

**Recommendations of the First Year Council  
to Assess and Respond to Student Needs  
April 12, 2010**

One of the key recommendations identified in the Foundations of Excellence self-study called on our institution to:

*Develop a systematic process to define, identify, and assess the needs of first-year students, especially underserved populations.*

- a. Move from an intuitive model of decision making to a data-driven process that identifies the unique needs of students.*
- b. Develop interventions to meet the needs of specific students based on those identified needs through the implementation of an early warning system and enhanced communication and outreach*
- c. Determine responsibility for the coordinator and implementation of interventions for specific subpopulations of students.*

In response to this recommendation, the First Year Council appointed a sub-committee to consider a course of action for implementing the recommendation. The sub-committee reviewed the availability of proprietary products, reviewed retention data for several subpopulations of UNI students, and considered the organization of the Council and units involved in providing support services to students.

**The sub-committee made two recommendations that were approved by the First Year Council:**

- 1. Using stimulus funds set aside for first year initiatives to purchase MAP-Works, a web-based student success and retention product for implementation with new students beginning in the fall semester of 2010.** This product is provided by Educational Benchmarking, Inc. MAP-Works is the only product of its kind, integrating all the following features:
  - At-risk algorithms that bring together student background data with self-reported student information
  - Interactive on-line student reports with comparative analysis and printable summaries
  - Communication management system
  - Tracking screens to record, initiate, monitor, and coordinate advisor/faculty/staff activity
  - Ability to establish direct-connect relationship between faculty/staff and students
  - Robust aggregate data analysis
  
- 2. Appoint a Student Success Leadership Committee reporting to the First Year Council and charged to coordinate, evaluate, and monitor first- year student success and retention efforts, including the implementation of MAP-Works. We recommend this group include the following individuals:**
  - Registrar
  - Director of Admissions
  - Director of Academic Learning Center
  - Director of Academic Advising Services
  - Faculty member from the First Year Council
  - Academic Department Head
  - Dean of Students
  - Director of Financial Aid
  - Director of Residence Life