Florida International University  
Board of Trustees  
Report on Undergraduate Education  
Submitted by the Dean of Undergraduate Education  
August 13, 2012  

The Graduation Success Initiative (GSI) is a comprehensive, university-wide set of innovations which transform the administration of FIU's undergraduate curriculum with the overarching goal of supporting undergraduate student success as measured by retention and graduation rates (http://gsi.fiu.edu).

At the heart of the GSI are a few simple objectives. Students are helped to identify their appropriate majors (majors which fit their abilities, interests, and goals) as early as possible, beginning with admission to the university. With their appropriate goal in mind, students are provided with a clear path (a semester-by-semester major map) to that goal. While on the path, students are provided with immediate feedback if they are straying from their path.

Feedback to the students is provided through integrated systems of high tech/high touch academic advising. The cadre of professional academic advisors is being built steadily to achieve the 300:1 student:advisor ratio which is the national standard of best practice set by the National Association of Academic Advising (NACADA). FIU’s current undergraduate ratio is approximately 450:1. The system of academic advising is transitioning from a reactive, drop-in approach to a proactive, caseload-management paradigm in which all students will be assigned an academic advisor at admission and each academic advisor will manage a specific caseload of students, monitoring their progress and reaching out to them to ensure their academic progress in an appropriate major.

My_eAdvisor is a powerful tracking tool which allows students and advisors to monitor academic progress vis-a-vis the Major Map. The Major Map encapsulates semester-by-semester expectations of what courses need to be taken, what grades need to be earned, and what milestones need to be achieved in order to graduate on-time. My_eAdvisor is currently being developed through a partnership of Undergraduate Education and University Technology Services and will be deployed in two phases over fall semester, 2012.

Both students and advisors will have My_eAdvisor dashboards with important summaries and quick access to functionalities.

The student's My_eAdvisor dashboard includes: (a) the interactive Major Map, which displays curricular specifications, performance levels, and milestones necessary for the student to graduate on-time; (b) advisor messages in addition to automated alerts if the student strays from the Major Map; (c) universal advising notes, the accumulated notes from interactions with all
advisors which allows students and any FIU advisor to know what advice the student has received; (d) a scheduler, which allows the student access to interact with the advisor's availability and to make an appointment online; and (e) links to pertinent resources (Figure 1).

The interactive Major Map (Figure 2) is rich in detailed information for students about what they should be doing and whether or not they are doing it. Research demonstrates that the closer to the behavior that feedback occurs the more likely it is that the feedback will be effective. In the case of My_eAdvisor, feedback is given immediately following each semester, and if students need to register for a course to correct a misstep, they can view the available sections and register for the course seamlessly from My_eAdvisor. Students receive feedback and the ability to correct it all at the same time. This feature is just one of many noteworthy innovations of My_eAdvisor which not only make it effective as an advising and planning tool but also give it commercialization potential.

The advisors' My_eAdvisor dashboard (Figure 3) includes: (a) all students assigned to that advisor, the roster of the advisor's caseload for whom the advisor is held accountable for monitoring the progress and proactively facilitating students' success in graduating on-time in an appropriate major; (b) advisor calendar, used to express advisors' availability and to make appointments online; (c) access to advisor notes for all students; (d) access to sending and receiving messages to students; and (e) advisor's profiles, including their basic contact information.

Initial training for My_eAdvisor begins in September and will be available continuously in face-to-face and online formats thereafter for students and advisors.

A great deal of information about GSI can be found at http://gsi.fiu.edu; see in particular the overall project plan with its nine task clusters, https://ugrad.fiu.edu/gsi/GSI_Project_Plan_June_2011.pdf.
Figure 1. My_eAdvisor student dashboard.

Figure 2. My_eAdvisor interactive Major Map.
Figure 3. My_eAdvisor advisor dashboard.