

COMPLETING THE PICTURE . . .



A PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE GRADUATION DEFICIENCIES

Submitted on Behalf of the College of Letters & Science Student
Academic Affairs for the Madison Initiative for Undergraduates

Ann Groves Lloyd, Ph.D., Associate Dean
Christina P. Klawitter, Ph.D., Principal Administrator

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Statement of the Problem

Approximately one out of three Letters & Science students who apply to graduate have degree deficiencies identified during the official graduation audit conducted by the Registrar. In Spring 2009, this amounted to nearly 640 deficiency notices to students who were planning to graduate in May 2009. The late timing of the notices rendered many students incapable of resolving their deficiencies, leading to postponement of their graduation. These graduation deficiencies were received by students of all types, across all majors, and across all levels of academic performance. This problem is not limited to a clearly identifiable population of students, such as those on probation or those who never used advising services.

*Nearly 640 L&S students
intending to graduate in Spring
2009 had a degree deficiency.*

Until now, the College of Letters & Science has paid little attention to characterizing the nature of the graduation deficiencies or resolving them at a macro level. This lack of focus on the graduation deficiency problem is multi-layered:

- Deficiencies happen across all requirement categories, in small numbers that add up to a big problem; impacting this problem requires small, incremental changes.
- The systems contributing to deficiencies are complex; impacting problems, like timely major declaration, requires identification of and work on the hard, complex, systemic barriers.
- Data resources which could be used to identify deficiencies are disconnected or have been non-functioning. Integrating student academic information and mass degree audit capacities will positively impact the graduation deficiency problem.
- Academic advisors do not have access to all data sources or to bulk information about their advisees' degree progress. Further, they have no systems by which to identify students who need intervention. Involving advisors in the identification and delivery of student progress interventions will decrease graduation deficiency problems.

This proposal (1) describes a pilot project designed to reduce graduation deficiencies, and (2) a three year approach for proactively and permanently reducing the number of graduation deficiencies received by L&S students.

2008-09 Pilot Project to Reduce Graduation Deficiencies

In January 2009, 3,600 L&S undergraduates had accumulated one hundred or more credits and were classified as "potential graduates" for May 2009. A January degree audit revealed that only 36% of these students were actually graduation-eligible. A substantial improvement was recorded in March when 53% were graduation-eligible partially attributable to a simple

communication and problem-solving intervention¹ which was deployed during Spring 2009 (see Table 1). Following the communications, considerable email communication and in-person student contact led to resolutions of many degree deficiencies. The ultimate goal of reducing the number of graduation deficiency notices sent to L&S students was achieved and deficiency issues across almost all requirement categories were reduced.

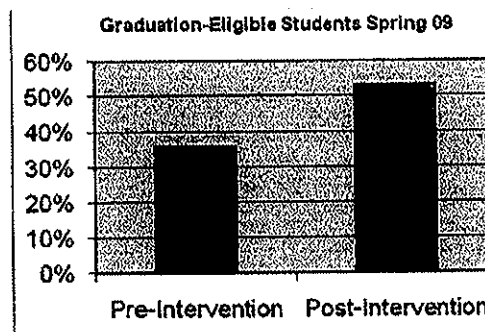


Table 1.

In Progress—Pilot #2. The results of Pilot #1 were promising enough to repeat the effort for 2,900 potential December 2009 graduates, with several key process improvements. In Pilot #2, beginning in August 2009, enhanced audit information was prepared using the restored batch functionality in DARS. It was delivered to participating departmental advisors² who were asked to deliver the progress messages to students. Anecdotal feedback from advisors has been positive, but quantitative results will confirm whether advisor-delivered messaging is a more successful strategy.

Proposal

This proposal outlines a three year, three tiered approach to enhancing degree progress services for L&S students; yearly goals and objectives were designed in support of each conceptual tier. The goals and objectives primarily focus on designing an audit and intervention system which will impact future students. Additionally, there is effort in year one directed toward having an immediate impact on students in the pipeline who are nearing degree completion.

Tier 1—Focus on Immediate Impact: At this moment there are students near to graduation who will inevitably have degree deficiencies. My goal with Tier 1 efforts is not to transform their remaining experience but rather to identify and remediate as many of the deficiencies as possible among those students intending to graduate in 2010 and 2011. Proximity to graduation

¹ https://mywebspace.wisc.edu/xythoswfs/webui/_xy-29428880_1-t_5lhGvr4k

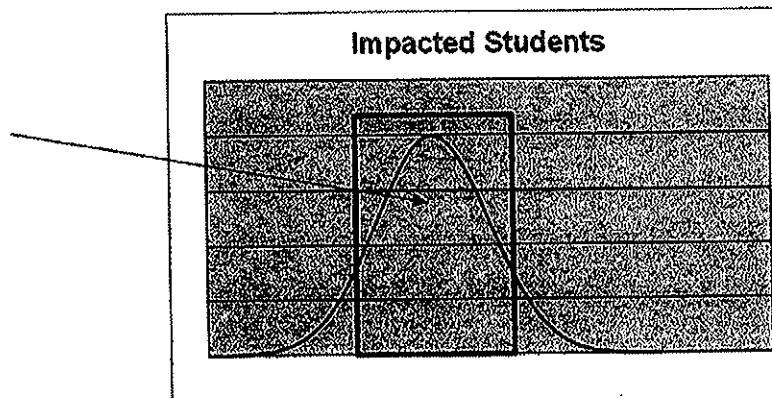
² Advisors from English, Spanish, History, and International Studies

forces this tier of service to focus on delivering 'just-in-time' communication to students and advisors and on intrusively intervening with students who are missing key degree requirements.

Tier 2—Focus on Creating Systemic Change: Identify systemic barriers to timely graduation by bringing together currently disconnected student data and degree audit information. Develop early monitoring and communication systems to impact timely degree progress for students intending to graduate beyond 2011. This tier will focus on creating community driven progress benchmarks, integrated data and information solutions, proactive communication to students and advisors, and practical tools students can use for long range enrollment planning.

Tier 3—Focus on Institutionalizing and Expanding: Develop tools and administrative processes that become a routine part of services at the College and departmental levels. Equip advisors with data retrieval solutions to assist them in providing students with early intervention on issues of degree progress. Deepen and broaden L&S's campus leadership in student services by translating degree progress practices to other interested Schools and Colleges at UW-Madison.

Maintaining Focus on ALL Letters & Science Students. A concept critical to understanding the intent behind this proposal is best illustrated by the following image:



The intent is to design a service to impact "the masses". We already serve well those students who seek special help because they are either high achieving or struggling. This initiative aims for the middle group of students who could theoretically move through their degree without intentionally interacting with any student service.

Year One of Initiative -- Focus on Immediate Impact

Goal 1: Facilitate the timely graduation of L&S students by assessing student academic progress and communicating frequently with students about essential degree-completion needs.

Performance Outcomes

- a. Reduce by 10% the number of deficiency notices generated during the graduation audit conducted by the Registrar's Office.
- b. Reduce by 10% the number of students with senior standing that have no declared major.
- c. Reduce by 50% the number of students with unresolved admission deficiencies.

Goal 2: Facilitate the timely, qualified graduation of students by exploring methods for integrating student academic information and mass degree audit capacities.

Performance Outcomes

- a. Produce a strategic plan detailing the capacities and challenges for using current student information and degree audit systems to identify and resolve degree progress barriers.
- b. Disseminate to L&S academic departments, a summary of common degree deficiencies based on analysis information from mass DARS audits and individual deficiency notices.
- c. Record in project archives the baseline data from 2008-09 for use in measuring quantitative performance outcomes outlined in this proposal.

Goal 3: Facilitate the timely graduation of L&S students by convening a group of College and campus personnel who have expertise pertinent to degree progress to advise on process and quality improvement activities.

Performance Outcome

- a. Document the initiation of an advisory board of College and campus personnel that proposes process improvements and quality initiatives to enhance analysis of degree progress and to integrate degree auditing capacities across the College.

Year Two of Initiative -- Focus on Creating Systemic Changes

Goal 1: Facilitate the timely graduation of L&S students by communicating academic expectations and using long range enrollment planning tools.

Performance Outcomes

- a. Prior to each registration, inform students of academic expectations related to General Education Requirements and L&S degree requirements as they pertain to course sequencing and course level requirements.
- b. Influence the production and use of a Four Year Enrollment Plan for students in at least five (5) participating, academic departments.

Goal 2: Facilitate the timely, qualified graduation of students by proposing solutions for integrating student academic information and enhancing degree audit capacities.

Performance Outcomes

- a. Produce a written report that inventories systemic barriers to timely graduation, especially as it relates to using disconnected data systems (DARS, ISIS, Advising notes systems) for student tracking or non-productive practices.
- b. Generate recommendations for consolidating student information and audit results in a way that is accessible apart from campus partners with specialized, technical knowledge.
- c. Roll out process for securely sharing degree progress information with students' academic advisors.

Goal 3: Facilitate the timely graduation of L&S students by drawing together College and campus personnel who have expertise pertinent to degree progress and completion.

Performance Outcome

- a. Maintain documentation of an advisory board of College personnel that proposes process improvements and quality initiatives to enhance analysis of degree progress and to integrate degree auditing capacities across the College.

Goal 4: Facilitate the timely graduation of L&S students by assessing student academic progress and communicating frequently with students about essential degree-completion needs.

Performance Outcomes

- a. Continue the reduction in the number deficiency notices generated during the graduation audit conducted by the Registrar's Office by an additional 10%.
- b. Continue the reduction of the number of students with senior standing that have no declared major by an additional 10%.

- c. Resolve all outstanding admission deficiencies, including missing high school units, prior to authorizing a fifth (5th) registration for any impacted student.
- d. Improve by 25% the number of timely (submission immediately following the final registration period) applications to graduate.

Year Three of Initiative -- Focus on Institutionalizing & Expanding

Goal 1: Facilitate the timely graduation of all UW-Madison students by proposing a campus level initiative focused on degree progress and completion.

Performance Outcomes

- a. Report broadly to campus partners the degree progress work being done in L&S, especially that which may be transferrable across school/college boundaries.
- b. Use work documented by advisory board to propose campus level process improvements and quality initiatives to enhance analysis of degree progress and integrated degree auditing capacities for the College.

Goal 2: Facilitate the timely, qualified graduation of students by using integrated student academic information and enhanced degree audit capacities to remove degree progress barriers.

Performance Outcomes

- a. Provide evidence of the elimination of twenty-five percent of the systemic barriers to timely graduation related to disconnected data systems or non-productive practices.
- b. Provide evidence of communication to academic advisors about the results of their advisees' degree progress.

Goal 3: Facilitate the timely graduation of L&S students by communicating academic expectations and using long range enrollment planning tools.

Performance Outcomes

- a. Maintain operative procedures informing students of academic expectations related to General Education Requirements and L&S degree requirements, as they pertain to course sequence and level requirements.
- b. Expand the production and use of a Four Year Enrollment Plan for students in at least five (5) additional participating, academic departments.

Goal 4: Facilitate the timely graduation of L&S students by assessing student academic progress and communicating frequently with students about essential degree-completion needs.

Performance Outcomes

- a. Continue the reduction of the number of deficiency notices generated during the graduation audit conducted by the Registrar's Office by an additional 10%.
- b. Continue the reduction of the number of students with senior standing that have no declared major by an additional 10%.
- c. Maintain operative procedures to resolve outstanding admission deficiencies, including missing high school units, prior to authorizing a fifth (5th) registration for any impacted student.
- d. Improve by 25% the number of timely (submission immediately following the final registration period) applications to graduate.

Budget Request

Expenses	Year One ³	Budget Narrative
<p>PERSONNEL New 1.0 FTE: Student Services Coordinator</p>	<p>\$41,000 (+ applicable fringe)</p>	<p>New Position: 1.0 FTE Student Services Coordinator In the pilot project a Student Services Coordinator provided for mass communications with students (e-mail broadcasts), on-going follow-up and problem-solving on an individual basis, and coordinated the collaborative interventions that included department advisors, academic deans and program personnel with L&S. This position assists with the implementation of the degree-completion strategies.</p>
<p>New 1.0 FTE: IS Data Services</p>	<p>\$45,800 (+ applicable fringe)</p>	<p>New Position: 1.0 FTE IS Data Services In the pilot project a L&S SAA position, and positions outside SAA, provided technical support such as conducting research, preparing reports, producing queries and mining the query library. The position would operate current student data systems to identify students and analyze degree-completion status. The Specialist should be versed in ISIS, DARS, FileMaker Pro, Access, and query tools.</p>
<p>1.0 FTE: Principal Administrator (currently Assistant Dean)</p>	<p>\$69,500 (+ applicable fringe)</p>	<p>Funding for: 1.0 FTE Principal Administrator Already employed by L&S Undergraduate Academic Services, the incumbent would be assigned to the Madison Initiative Project and a replacement position would be posted for the unit.</p>
<p>SUPPLIES & EXPENSE, TRAVEL</p>	<p>\$ 2,200</p>	<p>A \$400 per FTE allowance for annual operating expenses, including \$2,000 for conference presentation travel.</p>
<p>INFRASTRUCTURE</p>	<p>n/a</p>	<p>There are no new expenses.</p>

³ Costs for years two and three of the initiative are expected to remain roughly constant.

TECHNOLOGY & EQUIPMENT	\$ 4,900	One-time set up expense for standard computer workstations. Also, provides for the annual charge-back on technology support (per FTE).
PURCHASED SERVICES	\$4,000	Allowance for software, communication technologies, and program customization by Doit to enhance data mining capacities.
TOTAL	\$168,400	(+ applicable fringes)



MEMORANDUM

October 1, 2009

TO: Madison Initiative Oversight Committee
FROM: Gary Sandefur, Dean, College of Letters and Science GS
Re: Non-Instructional Madison Initiative Proposals

The College of Letters and Science is pleased to forward the attached proposals for:

- Eliminating Academic Deficiencies for L&S Students
- Expansion of the FIGs program
- Expansion of the Chemistry and Physics Learning Centers

These proposals are self-explanatory, so we do not discuss them in this cover memo.

We received 30 proposals for the October 1, 2009 deadline. We consider these three to be the most pressing.

Among the 27 proposals we are not submitting are several really good ideas. A number of departments requested support for advising. Several of these requests, especially in high demand majors such as Biology, Communication Arts, Economics, Psychology, Political Science, and Pre-Health Professions are very compelling. For the November deadline, we will propose a comprehensive advising plan for L&S, which will utilize a combination of centralized, department-based, and "pod-based" academic and career advising. Our plan will also include the use of peer advisors and satellite locations, along with clearly articulated goals and assessment plans. These initiatives will enable the College of Letters and Science to connect with significantly more liberal arts students helping them to understand and embrace the Wisconsin Experience.

We hope to partner with CALS and other schools and colleges on advising for Biology and Pre-Health Professions. We encourage the university to take a comprehensive look at advising and to develop a coordinated campus approach to advising needs rather than funding specific advising proposals piecemeal over the next four years.

Attachments

Office of the Dean

College of Letters and Science, The Heart of A Great University
105 South Hall 1055 Bascom Mall Madison, Wisconsin 53706-1394
Gary Sandefur, Dean 608/263-2303 FAX: 608/265-3564 gsandefur@ls.admin.wisc.edu www.ls.wisc.edu