campuses. |
| Strategic Principle #4 | Focus on those we serve. |

Finally, these programs and initiatives are linked to Kent State's current process for re-accreditation, the Academic Quality Improvement Project (AQIP) more fully described at <http://dept.kent.edu/aqip/>

Kent State's Success Challenge programs and initiatives include:

- Improved identification of and orientation for at-risk students.
- Supplemental instruction for students enrolled in high-risk courses.
- Student living-learning communities, Freshman Interest Groups and faculty learning communities.
- Improved academic advising for at-risk students to increase retention and ensure timely progress to graduation;
- Extension of the KSU Tutoring Program to serve greater numbers of at-risk students.
- Provost's Initiative to revise curricula for English and mathematics courses.
- Summer Transition programs for underrepresented at-risk students.
- Scholarship and financial support to promote retention and graduation for at-risk students.
- Computer-adaptive basic skills assessment/course placement and basic skills enhancement courses in reading, study skills and mathematics.
- Implementation of technological services to facilitate continuing enrollment and increase the graduation rate.

Miami University

Miami University prides itself on its institution-wide efforts to ensure the retention and timely graduation of its students. For many years the University has provided programs targeted to student retention and graduation and, with the advent of Success Challenge funds, has strengthened existing programs and launched new initiatives. The programmatic objectives of Success Challenge are wholly consistent with the University's mission.

Success Challenge funds have been integrated within the established operating budget of the University both in support of ongoing programs and as seed money to encourage new initiatives with the promise of furthering retention and graduation. A strategic tenet behind many of Miami's programs, supported amply by research, is that students engaged in the life of the University are more likely to thrive in their educational environments, persist in their studies and achieve their degree aspirations. Engagement occurs in many places, including classrooms and laboratories, in residence-life settings, through co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and within the context of student employment. A second strategic tenet is that of environment. The University seeks through its programming initiatives to build a caring, supportive and diverse community with which students can identify and within which they can feel sense.

As reported in earlier Success Challenge plans, the University does not utilize *a* single definition for "at risk" students. Alternatively the University targets programs and activities to many populations of students.

Key on-going programs and functions that Success Challenge funds help to sustain include the following:

- Learning Disabilities Services
- Scholastic Enhancement Program
- Tutorial Assistance Program
- Supplemental Instruction
- Advising
- Residence Halls
- Financial Assistance Counseling
- Student Scholarships
- Faculty Development
- Ensuring Success in Gateway Courses in Science
- Recruiting for Success
- Assessing Student Outcomes in Cultural Competence.
- First Year Seminars

Ohio State University

The Ohio State University is continually initiating new efforts and expanding existing programs that seek to provide an excellent educational experience for our undergraduate students. Supporting successful degree completion for students “at risk” because of financial disadvantage, and timely degree completion for all students, is an essential element of the university’s goals as well as those of the state of Ohio.

Advising and degree planning with students considered at-risk is premised on communicating expectations of success, and providing the necessary support to achieve that success. This view represents a mindset shift from traditional approaches in which potentially at-risk students were expected to need assistance, creating a climate of lowered expectations. Higher expectations of students are supported by the data showing that Ohio State students enter the university better prepared than ever before, as indicators of academic preparation for Ohio State’s entering class increase each year. At-risk students along with all others benefit from this atmosphere of high achievement.

For minority students, who have traditionally experienced lower retention and graduation rates than the student population as a whole at Ohio State, measures of progress in creating a climate supportive of success indicate overall improvement. First-year retention of Black, non-Hispanic freshmen entering in 2004 was at a high of 88.1%, compared to 75.8% for those entering in 1995. Six-year graduation rates for these students rose over 12 percentage points for the class entering in 1999 compared to 1995, from 42.8% to 54.9%.

At-risk students also benefit from the initiatives to support timely degree completion, such as the more-personalized advising systems put in place that provide stability for students over the course of their academic careers. Also notable are the university’s strong efforts to ensure financial aid for needy students, including many work-study opportunities. Research suggests such opportunities help support students’ academic progress not only financially, but also by increasing their sense of engagement and inclusion with the campus. Finally, the programs directed at helping students envision and attain their career paths help support the success of at-risk students by facilitating their transition out of the university and into their professions.

Students at Ohio State have available to them a wide array of support services and are encouraged to participate in as many programs as are relevant to their needs. Programs are sponsored by many units, including the Office of Minority Affairs, a long established vehicle of Ohio State with a specific mandate to recruit, retain, and ultimately graduate minority students; the Office of Student Affairs; the Office of Academic Affairs; and by individual colleges and academic departments within the University.

Ohio University

Ohio University has a strong record of retaining and graduating its baccalaureate degree students. The University's 82% retention rate and 70% graduation rate for first-year students and timely baccalaureate degree completion rate are among the highest retention and timely completion rates in Ohio. This achievement is reflected in the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded by Ohio University. In fall 2004, the Ohio University Athens campus enrolled 7.9% of all students attending public university main campuses and graduated 11.4% of all baccalaureate degree recipients.

Ohio University is first among Ohio's state institutions and in the top nine among the 248 national doctoral universities on *U.S. News and World Report's* six-year graduation rate performance index. The institution supports timely degree completion for at-risk students through a commitment to student success, supplemented with a network of programs and services designed to ensure the success of at-risk students.

The programs and services at Ohio University are targeted generally toward students who are at risk for a variety of academic, financial, or other reasons. These programs and services include but are not limited to the following:

- Academic Advancement Center for academically at-risk students
- Computer learning lab and tutorial services
- Supplemental instruction for courses that have high drop or failure rates among freshmen
- College Adjustment Program
- Computer Support Program for commuter freshmen and sophomores
- Office of Diversity for underrepresented minorities
- Learning communities available to all students
- Counseling and psychological services available to all students

Ohio University is actively engaged in efforts to identify at-risk students and ensure that they have the opportunity to complete a baccalaureate degree in a timely fashion. These programs involve substantial commitments of university funding and, in some cases, financial support from external sources. Ohio University actively pursued many Success Challenge program goals prior to the advent of the Success Challenge Program. Accordingly, Success Challenge funding has valued and recognized program priorities that have historically been central to the mission of Ohio University. The availability of Success Challenge funds has enabled Ohio University to continue and expand funding initiatives which were funded internally before the advent of the Success Challenge program.

Shawnee State University

Shawnee State University has used its Success Challenge allocations in a variety of ways to help its at-risk student population succeed. One such example is the University's **Student Success Center**, which addresses the educational, psychosocial and co-curricular needs of students by offering a comprehensive, integrated set of services designed to improve each student's career selection, academic achievement, and graduation success. These services include the First-Year Experience, learning assistance, special needs, academic planning and intrusive program counseling with referrals to other university services. The basic philosophy is that retention, leading to success, is the outcome of such activities and services.

Additionally, Shawnee State employs three strategies, each having a number of sub-components aimed at improving student retention and success:

- **Strategy I: Frontloading the First Year.** This includes profiling each applicant to determine if prospective students are academically at-risk. This in turn allows for optimum placement for enrollees.
- **Strategy II: Access & Success.** A successful first-year experience can only be sustained when there are adequate access and success initiatives in place. Supportive Services for all students must be continued, developed, implemented and evaluated. This includes the provision of tutoring services, organized study groups, career guidance, and the like. Each at-risk student is targeted at critical impact points beginning at the decision state or at the most appropriate notification time.
- **Strategy III: Evaluation.** Programs and initiatives are on a continual evaluation schedule to insure quality delivery and continued access and success for Shawnee State students. Evaluation instruments include student surveys, exit interviews, and monitoring of retention and graduate rates.

University of Toledo

Success Challenge funding at the University of Toledo is best understood in two time-frames: 1999-2004 and 2004 through the present. The 1999-2004 time-frame focused heavily on use of Success Challenge funding to address the needs of students entering UT as undecided in their choice of majors as well as students entering UT under-prepared for college level study. An infrastructure to support the needs of these students was created during this time period. Beginning Spring 2004, Success Challenge funding provided the basis for the First Year Experience (FYE) Program at The University of Toledo. The FYE program is based upon a theoretical model that student success is increased when attention is directed toward orientation, peer mentoring, supplemental instruction and tutoring, focused advising, enhanced classroom experiences, living and learning centers, and out of classroom experiences.

In the 2003-2004 academic year, The University of Toledo developed an extensive, multi-year First Year Experience (FYE) Program as part of implementing its Strategic Plan. A director for UT's FYE Program was hired in January 2004 using Success Challenge funds. Some programs were initiated in spring 2004 while additional programs were added fall 2004 and in subsequent years. A partial list of the FYE Initiatives, supported by Success Challenge funding is presented below:

- Developmental of specialized math courses
- Chem 1200 to help students in a historically high-failure course.
- The Learning Enhancement Center provides supplemental instruction for high-risk students in calculus, biology, and chemistry.
- Life @ College – This program addresses high-risk issues affecting students throughout their college years.
- Residence Life Faculty Friends: Several faculty members have been assigned to residence halls where they collaborate with hall staff to develop a variety of opportunities for faculty-student interactions.
- Primos - Latino peer leaders and a Latino Initiatives Director provide academic advice to Latino students through the academic year.
- A new orientation program was launched fall 2005 for transfer students called Rocket Transition
- Year of the Advisor – This program includes speakers and professional development for advisors working with first year students.
- OAASE - Office of Africa American Student Enrichment.

For the University of Toledo, the rate of baccalaureate recipients who were at-risk was 32%, 33%, 31%, 32%, 30% and 28% for 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004 respectively. Despite the dip in 2004 to 28%, there was actually a significant increase in the absolute numbers of at-risk students who graduated from UT, from 643 in 2003 to 736 in 2004.

Wright State University

Since its inception in the mid-1960's as one of Ohio's state-supported universities, Wright State University has remained true to its mission of providing access and every opportunity for success to the citizens of the Greater Miami Valley and beyond. Thus, as an open admissions institution committed to addressing the educational, social, and cultural needs of the communities it serves, Wright State has for decades provided a rich array of academic and student support services to help all students succeed, but particularly those historically considered to be at-risk because of economic status, racial or ethnic identity, disability, or general academic under-preparedness.

Of the student success programs and services Wright State currently offers, approximately half have either come into existence or been significantly enhanced during the past three to five years, thanks in part to Success Challenge funds. Some of these programs include the following:

- The **University College** focuses attention on the success of first-year students and to help them transition into a major at the end of their first year. This program incrementally accommodates virtually all freshmen in learning communities, a program that has proven to improve student retention and success.
- For years, Wright State has offered **Developmental Education** courses in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The **Student Academic Success Center** offers services to all students, but certain at-risk students are required to visit the Centers regularly. The Center focuses on writing and mathematics.
- Now in its eighth year, the **Continuing Student Loan Program** permits students to borrow up to \$2,000 a year from the University in low interest loans. Students who remain continuously enrolled and graduate are forgiven 50% of the loan.
- The **First Year Experience** brings together under one umbrella academic and student support services
- The **Office of Disability Services** provides support services for disabled students, including students with physical and documented learning disabilities.
- Beyond the above, WSU also offers a number of special programs for under-represented populations, such as the C.J. McLin Jr. Scholars Program; the Wright Math Program; and the Wright STEPP Program housed in the College of Engineering and Computer Science.

Youngstown State University

Youngstown State University's Centennial Strategic Plan identified student retention as a critical issue. YSU offers students a wide range of student services, such as tutorial assistance; learning centers for writing, reading and math; counseling and health services; and career testing, planning and placement. Success Challenge funding has enabled YSU to strengthen its commitment to maintaining the comprehensive support structures that are necessary to increase the level of success and rate at which students progress to graduation. The following programs are examples of those supported with Success Challenge funds at YSU:

- The **Center for Student Progress** focuses on student retention and progression. The center served 6,657 students during the 2004-2005 academic year, including 1,720 at-risk students (i.e., OIG-eligible).
- **Supplemental Instruction** is an academic support program that utilizes peer-assisted study sessions targeting historically difficult, gateway courses by offering regularly-scheduled out-of-class review sessions for all students. During the 2004-05 school year, 931 students attended these sessions.
- **Tutorial Services** has been expanded to provide assistance for independent study, formation of study groups, review sessions, and computer instruction—all in addition to free tutoring. Approximately 40 tutors provided 2,003 students with tutoring during the 2004-05 year.
- **Expanded Student Outreach** so that all new students receive an initial letter from the Center for Student Progress, pairing them with peer assistants or mentors to provide extended orientation services throughout the entire first year.
- The **Summer Bridge/Bridge & Beyond Learning Community** helps 20 entering minority students transition into college each term, and 87% of the 2004-05 participants were retained after their first year.
- The Gaining Opportunity to Achieve Learning Success—**GOALS**—Learning Community Program assists 42 academically at-risk students through common courses, weekly meetings with a GOALS coordinator, and monthly group activities.
- **Admission Fee Waivers:** Success Challenge funds have supplemented Access Challenge funding to grant fee waivers to students who otherwise could not afford YSU's \$30 application fee.
- A **Tuition Rollback** is awarded to all YSU students pursuing associate degrees. The rollback is \$496 per year for eligible full-time students.