Task Force for Increasing Student Success and Academic Excellence

Recommendations

The recommendations of the Task Force for Student Success and Academic Excellence seek to implement initiatives that foster student success and academic excellence that align with the priorities of our mission, vision, and values. This alignment will require trust, accountability, communication, and implementation across the campus, as well as allocation of budgetary resources for alignment with defined priorities as outlined by the strategic plan.

The Mission and Vision of Humboldt State University reads:

Mission

Humboldt State University is a comprehensive, residential campus of the California State University. We welcome students from California and the world to our campus. We offer them access to affordable, high-quality education that is responsive to the needs of a fast-changing world. We serve them by providing a wide array of programs and activities that promote understanding of social, economic and environmental issues. We help individuals prepare to be responsible members of diverse societies.

Vision

Humboldt State University will be the campus of choice for individuals who seek above all else to improve the human condition and our environment.

- We will be the premier center for the interdisciplinary study of the environment and its natural resources.
- We will be a regional center for the arts.
- We will be renowned for social and environmental responsibility and action.
- We believe the key to our common future will be the individual citizen who acts in good conscience and engages in informed action.
- We will commit to increasing our diversity of people and perspectives.
- We will be exemplary partners with our communities, including tribal nations.
- We will be stewards of learning to make a positive difference.

Definitions

To effectively implement initiatives that promote Student Success and Academic Excellence, Humboldt State University should approach these two ideas from a consistent perspective. Based on the feedback from multiple communities, and for the purpose of the recommendations of the Task Force, in alignment with Humboldt State University’s
Mission and Vision, we provide the following definitions of Student Success and Academic Excellence.

_Humboldt State University is committed to fostering the growth of the whole student, including intellectual, emotional, cultural, social, ethical, physical, and spiritual development that prepares students to be environmentally and socially responsible global citizens._

**Student Success** is academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, pursuit of required and desired knowledge, skills and competencies, attainment of educational objectives, intercultural competence, career preparation, and a commitment to lifelong learning and personal development.

**Academic Excellence** is the demonstrated ability to individually and collectively perform and excel in scholastic activities.

(These definitions are influenced by the work of The National Post-Secondary Education Cooperative, Joe Cuseo at Marymount College, Fresno State, and others).

**Recommendations**

1. **Provide purposeful and coherent integration of academics and student life that prepares students to be socially and environmentally responsible global leaders in a diverse world.** *Implementation Priorities Include:*

   - Better coordinate and integrate resources, such as academics, support services, student activities, student life, and community partnerships to enable an impactful student experience.

   - Provide and increase experiential/hands-on learning opportunities across all degree programs and general education classes, and tie to campus/programmatic assessment and program review.

   - Reform general education and programmatic curricula to incorporate environmental and social responsibility through the integration of the arts, humanities, professional programs, and social and natural sciences.

   - Ensure all campus decisions are made to provide a student experience that recognizes the importance of climate change and social justice that is consistent with our commitment to social and environmental responsibility.

   - Increase participation in undergraduate research opportunities and other high impact practices across all levels, programs, and general education classes.
• Require first-year students to participate in (re)assessment of interests, orientation to programs, and the development of an achievable educational plan to ensure academic excellence and success.

• Implement class scheduling that reduces conflicts with required classes to ensure students receive the classes they need to progress in a timely manner.

• Encourage and reward cross-disciplinary activities that engage staff and faculty in their role to support experiential learning, intercultural competency, engaging pedagogy, and social and environmental responsibility.

2. Provide a consistent and coherent support, mentoring, and advising experience for all HSU students that builds connections with faculty, peers, and discipline area, with a special focus on supporting student access, self-efficacy, self-actualization, and empowerment. Implementation Priorities Include:

  • Provide excellent, customized academic advising and resources for all students in order to facilitate their success and degree completion.

  • Identify students early in their collegiate careers who can benefit from programmatic intervention to increase continuation rates and four- and six-year graduation rates.

  • Integrate meaningful learning analytics to allow for timely interventions that promote student success at course and curricular levels.

  • Utilize technology to facilitate appropriate class choices and timely progression toward degree as a complementary resource to personal advising.

  • Develop and enhance first-year programs to connect students to faculty, peers, staff, curricula, and communities.

  • Connect education and campus life with career/life mentoring that help students apply what they learn and experience at HSU to what they will do after graduating.

  • Ensure that support services help students persist to achieve their educational goals.

  • Simplify degree pathways to make it easier for students to work with advisors and others to create meaningful and achievable educational plans.
3. **Foster meaningful relationships that demonstrate throughout faculty, staff, students, curricula, and pedagogy a dynamic commitment to intercultural communities, identities, and competencies.** *Implementation Priorities Include:*

- Provide cohesive ongoing professional development for faculty and staff in the areas of experiential learning, intercultural competence, engaging pedagogy, and social and environmental responsibility aligned with campus needs.
- Hire, develop, and support a diverse, outstanding faculty and staff that reflect our state and student populations.
- Assess, recognize, and reward individual and programmatic practices that foster cultural diversity and competency.
- Ensure that diverse perspectives, identities, and communities are acknowledged and taught throughout curriculum and provide a safe environment for everyone to explore a broad range of viewpoints and ideas.

4. **Partner with local communities to provide educational, social, and co-curricular experiences for all students by leveraging our campus and local communities’ resources and geography.** *Implementation Priorities Include:*

- Foster new and existing partnerships with our local communities to support student well-being (intellectual, emotional, ethical, and spiritual development), and provide more campus-community social and cultural activities/experiences.
- Work with local communities to strengthen internship, mentoring, service-learning, and job opportunities that foster students’ professional development.
- Work with local businesses to provide goods and services to HSU students of all communities.
- Partner with CR and local high schools to ensure students receive college-ready preparation.
- Improve relationships and increase partnerships with tribal nations that provide greater access to educational and professional opportunities.

5. **Align Resources with Student Success Recommendations.** *Implementation Priorities Include:*

- Prioritize and target funding. Recommendations regarding student success and academic excellence must be supported through the allocation and reallocation of
resources to ensure we reach our goals.

- Provide consistency in policies, services, and communication.

- Partner with local communities to connect students with resources that are not provided on campus.

- Identify and eliminate campus services that are provided by the community where appropriate.

- Consolidate, concentrate, and centralize similar and related campus resources to provide more visible “one stop shop” for students.

- Consistently evaluate how we are doing and make necessary resource/curriculum changes to continually improve.

- Ensure basic needs are met for students, including access to affordable and healthy food options, affordable and safe housing, and reliable physical and mental health services.

- Coordinate resources as a “whole campus” instead of individual units.

- Determine optimal campus enrollment to allocate resources in such a way to optimize program mix and program size that provides students with the best educational experience in their chosen major.

- Balance tenured/tenure-track faculty levels with lecturer positions to meet critical and strategic needs.

- Invest resources to provide ongoing and cohesive professional development for faculty and staff.

- Ensure dedicated and appropriate space and time to develop student commitment to their academic success.