Interdisciplinary Studies

#3 Plan cycle - 3
Plan cycle 2021/2022
7/1/21 - 6/30/22
Performance Objective 1  Increase enrollment, persistence, retention, and graduation rates for each program offered by the department.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark: Increase enrollment by 5% each year, overall and in each program offered by the department.

Prior to 2018-2019, the benchmark was track student enrollments at each level and completers. Maintain or exceed 2014-2015 levels of declared majors:

**AGS - Associate of General Studies**
- **GSTG - General Studies**
  - APNS - Applied and Natural Sciences
  - ARHM - Arts and Humanities
  - BHSC - Behavioral Sciences
- **GSGO - General Studies [Online]**
  - APNS - Applied and Natural Sciences
  - ARHM - Arts and Humanities
  - BHSC - Behavioral Sciences

**BGS - Bachelor of General Studies**
- **GNST - General Studies**
  - APNS - Applied and Natural Sciences
  - ARHM - Arts and Humanities
  - BHSC - Behavioral Sciences
  - TCWR - Technical Writing (effective 202140)
- **GSTG - General Studies [Online]**
  - APNS - Applied and Natural Sciences
  - ARHM - Arts and Humanities
  - BHSC - Behavioral Sciences
  - TCWR - Technical Writing (effective 202140)

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### Notes:
- The table shows enrollment data for different majors across three semesters: Summer, Fall, and Spring.
- The totals for each semester are listed in the grand total row.
- The data is organized by degree and major, with each major having a specific pattern of enrollment across the semesters.
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**Percentage Change between 2017-2018:**

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<th>% Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>GSGO</td>
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**Percentage Change between 2018-2019:**

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</tr>
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<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>2020</td>
<td>6</td>
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Percentage Change between 2020-2021:

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<tr>
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<td>2021</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSTG</td>
<td>2020</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>2021</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
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1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2017-2018:

- The benchmark was not met.
- General Studies continues to be a high demand program among students and enrollment and graduation numbers remain strong (though not back to the benchmark year standards). In the upcoming year we will be removing all associate degree programs from our catalog but will continue to teach out those already in the AGS program. We will also be moving the BGS to an academic department on campus (location to be determined). We have met with the Dean of Liberal Arts (the BGS will be moved under one of his departments) and he has some ideas about marketing this degree through our new partner for online learners.
2018-2019:

- The benchmark was not met in fall but was met in the spring. The decision has been made to keep the AGS program and both the AGS and BGS will be moving under the College of Liberal Arts effective fall 2019. The 5% benchmark seems reasonable to keep.
- The state is promoting Project Win Win which will reach out to students who have completed a substantial number of hours, to encourage them to go back and finish their degree. In preparing for this, McNeese ran a report to determine those students who have already earned enough hours to obtain the AGS degree. We are at the point now of reaching out to those students to see if they would like to receive the AGS (these could begin showing up in the summer 2019 completer numbers). This could add a substantial number of graduates this year in the AGS and hopefully add several readmits to the BGS stats. We will evaluate the effectiveness of this initiative and determine the feasibility of making this an annual effort.

2019-2020:
These are the numbers according to reports and they are less than prior years due to Covid-19 pandemic and hurricanes.

2020-2021:
These are the numbers according to reports and they are less than prior years due to Covid-19 pandemic and hurricanes.

2021-2022:
These are the numbers according to reports and some numbers are less than prior years due to the recovery from Covid-19 pandemic and hurricanes. We are working on boosting enrollment and getting the graduation rate up.

However, the benchmark for GSTG and GNST majors was met. Also, enrollment for GNST increased by 95 students. This may be due to the CompeteLA program that McNeese is participating in with the UL System.

Since GNST is also a completer degree, we may need to adjust the way we do the data.

2 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmarks:

- A persistence rate (retained students from fall Y1 to spring Y1) of 85%.
- A retention rate of 70% from Y1 to Y2.
- A retention rate of 55% from Y2 to Y3.
- A retention rate of 45% from Y3 to Y4.
- A 4-year graduation rate of 35%.
- A 5-year graduation rate of 40%.
- A 6-year graduation rate of 45%.

Major:

- GNST - Bachelor of General Studies in General Studies
- GSGO - Associate of General Studies in General Studies [Online]
- GSTG - Associate of General Studies in General Studies
- GSTO - Bachelor of General Studies in General Studies [Online]

2.1 Data

2012:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Cohort Size</th>
<th>Same Major?</th>
<th>Persistence Rate</th>
<th>Retention Rate</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Persistence Rate</td>
<td>Retention Rate</td>
<td>Graduation Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y1 to Y2</td>
<td>Y1 to Y3</td>
<td>Y1 to Y4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<th>Graduation Rate</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Y1 to Y2</td>
<td>Y1 to Y3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
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*22 students were initially undeclared before declaring GNST.

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<td>Y1 to Y2</td>
<td>Y1 to Y3</td>
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<td>%</td>
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*18 students were initially undeclared before declaring GNST.

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<td></td>
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<td>Y1 to Y3</td>
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*18 students were initially undeclared before declaring GSTG.
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### 2017:

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<td>Y1 to Y2</td>
<td>Y1 to Y3</td>
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<td>3 4.8</td>
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### 2018:

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<td></td>
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<td>Y1 to Y3</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>31</strong></td>
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| Changed | 26 37.7 | 29 42.0 | 30 43.5 | 24 34.8 |
### 2019:

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### 2020:

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<th>Retention Rate Y1 to Y2</th>
<th>Retention Rate Y1 to Y3</th>
<th>Retention Rate Y1 to Y4</th>
<th>Graduation Rate 4-Year</th>
<th>Graduation Rate 5-Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>GNST/ GSTO</td>
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### 2021:

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<th>Retention Rate Y1 to Y2</th>
<th>Retention Rate Y1 to Y3</th>
<th>Retention Rate Y1 to Y4</th>
<th>Graduation Rate 4-Year</th>
<th>Graduation Rate 5-Year</th>
<th>Graduation Rate 6-Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GNST/ GSTO</td>
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<td>54.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2018-2019:
The persistence rate for this year is 82.6% which did not meet the benchmark. The Y1 to Y2 retention rate was 57.6 which also did not meet the benchmark. You have to go back to 2013 and 2014 to find the persistence benchmark being met. The same goes for the retention rate benchmark. We would like to keep the benchmarks the same at this time as the program just moved to the College of Liberal Arts and the state has pushed an emphasis on finishing your college degree with "Compete LA". We have already seen quite a few students contact us about returning to finish their degree so let's look at the rates next year before changing them. This population of students is very fluid. Most that start in General Studies change their major to something else. This is a positive thing since the vast majority of students starting in General Studies are really "undecided" students. Most students who graduate in General Studies come from other majors. We do not try to encourage students to come into General Studies because we do not want to cannibalize our other programs. Therefore, this program has a completely different goal from all other degree programs on campus in that regard.

I believe a better way to judge the efficiency of this program would be to track those students entering the program at sophomore, junior, and senior levels and track whether they then graduate in a timely manner (i.e., a student entering General Studies with 60 credits should be tracked to see if he/she graduates in 2, 3, or 4 years).

2019-2020:
These are the numbers according to reports and they are less than prior years due to Covid-19 pandemic and hurricanes.

2020-2021:
Retention and persistence rates for the GNST/GSTO majors have gone up each year, we hope to continue this and help students progress all the way to graduation.

2021-2022:
GSTO/GSTG has become more of a completer degree. Students are not starting off their college career in the AGS major; however, we do have a great graduation rate of students that decide not to continue their college degree and want an associate degree to show their effort in college.

Performance Objective 2  To use exemplary advising as a tool to help students understand and ultimately graduate in General Studies.

1 Assessment and Benchmark

Benchmark:
- 95% of the General Studies degree candidates "strongly agreed" on each of the following items:
  - My General Studies advisor was knowledgeable of courses and requirements.
  - My General Studies advisor helped me understand course requirements and registration procedures.
- 95% of the General Studies degree candidates will rate their advising experience as "very good."

Graduating Senior Exit Survey 2017-2018  [PDF 78 KB 5/13/20]

1.1 Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
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<td>2014-2015</td>
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<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>10/166</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of the General Studies degree candidates “strongly agreed” 'My General Studies advisor was knowledgeable of courses and requirements'.</td>
<td>52.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of the General Studies degree candidates “strongly agreed” 'My General Studies advisor helped me understand course requirements and registration procedures'.</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of the General Studies degree candidates rate their advising experience as &quot;very good&quot;.</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Academic Year Ending</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of the General Studies degree candidates “strongly agreed” 'My General Studies advisor was knowledgeable of courses and requirements'.</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>94%</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of the General Studies degree candidates “strongly agreed” 'My General Studies advisor helped me understand course requirements and registration procedures'.</td>
<td>92.5%</td>
<td>86.4%</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>82.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>% of the General Studies degree candidates rate their advising experience as &quot;very good&quot;.</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>82.8</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1.1.1 Analysis of Data and Plan for Continuous Improvement

2017-2018:
The benchmark was not met. Though the benchmark was not met in one of the three areas, it was less than 1% away so I would like to keep the benchmark set at 95%. This is a high benchmark but it should remain high since advising is of utmost importance.

- Now that Degree Works is implemented, General Studies students will have a snapshot of what they have completed. Due to the nature of the degree, students will still need to meet with an advisor to plot what remains in the degree. We hope this will enhance the advising process and provide another tool for students to use to stay on top of their degree plan.
- The General Studies degree will be moving to an academic department this next year, and we are unsure if this will have a positive or negative impact on advising.
- With the current QEP, advising across campus will be assessed and we hope to get data that will help us know if our current method of advising students is effective or needs to be enhanced. The first data will be obtained this year from a campus-wide advising survey.

2018-2019:
• The benchmark was not met. The drop was not significant enough to be alarmed, though I do feel that the General Studies advisor could use additional help to better serve students. This is an extremely large group of students being served by only one advisor.
• We will watch to see if the move of General Studies to an academic department will significantly impact advising. The location of General Studies will now be more central to campus. We are also requesting to change the name to Interdisciplinary Studies, which should have a more favorable connotation.

2019-2020:
These are the survey responses according to reports. Keep in mind these are the years due to Covid-19 pandemic and hurricanes and most advising was done by email.

2020-2021:
I believe these scores have decreased for several reasons. The move from the Department of General and Basic Studies with two full-time academic advisors, a director, and an administrative assistant to the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies Department with only a department head/academic advisor is the main issue. Because of this, the majority of advising in this department is now being done by email since the ratio of the number of students to only one advisor/department head is so off-balance. Important and specific information is getting left out. Even though I try to explain every detail of the degree and have a Reference Guide/Audit sheet that I send to each student along with a copy of their paper degree plan, parts of the advising process are suffering. Face-to-face advising has also been cut down to 15-minute sessions from 30-minute sessions because there are not enough hours in the day for me to see all the students in person. Face-to-face advising is extremely beneficial, so I hope to be able to get students back in the office in the years to follow.

Also, Degree Works does not work well with the General Studies degree plan, so when students try to use it to advise themselves on what they should take, they often get confused and register for the wrong courses.

2021-2022:
Building on my analysis for 2020-2021, I believe the only way to address the low advisor scores is to hire another academic advisor to help lower the student-to-advisor ratio.