



Quality Enhancement Plan:
Enhancing Academic Advising to Improve Retention and Graduation Rates

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Section I. Executive Summary

The Fort Valley State University (FVSU) Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), as a part of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) compliance certification process, seeks to increase student retention, persistence and graduation rates through proactive advising, also known as intrusive advising. Proactive advising is a blend of advising and counseling into one discipline (Glennen, 1975). The idea behind this model is to provide students with information before they request it, while simultaneously building a relationship with the student. FVSU proposes a QEP that fosters a collaborative relationship to build an advising team that includes the students, professional advisors from the University College (UC), and academic advisors from the program of study advising teams.

The programmatic goals are structured to ensure students are continuously engaged through proactive advising in order to improve retention, persistence and graduation. The proactive advising will involve intentional contact with students with the goal of developing a relationship that leads to increased academic motivation and persistence. Research on student retention suggests that contact with a significant person, including a faculty, a staff member, an alumnus, a peer, etc. within an institution of higher education is a crucial factor in a student's decision to remain in college (Heisserer & Parette, 2002).

Training will be a key component to the success of this advising QEP. Faculty and staff will undergo extensive professional development in the proactive advising model training coordinated through the UC and utilizing the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) global community, resources, and expertise in academic advising to enhance advising at the university. Training provided will include advising and counseling, including pre-admission counseling, general financial aid counseling, assisting students with making purposeful choices in degree focus area, and scheduling.

A set of success outcomes and action items have also been developed to meet the overall goals of this project. The QEP's goals are: (1) to increase retention rates; (2) to increase persistence rates; and (3) to increase the four-year and six-year graduation rates through a proactive advising model.

Section II. Institutional Overview and Background

Located in the heart of Georgia, FVSU combines the personal attention and family feel of a small, private college with the resources and research found at large public universities. FVSU is one of the 26 member institutions that comprise the [University System of Georgia \(USG\)](#). FVSU is also one of the more than 90 historically black colleges and universities (HBCU) in the United States and one of the 19 HBCUs with the designation of a Land-Grant. FVSU's primary goal is to equip students from all backgrounds with the knowledge and skills to enhance the world as leaders and to positively impact the state of Georgia and beyond with the resources they gain at FVSU.

Mission, Vision, and Core Values

The mission of FVSU is to advance the cause of education with an emphasis on building a better, stronger, and wider community. As an institution of the USG, FVSU naturally embraces the principles articulated by the Core Mission Statement for State Universities as approved by the Board of Regents of the USG. The university's primary commitment includes, among others, enhancement of teacher training programs grounded upon a liberal arts foundation. Additionally, the university strives to further its responsibilities as Georgia's 1890 Land-Grant institution by offering programming excellence in agriculture, agribusiness, family and consumer sciences, extension, and military science, as well as to further its traditions of excellence in programs in the liberal arts and humanities, social sciences, and natural and physical sciences.

The university's primary commitments extend, as well, to:

- community outreach through the concept of the “communiversity,” an approach that highlights the connection of community and university;
- expanding service beyond the campus, as well as within, so the institution addresses in a meaningful manner the broad diversity—human and technical—of needs in our home region and state, as well as nationally and internationally;
- sparking within our students an enduring interest in learning and providing the tools and skills necessary to maintain that interest through life;

- preparing students through a mentoring approach for the opportunity to serve their fellow man while enjoying the opportunities provided by hard work and achievement to live the quality of life inherent in the American dream;
- encouraging and supporting creative expression, innovation, honesty, and integrity as endeavors of lasting and intrinsic merit;
- providing a productive environment for cutting-edge academic and practical research in, among other fields, agriculture, aquaculture, veterinary medicine, biotechnology, energy, environment, social and behavioral sciences, and the humanities; and
- otherwise acting to enlighten, enrich, and inspire by example those whom we serve.

The vision of Fort Valley State University is to become a top choice university in the nation. The core values include accountability, integrity, excellence, and engagement.

Section III. Process Used to Develop the QEP

At the beginning of each academic year, FVSU hosts a faculty/staff institute to orient new and returning personnel to the campus and to the proposed events for the academic year. The faculty/staff institute also provides professional development opportunities on topics of interest to the campus community. The priority topic for the fall 2018 faculty/staff institute was the SACSCOC compliance certification. On this occasion, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs outlined the SACSCOC planning process for FVSU and announcing the QEP chair.

QEP Steering Committee Appointment

On August 29, 2018, the full FVSU QEP Steering Committee was formed by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The committee broadly represented the university community (i.e., administrators, faculty, staff, and students) and consisted of 29 members. The committee was charged to develop a QEP as part of the compliance certification process to include (1) a topic identified through ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation process; (2) involve a broad-based support in institutional constituencies; (3) focus on improving specific student learning outcomes and/or student success; (4) recommend reallocation of resources to initiate, implement, and complete the QEP; and (5) develop a plan of assessment to demonstrate achievement

([Appendix A](#)). Subcommittees were formed to perform research and provide information to the steering committee in developing this plan.

Topic Selection Process

A mixed design of quantitative and qualitative methodology was utilized to gather data. The quantitative portion was collected in conjunction with the FVSU Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness (OIRPE) and surveys of program managers were conducted to provide evidence that the institution has a QEP topic identified through its ongoing, comprehensive planning and evaluation processes. The qualitative portion utilized the [ThoughtExchange](#) software solution to solicit input and buy-in from the faculty, staff, and students to provide evidence of the involvement of all appropriate campus constituencies.

Student Demographics

In fall 2017 and fall 2018, FVSU saw two consecutive academic years of increased enrollment while fall 2019 saw a 5% decrease in overall enrollment. During the fall 2018 academic year, the institution reached an enrollment of 2,776 students comprised of 2,359 undergraduate and 417 graduate students. In fall 2019, there was an overall enrollment of 2,624 (see Table 1).



Photo Credit: FVSU Marketing Department

Table 1. Fall 2015 - Fall 2019 Total Student Enrollment by Change in Percentage.

Semester	Enrollment	% Change in Previous Year
Fall 2015	2,695	4%
Fall 2016	2,679	-1%
Fall 2017	2,752	3%
Fall 2018	2,776	1%
Fall 2019	2,624	-5%

Source: FVSU Institutional Research

For fall 2019, there were 1,654 or 63% female students and 970 or 37% male students. For race and ethnicity, 98% of the students are minority and 2% white (see Table 2). There were 2,400 (91.5%) black or African American, 49 (1%) Hispanic/Latino, 3 (0.1%) American Indian or Alaska Native, 13 (0.5%) Asian, 67 (2.6%) Multiracial, and 15 (0.6%) undeclared ([USG Academic Affairs Policy Manual: USG By the Numbers](#)).

Table 2. Fall 2015 - Fall 2019 Total Student Enrollments by Gender and Ethnicity.

Year	Total Enrollment	White	Minority	Not Listed	Men	Women
2015	2,695	94	2,520	81	1,063	1,632
2016	2,679	76	2,525	78	1,050	1,629
2017	2,752	112	2,526	114	1,064	1,688
2018	2,776	97	2,675	4	1,049	1,727
2019	2,624	49	2,573	2	970	1,654

Source: FVSU Institutional Research

The institutional data shows 93% of our students are in-state students, while 7% were out-of-state students (see Table 3). Based on classification in fall 2019, 84% of the students were undergraduate students and 16% were graduate students. Further, 32% of the student body were freshmen, 19% sophomores, 16% juniors, 16% seniors, 0.4% post-baccalaureate, 14.5% graduate, and 0.5%

educational specialist. Data showed that in fall 2018, 85% of the students were full-time and 15% were part time. Also, 28% or 782 students were new students, while 72% or 1,994 were returning students.

Table 3: Fall 2015 - 2019 Total Enrollment Students by Georgia Residence and Other States.

TERM	IN -STATE			OUT OF STATE			GRAND TOTAL
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	
Fall 2015	996	1,577	2,573	67	55	122	2,695
Fall 2016	973	1,562	2,535	67	77	144	2,679
Fall 2017	977	1,605	2,582	87	83	170	2,752
Fall 2018	972	1,611	2,583	77	116	193	2,776
Fall 2019	896	1,542	2,438	74	112	186	2,624

Source: FVSU Institutional Research

FVSU Student Financial Need Profile

Currently, over 80% of students attending FVSU receive some form of financial aid. Students are advised to apply for assistance as their financial circumstances will dictate how much and for what form of aid the student may qualify. Financial assistance typically comes in the form of scholarships, grants, federal, and private loans. Although many students receive these funds, some are not aware that there are maximums tied to each type and, once reached, the ability of students and their families to pay for college may be a challenge.

The [Federal Pell Grant](#) is likely the first option for qualifying students when seeking external funding for school. Although the amounts can change yearly, the maximum Federal Pell Grant is \$6,195 for 2019-20, which extends from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. Students can only receive the Federal Pell Grant for a total of 12 semesters or six years. The maximum loan amount for federal loans is based on whether the student is classified as dependent or independent with respect to their parent-child relationship. For dependent students, the maximum loan amount is \$31,000

over the course of degree completion. Inclusive in this category is the [Parent Plus Loan](#), which is an option when a student needs additional funds. Some parents may be reluctant take on additional debt, or they may be denied approval. If the parent is denied, then the student is eligible to get additional loans at a maximum of \$4,000 to \$5,000 depending on the students' classification.

Because 80% of students attending FVSU receive financial aid, there is the possibility that some will reach their maximum grant or loan amounts prior to completing their degree programs. According to the fall 2019 data, approximately 5.7% (n = 149) of students receiving Pell Grants and 10.5% (n = 278) of students receiving federal loans are close to or have exceeded their eligibility limits. Of those students approaching their eligibility limits, most receiving federal loans are seniors and are nearing completion of their degrees. However, some are juniors, sophomores, and transfer freshmen who are already approaching their eligibility limits. This is concerning as those students who lack a stable funding source are less likely to return and complete their degrees.

In fall 2018, 74.7% or 1,798 of undergraduate student population received Pell Grants. During the same period, 80% or 378 of first-time, full-time freshman received Pell Grants that totaled over \$9,960,000 (Department of Education, Financial Aid). Therefore, the Office of Financial Aid was able to successfully award 1,748 undergraduate students and 378 first-time, full-time freshman with federal student aid (Table 4).

Table 4. Number of PELL Grant Recipients from Fall 2015-18

Number of PELL Grant Recipients by Fall Semester							
Fall	Enrolled	Undergrads	Undergrads with PELL	% Undergrads with PELL	FTF (<i>SER Definition</i>)	FTF with PELL	% FTF with PELL
2015	2,695	2,224	1,723	77.5%	402	336	83.6
2016	2,679	2,229	1,695	76.0%	490	400	81.6
2017	2,752	2,333	1,798	77.1%	495	393	79.4
2018	2,776	2,341	1,748	74.7%	467	378	80.9

Source: [USG Financial Aid](#)

First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen Demographics

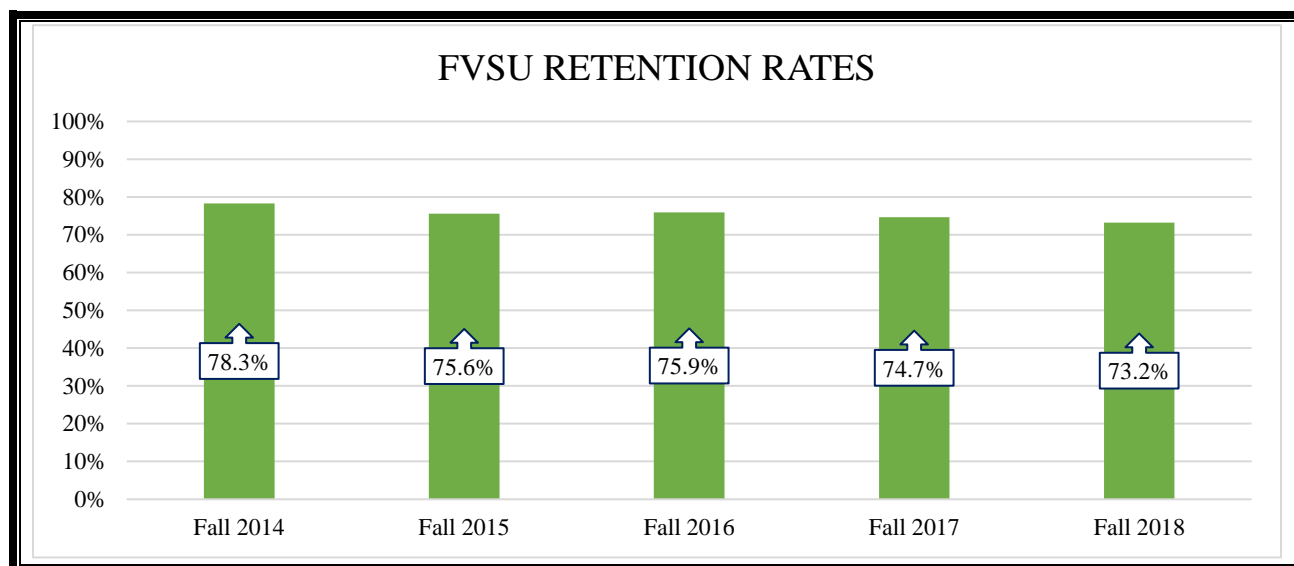
In fall 2018, there were 467 first-time, full-time freshmen, 59% female and 41% male. Within that class, 92.8% were African American, 2.7% Hispanic, 2.5% multiracial, and 1.5% white. In addition, 92% were in state and 8% were out of state. The average GPA of the freshmen class was 2.87; the average ACT scores were 17 in English, 17 in math, and 18 composite; and the average SAT score were 468 in verbal and 444 in math.

Section IV. Measures of Student Success

Key performance indicators of student success include, for first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students' retention rate and cohort four-year and six-year graduation rates. However, persistence rates should also be considered. Persistence considers the number of students who depart from term-to-term or year-to-year (The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2019).

For the last decade, student success has been measured in terms of retention, persistence, and graduation rates (AASCU, 2004). Retention rates measure the percentage of first-time undergraduate students who return to the same institution the following fall where graduation rates measure the percentage of first-time undergraduate students who complete their program at the same institution within a specified period (NCES, 2019). For first-time, full-time, degree-seeking undergraduate students who enrolled in four-year, degree-granting institutions in fall 2016, the retention rate was 81% (NCES, 2019). Retention rates were highest at the most selective institutions (i.e., those with acceptance rates of less than 25%) for public and private non-profit institutions. At the least selective public institutions (i.e., those with an open admissions policy), the retention rate was 62%. FVSU's retention rate has consistently been in the mid 70% range since 2014 (Figure 1), which is in about the average of those institutions with greater than 25% acceptance. For the fall 2018 cohort, the retention rate was 73.2% which was a slight decrease from 2017, but remains above the national average for similar institutions

Figure 1. Fall 2013 – Fall 2018 Cohort Trends in Institutional Retention Rates.



Source: FVSU Institutional Research

The persistence rate is the percentage of students who return to college at any institution for their second year, while the retention rate is the percentage of students who return to the same institution (NSCRC, 2019). For students who started college in fall 2016 at four-year public institutions, the second year persistence rate was 83% ([Ruffalo Noel Levitz](#), 2017), up 1.3% from the prior year, and up 0.7% in comparison to the fall 2009 cohort. The persistence rate was 88.9% for those who entered college on a full-time basis, compared to 65.7% for those who entered college on a part-time basis. Of all students who started college in this sector in fall 2016, 71.2% returned to the same institution in fall 2017. In the 2015 cohort, retention rates remained high at 76%, persistence dropped by 10% in year two to 63%, and dropped by another 10% to 54% in year three (Table 5). For students that stay beyond year four, the 2014 cohort persistence has declined to 48%. Persistence beyond the fourth year drops to below 40% and remains in the 30% range. An article published in [Inside Higher Ed](#) suggested that universities must build programs to address the sophomore slump, as sophomore year is one of the toughest years. It suggested that the cost of ignoring the sophomore slump is less engaged, less motivated juniors and it is seniors uncertain of their future goals which impacts graduation. Persistence rates should hold steady with retention rates ([Inside Higher Ed](#), [Ruffalo Noel Levitz](#)).

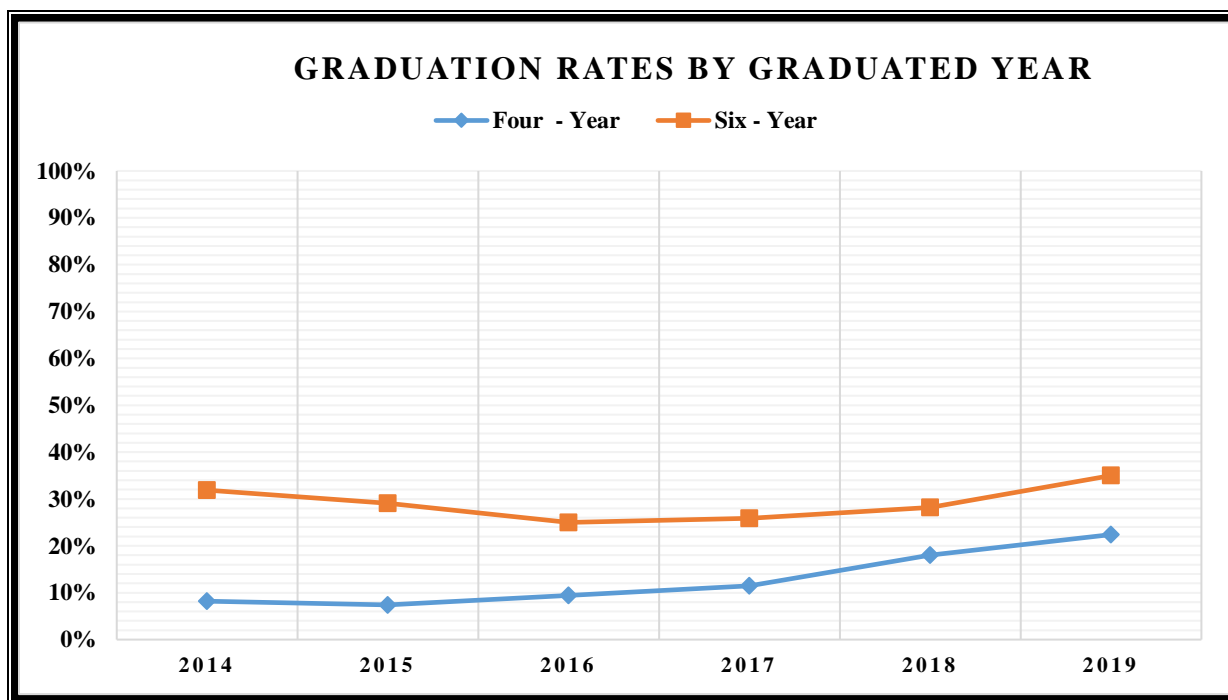
Table 5. Retention and Persistence Rates from Fall 2010-2018 Cohorts: A Six-Year Comparison.

Bachelor's Degree First- Time Full-Time Freshmen						
	Retention	Persistence				
Fall Cohort	One Year	Two Year	Three Year	Four Year	Five Year	Six Year
2013	57.1%	47.0%	41.9%	39.2%	37.3%	36.7%
2014	78.3%	50.7%	52.1%	47.9%	44.7%	
2015	75.6%	63.2%	54.4%	50.2%		
2016	75.9%	62.1%	57.1%			
2017	74.7%	60.9%				
2018	73.2%					

Source: FVSU Institutional Research

According to the National Center for Education Statistics ([NCES](#), 2019), the official four-year graduation rate for students attending public colleges and universities is 33.3% and the six-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began seeking a bachelor's degree at four-year, degree-granting institutions in fall 2011 overall was 60%. That is, by 2017 some 60% of students had completed a bachelor's degree at the same institution where they started in 2011. FVSU four-year bachelor's degree graduation rates range from 7.4% to 22.4% for cohorts that graduated from institution between 2004 and 2019. The six-year graduation rates for the same cohorts were 25% to 35.0% (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Four- and Six-Year Graduation Rates by Cohort from Fall 2014-2019.



Section Summary

Retention rates for first-time, full-time freshmen at FVSU was 75% for fall 2017. When examining persistence rates beyond the first-year retention, with the fall 2014-2018 cohorts, there is a decrease from an average of 75% in year one to an average of 63% in year two and an average of 54% by year four. However, looking at graduation rates during the same period for the four-year graduation rates average 10%, which is significantly lower than the persistence rates and the national four-year graduation rates. The six-year graduation rate averages about 25%, which is also significantly lower than the persistence rates which average around 40% and lower than the national average for six-year graduation rates of 60%, as reported by NCES. These data taken together demonstrates that: (1) FVSU's first year retention rate is good; however, the university has not reached the target or the national average for four year public institutions; (2) the university's persistence shows that students do not stay and continue to matriculate at a level that would be expected based on retention numbers; and (3) FVSU students are not graduating on time and many are not graduating at all. This establishes a need to further examine the university's current retention strategies and determine why those are not translating into students persisting and graduating.

Section V. Graduation Rate Challenge

One of the most significant measures of success for any institution is its ability to graduate students (Scott, Bailey, & Kienzl, 2006). This realization is not lost on FVSU as it attempts to address the low graduation rates at the four- and six-year cohorts at the undergraduate level. To further understand these rates, it is necessary to see where FVSU stands in comparison to its peer institutions throughout the US. [Peer selection](#) was guided according to specific guidelines derived from the USG and was based on variables such as whether the institution is public, private non-profit, or private for-profit; whether the institution has a medical school; city size; region of the US; total student headcount; number of full-time faculty; and degree programs offered. Further, according to the [USG](#), the base cohort for calculating bachelor's degree graduation rates includes all undergraduate, bachelor's degree-seeking, first-time, full-time freshmen.

Using these criteria, a total of 15 institutions throughout the United States were identified as peer institutions of FVSU, which constitutes a total of 16 institutions in the peer group. Each peer institution is ranked according to the 2018 graduation rates and FVSU has the fifth lowest ranking at the six-year mark ([Appendix B](#)). Analysis of graduation rates of the 16 peer institutions combined compared to FVSU data shows that FVSU has lagged its peers since 2014, which would be inclusive of those students beginning their studies in 2008 (Table 6). IPEDs data showed that the FVSU fall 2018 four-year graduation rate at 9% compared to 17% averages among its peers. In addition, the FVSU six-year graduation rate was 28% compared to 35% among its peers.

Table 6. Comparison Graduation Rates between FVSU and Peer Institutions.

Comparison	Graduation Rates (%)									
Graduation Year	2018		2017		2016		2015		2014	
	6 YR	4 YR	6 YR	4 YR	6 YR	4 YR	6 YR	4 YR	6 YR	4 YR
	2012	2014	2011	2013	2010	2012	2009	2011	2008	2010
Fort Valley State University	28	9	26	7	25	8	29	12	32	11
Peer Institutions Average	35	17	35	17	33	17	34	16	34	16

Source: IPEDS

Because graduation rates provide an outcome measure of student success, it is necessary for the institution to evaluate and understand how or why graduation rates remain low compared to peers. Exploration of indicators such as retention rates and student engagement are essential to this process.

Retention Rates

When considering student success, it is necessary to evaluate its relationship to student retention. More specifically, institutions must retain students in order to graduate students. To that end, one would expect a positive correlation to exist when assessing student retention and graduation rates. FVSU has consistently outperformed its peers since 2015 with respect to retention. In 2018, FVSU had a retention rate of 75% compared to an average of 68% among its peer institutions (Table 7).

Table 7. Comparison of Retention Rates of Returning First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen between FVSU and Peer Institutions.

Comparison	Retention Rates (%)				
	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
	Full-time	Full-time	Full-time	Full-time	Full-time
FVSU	75	76	75	78	57
Peers	68	68	69	70	69

Source: IPEDS

Student Engagement

The relationship between student engagement and college persistence is well documented in literature (Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2007). Kuh et al. (2007) found that student engagement had a positive and statistically significant effect on persistence, as well as student grades between the first and second year of study, which included students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds. One specific measure used in their analysis was the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE). Because FVSU seeks to improve graduation rates, the institution

acknowledges the need for its students to persist beyond the initial retention of their first year. Further, NSSE data is provided to show how FVSU compares to its peers.

According to the NSSE, student engagement refers to (a) the amount of time and effort students put into their studies and other educationally purposeful activities; and (b) how the institution deploys its resources and organizes the curriculum and other learning opportunities to get students to participate in activities linked to student learning. The survey gathers information from first-year and senior students' participation in the aforementioned purposeful activities designed to enhance student learning and personal development. More specifically, 10 engagement indicators are identified and grouped into one of four broad themes. The first theme is "academic challenge" and includes the indicators of higher-order learning, reflective and integrative learning, learning strategies, and quantitative reasoning. The second theme is "learning with peers" and includes the indicators of collaborative learning and discussions with diverse others. The third theme is "experiences with faculty" and includes the indicators of student-faculty interaction and effective teaching practices. The fourth theme is "campus environment" and includes the indicators of quality of interactions and supportive environment. Engagement indicators are scored based on a 60-point Likert scale where Never = 0; Sometimes = 20; Often = 40; and Very Often = 60. Results from the survey provide an estimate of how undergraduate students utilize their time and what they gain from attending college.

As the institution seeks to improve upon its advisement to improve student success, the most relevant indicators regarding student engagement can be found in the third (experiences with faculty) and fourth (campus environment) themes respectively. These themes are disaggregated purposely as they are deemed most relevant to the concept of proactive advisement.

To better understand FVSU's standing in comparison to its peers along these two themes, three comparator groups are utilized. These include the entire USG (termed Georgia System by NSSE), Carnegie Classification peers, and FVSU-selected peers (termed USG selected peers by NSSE). To clarify, the USG-selected peer group is inclusive of all institutions within the USG; the Carnegie Classification peer group is comprised of institutions from around the country according to guidelines and criteria set by the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education; and the USG-selected peer group is comprised of specific institutions within the USG as selected

by FVSU and approved by the USG. Participants of the survey include first-year students and seniors. The most current NSSE results are from 2017 and are provided showing FVSU's standing among its comparator groups during this assessment period (Table 8-11). Results of first-year and senior students are separated for clarity.

Experiences with Faculty Theme

Among first-year students under the Experiences with Faculty theme (Table 8), FVSU students are not significantly different from their peers on the engagement indicator of “effective teaching practices.” However, FVSU students scored significantly higher on the indicator “student-faculty interaction” when compared to USG peer group and the Carnegie Class peer group.

Table 8. Experiences with Faculty: First-Year Students.

Mean Comparisons	FVSU	<i>Your first-year students compared with</i>					
		Georgia System		Carnegie Class		USG Selected Peers	
<i>Engagement Indicator</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>
Student-Faculty Interaction	27.7	21.0**	.44	21.6**	.41	23.5	.26
Effective Teaching Practices	36.1	38.5	-.18	38.8	-.20	38.3	-.15

Notes: Results weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups); Effect size: Mean difference divided by pooled standard deviation; Symbols on the Overview page are based on effect size and *p* before rounding; **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001 (2-tailed).

Source: IPEDS

Among senior students under the Experiences with Faculty theme (Table 9), FVSU students scored significantly higher than the USG peer group and the Carnegie Class peer group on the engagement indicator of “student-faculty interaction,” while no significant difference was found between the USG-selected peer group. However, FVSU students scored significantly lower on the indicator “effective teaching practices” when compared to all three comparator groups.

Table 9. Experiences with Faculty: Seniors.

Mean Comparisons	FVSU	<i>Your seniors compared with</i>					
		Georgia System		Carnegie Class		USG Selected Peers	
<i>Engagement Indicator</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>
Student-Faculty Interaction	32.1	24.3***	.49	25.1**	.42	27.6	.27
Effective Teaching Practices	34.5	39.8**	-.39	39.7*	-.38	40.8**	-.43

Notes: Results weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups); Effect size: Mean difference divided by pooled standard deviation; Symbols on the Overview page are based on effect size and *p* before rounding; **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001 (2-tailed).

Source: IPEDS

Campus Environment Theme

Among first-year students under the Campus Environment theme (Table 10), FVSU students are not significantly different from their peers on the engagement indicator of “supportive environment.” However, FVSU students scored significantly lower on the indicator “quality of interactions” when compared to USG peer group and the Carnegie Class peer group. No significant differences were reported between the USG-selected peers.

Table 10. Campus Environment: First-Year Students.

Mean Comparisons	FVSU	<i>Your first-year students compared with</i>					
		Georgia System		Carnegie Class		USG Selected Peers	
<i>Engagement Indicator</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>
Quality of Interactions	36.8	41.1*	-.34	41.4**	-.36	40.0	-.24
Supportive Environment	35.7	36.4	-.05	35.8	-.01	35.6	.01

Notes: Results weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups); Effect size: Mean difference divided by pooled standard deviation; Symbols on the Overview page are based on effect size and *p* before rounding; **p* < .05, ***p* < .01, ****p* < .001 (2-tailed).

Among senior students under the Campus Environment theme (Table 11), FVSU students are not significantly different from any comparator group on the engagement indicators of “quality of interactions” or “supportive environment.”

Table 11. Campus Environment: Seniors.

Mean Comparisons	FVSU	<i>Your seniors compared with</i>					
		Georgia System		Carnegie Class		USG Selected Peers	
<i>Engagement Indicator</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Effect size</i>
Quality of Interactions	40.2	41.7	-.13	42.4	-.18	42.5	-.18
Supportive Environment	29.8	33.2	-.24	32.3	-.17	33.7	-.26
Notes: Results weighted by institution-reported sex and enrollment status (and institution size for comparison groups); Effect size: Mean difference divided by pooled standard deviation; Symbols on the Overview page are based on effect size and <i>p</i> before rounding; * <i>p</i> < .05, ** <i>p</i> < .01, *** <i>p</i> < .001 (2-tailed).							

Source: IPEDS

Section Summary

Assessments in the areas of retention and student engagement have shown results consistent with other institutions around the nation, as well as within the USG. Retention and engagement rates of FVSU students are consistent and sometimes better than those of its peers. With such positive results, one might expect a positive correlation between these influential factors and graduation rates. Because this is not the case, the institution has an obligation to address this issue by gaining a better understanding of the negative correlation between these factors and current graduation rates. As the data presented indicates, low graduation rate is the challenge for FVSU and serve as the foundation for the development of its QEP.

Section VI. Influential Factors of Low Graduation Rate

For students, graduation represents the culmination of years of study, hard-work, and dedication. However, there may be a variety of reasons that prevent students from persisting to graduation. Possible reasons could be of a personal nature such as illness, family crisis, financial limitations, or negative experiences with those associated with the institution whether they are fellow students or university personnel. Regardless of the reason behind students' lack of persistence, FVSU has an obligation to provide all students a quality education, complete with the skills and preparation necessary to succeed. FVSU has identified proactive advisement as an influential factor that may positively affect student success through greater student engagement, persistence, and, ultimately, graduation.

The Case for Proactive Advisement

Proactive advisement, also known as intrusive advisement, has been around since the mid-1970s and started with the work of Robert Glennen, who wanted to combine advising and counseling into one specialty (Glennen, 1975; Glennen & Baxley, 1985). Many attending FVSU possesses characteristics indicative of at-risk populations (i.e., ethnic minorities, academically disadvantaged, and low socioeconomic status) intrusive advising would be beneficial to his or her success. According to Heisserer and Parette (2002), there are three elements to advisement that showcase its usefulness in working with at-risk populations. These elements include prescriptive advising, developmental advising, and integrated advising. First, prescriptive advising is characterized by the advisor making a diagnosis (where the student is currently) and subsequently prescribing a specific treatment (plan) for the student where the student is expected to follow without question. Second, developmental advising refers to the shared responsibility between student and advisor designed to stimulate growth in the student. This goes beyond the advisor simply answering general questions as dictated by student needs but includes directing students to proper resources where specific questions can be answered, thereby increasing the independence, decision-making, and problem-solving abilities of the student. Lastly, integrated advising is simply a combination of the first two elements (prescriptive and developmental) and is synonymous with intrusive advising.

Because the advisement process is essential to the progression of the student towards successful degree completion, consideration must be given to those elements that may hinder this effort. Deficiencies in the areas of course offerings, financial aid, and the utilization of the university's degree audit system, [DegreeWorks](#), shows how these occurrences may negatively impact student success.

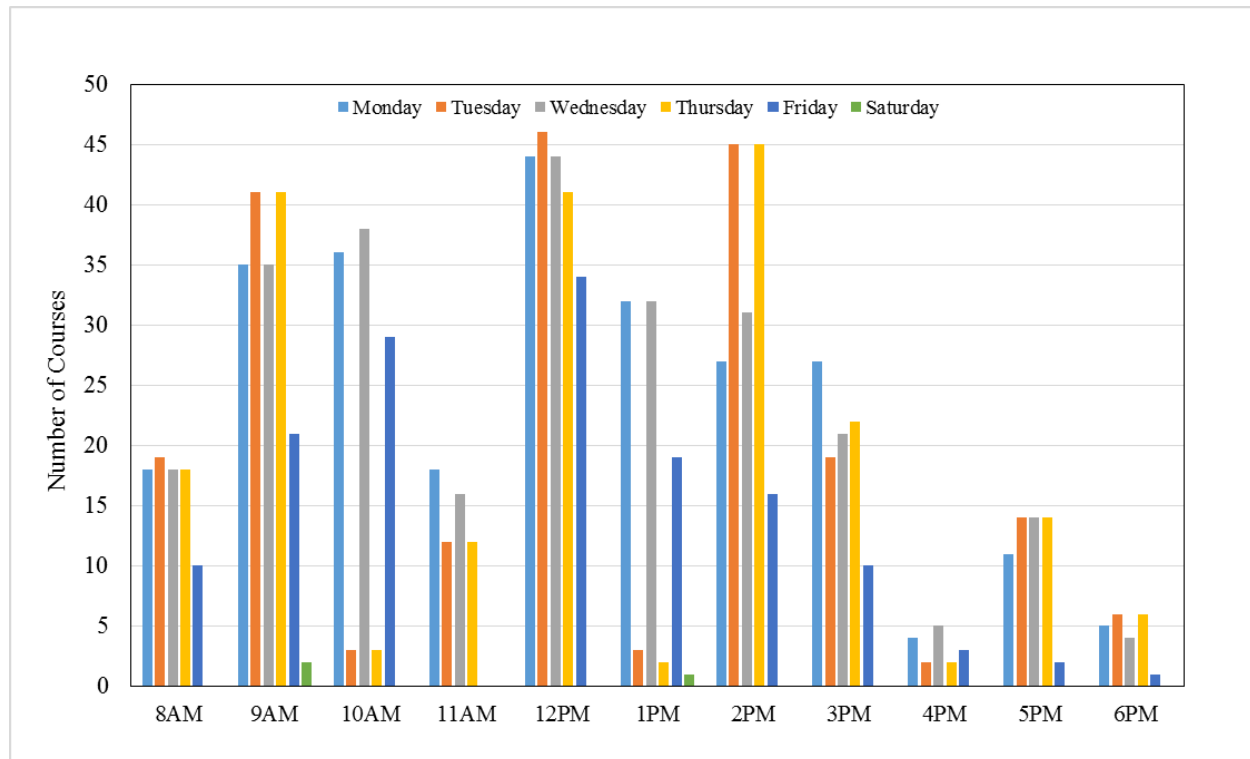
Course Offerings

The term course offerings refers to the availability of specific courses along with meeting days and times for a given semester. As it pertains to student progression towards graduation, needed classes must be available for students to ensure they are able to complete their degree programs within eight semesters or four years. Although FVSU utilizes [degree maps](#) for all programs to identify

the specific semesters when courses are available, any conflict in course offerings (student needs two courses that are both are offered at the same time) can disrupt this plan while creating challenges for the student. This can be even more damaging when prerequisites are needed but are closed due to high class enrollment. In those instances, a student may be delayed a year waiting for class availability. This same situation can occur if a student fails a course that serves as a prerequisite to another, as many classes are offered according to a rotation as designated within a given department. Course rotation affirms that certain classes are only offered in each semester regardless of the needs of the student.

Another issue regarding course scheduling is the choice or discretion faculty have regarding the times they schedule their individual classes (Figure 3). Some may elect class times that are more convenient for themselves as opposed to what is needed by the student. This could potentially leave students needing classes at a certain time that may simply not be available. Given these issues regarding scheduling, the ability of students to complete their degree programs in four to six years becomes more challenging. There appears to be a bottleneck of classes Monday – Thursday at 12 noon; Monday and Wednesday at 10am, 1pm, and 2pm; and Tuesday and Thursday at 9am and 2pm. There are minimal classes available at 8am Monday - Friday, Tuesday and Thursday at 1pm, and any day after 4pm. This data demonstrates the need to pressure test the university schedule and adjust course offering times. The pressure test will identify pressure or areas of the schedule where there is class congestion exist. This pressure can impact the ability of students to schedule and complete the course sequences based on the degree maps. The academic leaders will then redesign the FVSU schedule of course offerings, known as the dynamic schedule.

Figure 3. Weekly University Class Schedule for the Fall 2019 Semester



Section Summary

Addressing the issue of low graduation rates is a high priority for FVSU. By focusing on proactive advisement, the institution seeks to establish a close relationship between advisors and students as necessary to guide students to degree completion. FVSU recognizes that for students to graduate, they must be retained, and, for them to be retained, they must be engaged within the campus community. The interaction between advisors and their respective students is essential to this process. Although retention and engagement rates are currently at acceptable and satisfactory levels, the graduation rates remain low. The university seeks to change this outcome by increasing rates in retention, persistence and graduation through integration of a proactive advisement approach to foster student success.

Section VII. Current Student Success

University College

FVSU has made significant investments in financial resources, human resources, and systems to strengthen the institution by establishing a UC to increase retention, persistence, and graduation rates for undergraduate students ([Appendix C](#)). Investment for 2019-2020 was \$820,307 that included \$710,894 in personal, \$10,712 in travel and \$94,700 in total operating expenses. UC is an innovative, interdisciplinary approach to achieving student success and engagement outcomes for first- and second-year students. The UC currently serves as the entry point for students, an innovator of new academic initiatives, and a catalyst for student success and retention throughout the campus. UC includes academic advising, academic counseling and disability services, tutorial services, supplemental instruction, reading and writing lab services, and first- and second year experience programs ([Appendix D](#)). UC serves as the primary support for all first-time, full-time freshmen throughout their first two years as undergraduate students. The UC is led by the dean of the UC, who is responsible for implementation, execution, review, and reporting. The UC is funded by the institution through the [Title III](#) grant, as part of the Higher Education Act of 1965, Title III, Part B is a U. S. Department of Education program. The purpose of Title III funding is to provide financial assistance to establish or strengthen the physical plants, financial management, academic resources, and endowments of HBCUs.

The success of the UC goals are being assessed based on the performance of six indicators: (1) achieve a 77% retention rate by a two percent increase each year by September 30, 2022; (2) develop comprehensive first and second-year experience programs by fall 2018, (3) establish civic engagement and volunteerism as a requirement for the UC by fall 2018; (4) engage 80% of freshmen and sophomores in academic advising each year; (5) engage 80% of freshmen and sophomores in student engagement programs and services; and (6) increase the number of students achieving a grade of “C” or better in general education courses by 10%. FVSU has invested over \$3.7M to ensure the success of this program and the success of the students it serves. This \$3.7M includes the Dean for the UC and staff, supplies, equipment, and technology for five years to accomplish the goals.

Momentum Year

Momentum Year Initiative (MYI) is a suite of strategies designed to help FVSU students in their crucial first year of college. FVSU works with students to guide them on a path to achieve their educational goals, including successful degree completion and on-time graduation. The MYI aims to increase student success as outlined below:

We (USG) know that: (1) predictive analytics and intrusive (proactive) advising help keep struggling students on track toward graduation, saving students money in the long term; (2) changes in remedial education that include intensive tutoring in conjunction with courses being taken for credit have led to big jumps in student success rates; (3) first-year students who take at least three courses connected to what they think they want to study are 40% more likely to graduate than students who do not; and (4) taking 15 hours a semester improves student success as well as shortens the time to graduation. Evidence-based research confirms that college students are most successful when they (1) start out their college careers by making a purposeful choice in a focus area or program; (2) enter with a productive academic mindset; and (3) follow clearly sequenced degree maps. Put together, these elements create a Momentum Year for students—a starting point that helps students find their path and build velocity in the direction of their goals (USG Momentum Year Initiative).

At FVSU, the MYI has been initiated with a high level of importance. FVSU utilizes collaborative approaches to advance work in this area, specifically through partnerships between academic and student affairs. The UC's First-Year Experience (FYE) program strives to connect the student experience with a number of other campus units (e.g., academic advising, career services, student engagement, etc.). In order to strengthen the campus' approach to achieving the goals associated with the MYI the following points are being implemented for the 2019-20 academic year:

- Fully engage academic departments in the MYI by successfully identifying at least nine credit hours from each major to fully bring to fruition the concept of academic focus areas for the campus;
- Continually work to connect academic advising and career planning and preparation;

- Encourage academic and student affairs units, departments, and divisions to use the e-portfolio option identified to connect student learning experiences, both in and out of the classroom;
- Develop connections between critical milestones and creating successful academic and career-pathways for students;
- Incorporate service-learning courses into the curriculum for each major in an effort to enhance student engagement;
- Identify an internship or capstone course within each major; and
- Heighten the awareness and commitment to the institution's adoption of civic engagement and service as a required component of student development and learning.

FVSU has implemented these items to develop synergy between the divisions of academic and student affairs, generating the necessary collaboration campus wide to allow the MYI to be incorporated throughout the student's matriculation. Implementation of the use of degree maps for auditing graduation requirements is one tool that has assisted keeping students on track to improve retention. Degree maps help structure the choices students must make to reach their academic and personal goals in college, while supporting the student's educational pursuits in a manner that keeps them on schedule for graduation. These degree maps sequence courses for students by semester, eliminate uncertainty about which courses students should take and when, identify prerequisite and corequisite courses, and highlight key academic and non-academic milestones students should achieve along the way. In the first-year degree maps include:

- The completion of core English and the aligned mathematics course (Figures 2 and 3);
- Nine credit hours in a student's selected major or academic focus area; and
- At least 30 credit hours (15 hours per semester).

Completion of Core English and Mathematics

In fall 2019, 24% of first-time, full-time freshmen students enrolled in the core English course and 9% enrollment in a core mathematics course, while 55% of the students enrolled in English and mathematics. Enrollment in both English and mathematics increased from 31% in fall 2017 to 55%

in fall 2019. When “A,” “B,” “C,” or passing rates were analyzed, it was shown that English has been consistently high at 86%, 88%, and 82% in 2017, 2018, and 2019, respectively. The “A,” “B,” and “C” rates in Math 1101/1111 have increased from 54% in 2017 to 70% in 2019 (Figure 12). This table demonstrates that more FVSU students are taking introductory English and mathematics. Through proactive advising, the goal is to further increase the number of students who complete both courses in the first semester.

Table 12. Percent of First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen Enrolled in Core English and Math from Fall 2107-19

Semester	ENGL 1101 Only	MATH 1101/1111 Only	Takes Both	Neither	FTF-FT
Fall 2017	18%	23%	31%	28%	100%
Fall 2018	34%	7%	49%	10%	100%
Fall 2019	24%	9%	55%	13%	100%

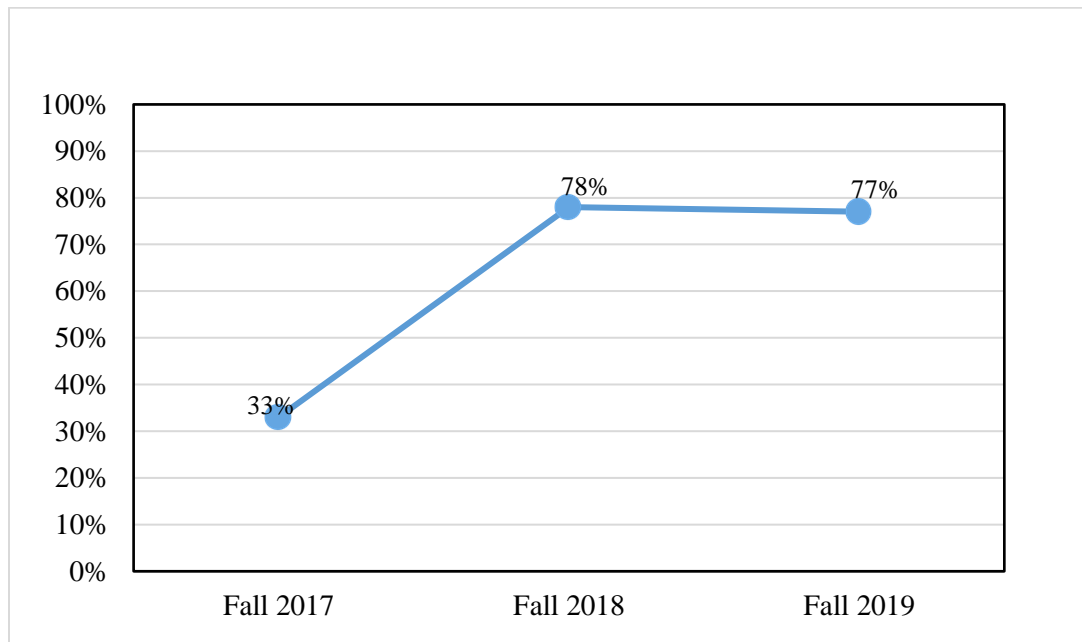
Source: FVSU Institutional Research

Data using propensity score matching to assess the success of essentially identical students in the USG distinguished only whether they took a first-semester momentum course load (15+ credits), which underscores the importance of increased credits in the first semester and first year. Students with this momentum course load in their first term are 6.2% more likely to graduate (USG Momentum Year).

Momentum Course Load

In fall 2016, 33% of first-time, full-time students attempted 15 or more credit hours. In fall 2017, that number increased to 78% and in fall 2019 remained high with 77% attempting 15 or more credit hours (Figure 3).

Figure 3. First-Time, Full-Time Freshmen Who Took at Least 15 hours from Fall 2017 to Fall 2019



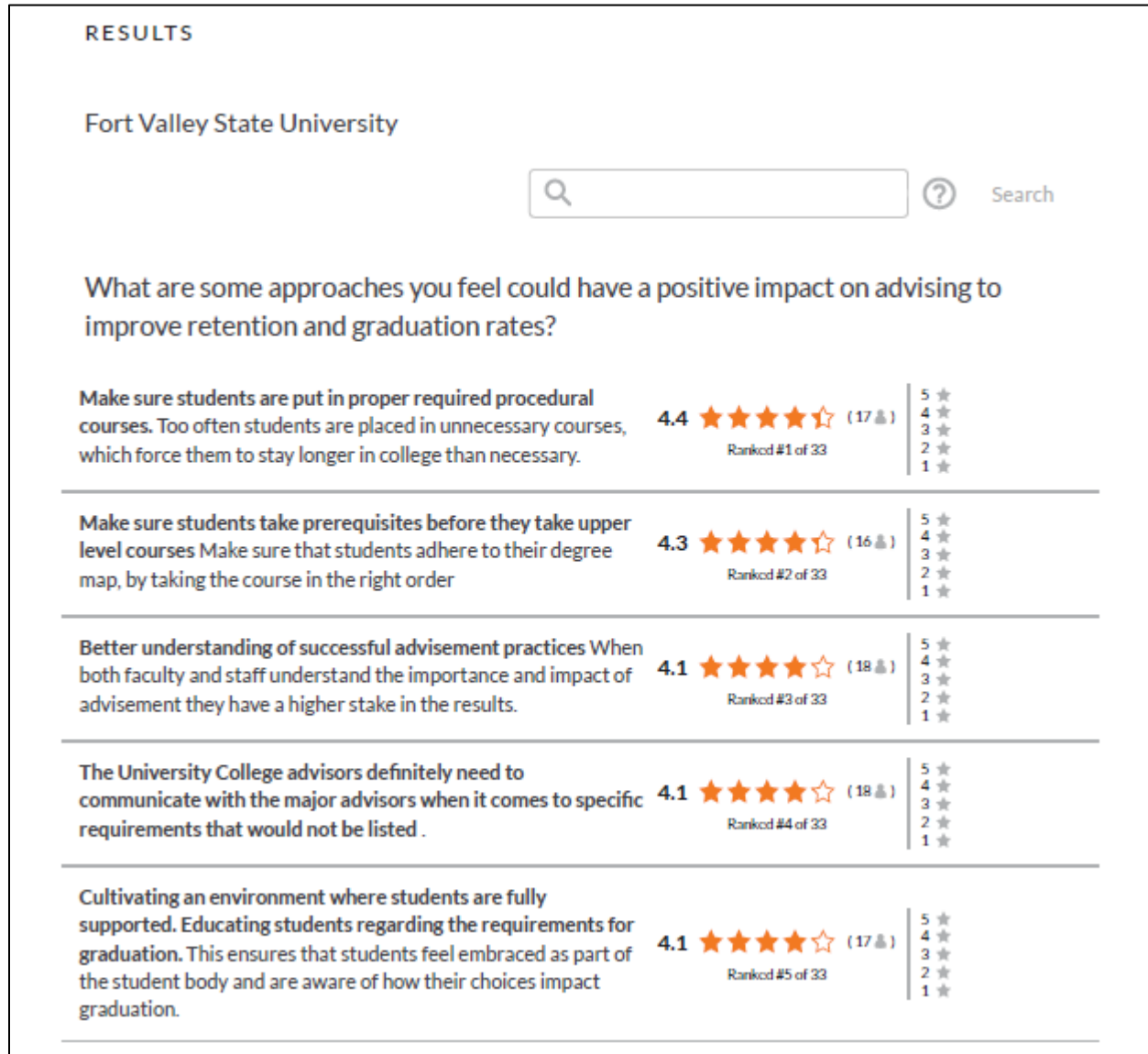
Source: FVSU Institutional Research

Input from Constituents

FVSU used the [ThoughtExchange](#) tool to survey constituents and involve a broad-based support for the topic. ThoughtExchange allows real-time communication, which can uncover common ground and lead to change. The university launched a ThoughtExchange with a question to discover different perspectives and inform decisions on this important topic: What are some approaches you feel could have a positive impact on advising to improve retention and graduation rates?

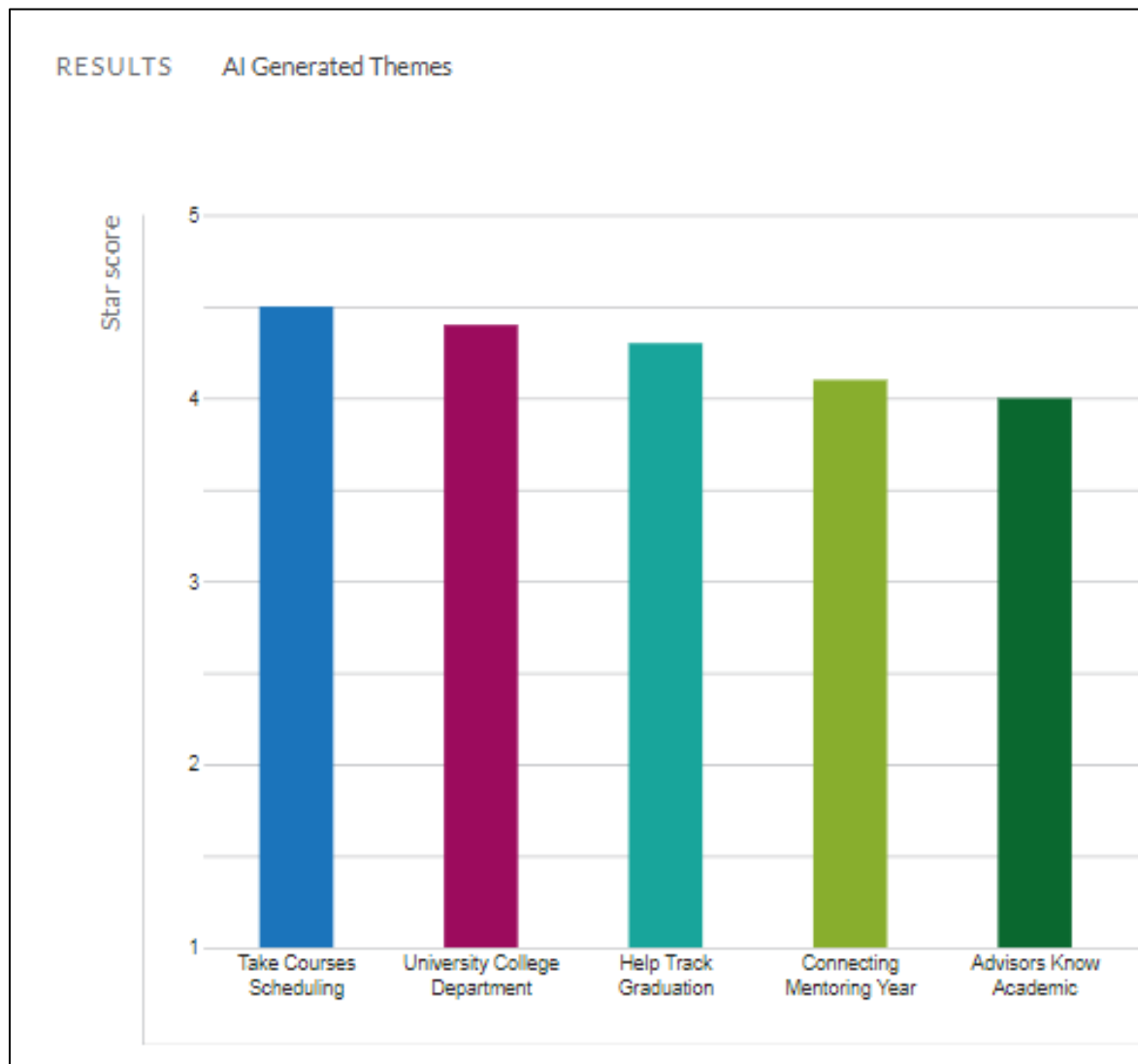
There were 75 faculty and staff that responded, 48 comments and 449 star ratings of those responses. The top five thoughts included: (1) Make sure students are put in proper required procedural courses; (2) Make sure students take prerequisites before they take upper level courses; (3) Provide a better understanding of successful advisement practices; (4) Ensure UC advisors communicate with the major advisors when it comes to specific requirements that would not be listed; and (5) Cultivate an environment where students are fully supported (Figure 4).

Figure 4. ThoughtExchange Top Thoughts by Faculty and Staff



Next, FVSU examined the top themes for the ThoughtExchange (Figure 5). Comments are grouped by keywords to highlight themes within the exchange. The top themes included: (1) Course scheduling; (2) UC; (3) help track graduation; (4) connecting mentoring year; and (5) advisors “know” academics.

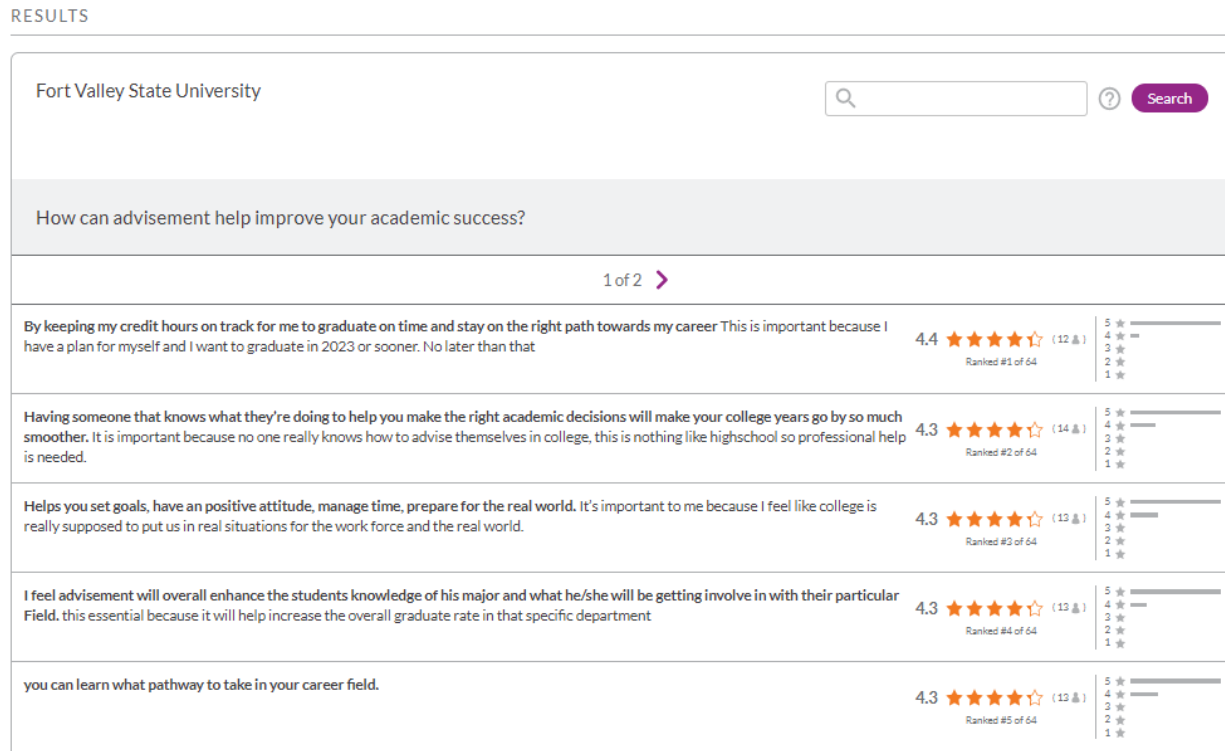
Figure 5. ThoughtExchange Faculty and Staff Themes



The university also conducted a ThoughtExchange with the students to gather their thoughts on advising at FVSU (Figure 6). There were 230 participants with 73 comments and 409 ratings. The top five student comments were: (1) By keeping my credit hours on track for me to graduate on time and stay on the right path towards my career; (2) Having someone that knows what they're doing to help you make the right academic decisions will make your college years go by so much smoother; (3) Helps you set goals, have an positive attitude, manage time, prepare for the real world; (4) I feel advisement will overall enhance the students' knowledge of his major and what

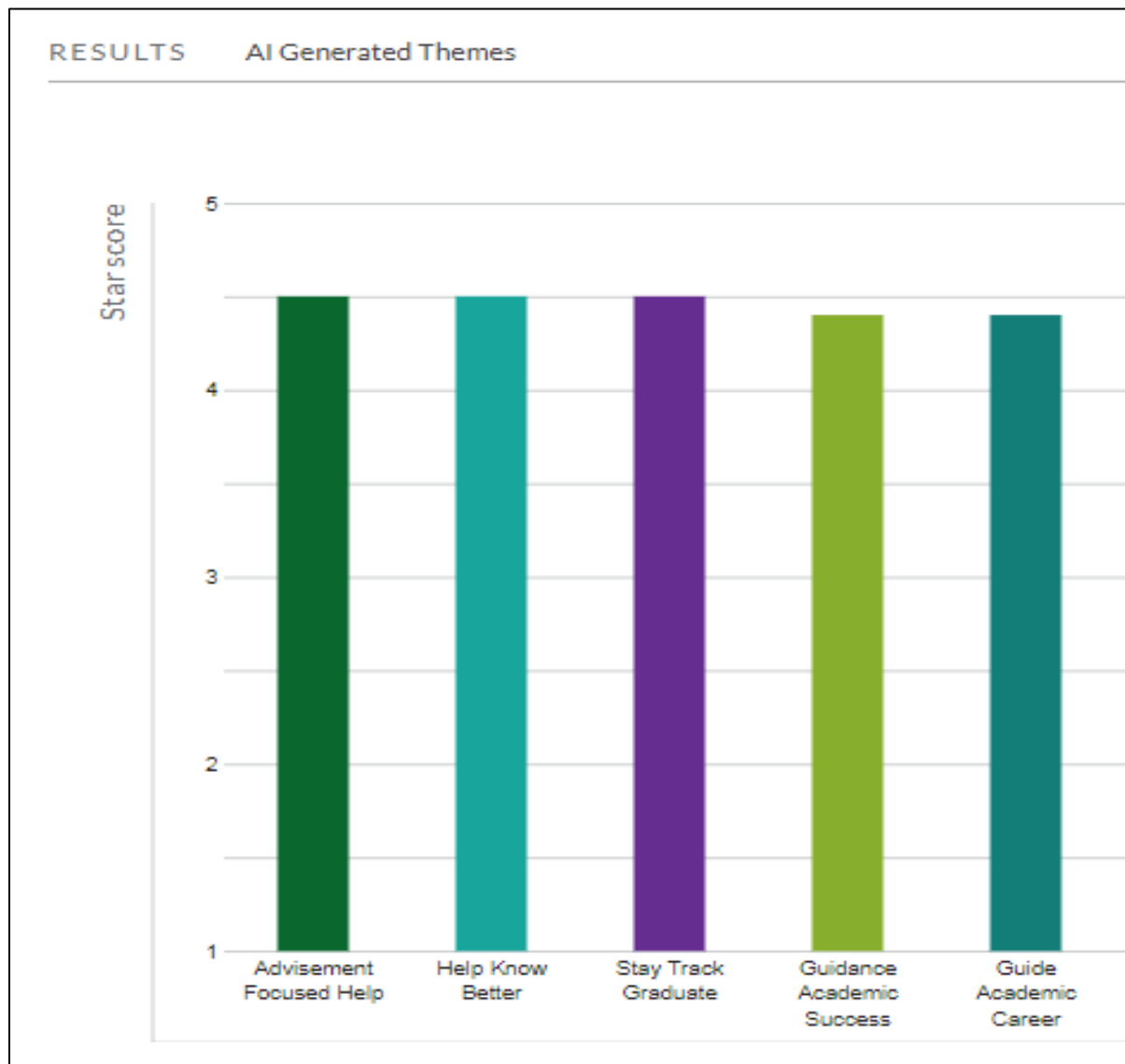
he/she will be getting involve in with their particular field; and (5) you can learn what pathway to take in your career field.

Figure 6. Top Thoughts by Students



Again, FVSU examined the top themes for the ThoughtExchange (Figure 5). Comments are grouped by keywords to highlight themes within the exchange. The top themes included: (1) advisement focused help; (2) help “know” better; (3) stay on track to graduate; (4) guidance academic success; and (5) guide academic career.

Figure 7. Top Themes by Students



Section Summary

One of the primary goals of the UC and MYI is to increase retention. The UC has a goal of a 77% retention rate. In fall 2016, prior to launch of the UC, the retention rate was 75.9%. In fall 2017, the rate dropped to 74.7% and in 2018, to the current level of 73.2%. Though FVSU's retention rate leads its peer institutions as previously demonstrated, the university is not trending in the right direction. The Momentum Year is positioned to address retention through its six success indicators, as previously mentioned. Previously presented data shows that students are not persisting at rates

that would be expected with even current retention rates. This may be impacting the overall graduation rates. Through ThoughtExchange, it was determined that all constituents see the need to enhance advising. The enhanced advising through proactive advising will increase retention and persistence that will lead to increased graduation rates.

Section VI. Student Success Outcomes

Advising at FVSU will be a combined effort involving professional advisors and faculty advisors. Using the data collected from the university community, the QEP team worked with key stakeholders to determine what students should be able to accomplish as a result of the proactive advising program.

Goal 1: To increase retention from the five-year average of 75% to 80% by 2025.

Goal 2: To increase second-year and third-year persistence from 60.9% and 57.1% to 80% by 2025.

Goal 3: To increase the four-year and six-year graduation rates from 22% to 30% and from 35% to 43%, respectively, by 2025.

To achieve these goals, the QEP team developed a set of student success outcomes (SSO) that will help students with developing academic goals. This QEP will also connect students with advisors who will use a proactive approach to advising to enhance the advising experience and improve retention, persistence, and graduation rates.

SSO 1. Increase the five-year fall-to-fall retention rates by 1% over the next five-year to an overall 80% by 2025.

SSO 2. Increase persistence rates to align with retention rates by increasing second- and third-year persistence to 80% by 2025.

SSO 3. Increase the four-year and six-year graduation rates by 2% to 30% and 43%, respectively, over a four-year period between 2022 and 2025.

Action Items:

- Students will meet with advisor(s) twice a semester for an advising session;
- Implement student self-registration;
- Print degree maps in the course catalog.
- Use the [Curriculog Management System](#) to improve efficiency for course and program changes including balance sheet changes and degree map changes.
- Redesign the schedule to accommodate better class scheduling; and
- Implement a transitional ceremony to recognize students as they earn the 60-credit hours at the end of the second year. This will also include a formal acknowledgement of the transition from profession advisor to the program advisor.
- Increase the number of students that register for more than 15 hours per semester by 30%;
- Students will demonstrate progress to degree program by successfully completing an average of 30 credit hours per academic year;
- Once a student earns 60-credit hours, the students will meet with their program advisor twice a year to review the academic progress in the DegreeWorks audit system. This will decrease advising errors that can delay graduation; and
- Perform a pressure test to lead a redesign of the course schedule to accommodate better course sequence needs.

Section VII. Assessment

The UC dean will oversee implementation and assessment of the QEP with the support of the OIRPE. Tables 13 demonstrate the actions to be completed for the SSO to be assessed, the expected outcomes, the responsible individuals, and the timeline for implementing each outcome.

Table 13. Assessment plan for the Success Outcomes

Assessment of Success Outcome 1			
Increase the five-year fall-to-fall retention rates by 1% over the next five-year to an overall 80% by 2025.			
Action	Expected Outcome	Responsibly Party	Timeline
Students will meet with advisor twice a year for an advising session.	80% of students will meet with the professional advisor twice a year during the first year.	Dean, University College	8/21-8/25
Increase the number of students that register for more than 15 hours per semester by 30%.	80% of first-time full-time students will register for 15+ credit hours.	Advisors	8/21-8/25
Retention rates will increase 80% by 2025.	Retention rates will increase 5% by 2025.	Dean, University College	8/21-8/25

Assessment of Success Outcome 2			
Increase persistence rates to align with retention rates by increasing second- and third-year persistence to 80% by 2025.			
Action	Expected Outcome	Responsibly Party	Timeline
Students will meet with advisor(s) twice a year for an advising session.	80% of students will meet with the professional advisor(s) twice a year during the second year and up to 60 credit hours.	Dean, University College and Academic Deans	8/22-5/25
Increase the number of students that register for more than 15 hours per semester by 30%.	85% of all retained students will register for 15+ credit hours each semester.	Advisors	8/22-5/25
Student self-registration implementation	80% of students will register themselves for classes each semester.	Dean, University College, Academic Deans, Department Chairs and advisors	8/22-5/25
Persistence rates will increase to 80% by 2025.	Persistence rates will increase to levels that align with retention rates.	Dean, University College	8/22-8/25

Assessment of Success Outcome 3			
Increase the four-year and six-year graduation rates by 2% to 30% and 43%, respectively, over a four-year period between 2022 and 2025.			
Action	Expected Outcome	Responsibly Party	Timeline
Students will demonstrate adequate progress to degree program	70% of students will maintain a GPA of 2.0 and 30 earned hours per semester	Advisors	8/20-8/25
Increase the number of students that the program of study in four years	Four year graduation rates will increase 10% by 2025.	Dean, University College	8/20-8/25
Increase the number of students that the program of study in six years	Six year graduation rates will increase 10% by 2025.	Dean, University College	8/20-8/25

Timeline

Year	Action Step	Assigned Leadership Responsibility	Status
(2018-19) Planning	Form the QEP Steering Committee	Provost & Vice President for Academic Affairs	Completed
	QEP Steering Committee Kickoff Meeting	QEP Chair	Completed
	Establish sub-committees for Topic Selection Consideration	QEP Chair	Completed
	Report on data collected and analyzed to develop major topic	QEP Subcommittee chairs	Completed
	Present formal proposal to college community	QEP Chair and Co-chair	Completed
	Identify Goals and Success Outcomes	QEP Team	Completed
	Identify assessment measures	QEP Team	Completed
(2019-20) Pre-Implementation	Formally announce QEP topic to the college community	Provost/VPAA, QEP Chair and QEP Co-chair	Completed
	Establish budget	QEP Leadership	Completed
	Write QEP Document	QEP Writing Team	Completed
	Establish budget	QEP Budget Team	Completed
	Welcome SACSCOC Site Visit	FVSU Community	Not Completed
	Establish the QEP Implementation team	Provost/VPAA and UC Dean	Not Completed
	NACADA Conference	QEP Chair and Professional Advisors	Not Completed
(2020-21) Implementation of the Plan	Kickoff Academic Advising Plan among Faculty and staff	UC Dean and Implementation team	Not Completed
	Refine Academic Advising program	UC Dean and Implementation team	Not Completed
	Professional Development	UC Dean and NACADA	Not Completed

Organizational Structure

The supervisory structure for providing oversight for the QEP development and implementation includes:

- The President: Charged the QEP team, emphasizing the importance of alignment of the QEP with the university's mission.
- The President's Council: Under the president's guidance, this advisory council will provide the unit-level resources in a timely manner to support the efficient implementation of the QEP.
- Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs: Establishes the QEP as an academic priority and provides the leadership framework within which the deans of the colleges will be accountable for working with the department chairs and faculty to conduct the implementation, assessment, reporting, and revisions required for a successful QEP.
- Director for the OIRPE: Assumes leadership in assigning staff and working with the UC Dean and staff to conduct formative and summative assessments. Provides reports based on the tabulation and interpretation of the data in light of stated goals and objectives. This position will also assist with the reporting and review of QEP data by the QEP leadership team.
- Deans' Council: Under the direction of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, this council will work with the UC Dean and advisory committee to establish priorities, structure the faculty development and student enhancement components of the plan, and make recommendations for faculty rewards and recognitions.
- UC Dean/ QEP director: Leads implementation, training, execution, and assessment of the QEP. Subject to the direction of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the UC dean will oversee budget management, make recommendations for new hires, and evaluate personnel. The UC dean will provide reports to the Dean's Council and the President's Cabinet.
- Implementation Committee: Works on an on-going basis with the UC dean to oversee the plan, ensure that formative and summative assessment results are reviewed, and coordinate subsequent revisions and alignments required for a successful QEP. Committee members

will seek input on an on-going basis from their representative units to inform the ongoing QEP efforts.

Resources and Budget Estimate

To implement and accomplish a successful QEP, FVSU will commit adequate resources to the project, including human resources and material resources.

Human Resources

Personnel: To ensure the success of the QEP, FVSU will assign additional duties to the UC dean that will direct all of the activities associated with the QEP. The UC dean will chair the QEP implementation team and oversee the implementation of the QEP, collaborate with the coordinator of faculty development to execute professional development activities, manage the QEP budget, and promote university-wide participation. The UC dean will also work with the marketing and communications department to share information with all stakeholders. The UC dean will also travel to at least one professional development workshop annually with an advising focus. The UC dean is currently funded through Title III and will receive an additional compensation from the institution. The staff is also currently fully funded by the institution through the Title III grant.

Professional Development: Professional development will be an essential component of the QEP as all faculty and some staff will be trained on academic and financial aid advising. Initial comprehensive training will include, but not be limited to academic advising, DegreeWorks, and financial aid. Ongoing education will be provided to faculty and staff participating in advising.

Members of the QEP implementation team will obtain membership in NACADA. The team will attend training and workshops annually and will utilize NACADA's compilation of advising materials and information, along with consulting and speaking services to assist in enhancing advising.

Budget Estimate

The budget estimate for the QEP is as follows:

QEP Budget 2019-2023						
Category	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Marketing	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$10,000
Supplies	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$15,000
Faculty Advising Training	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$25,000
Technology	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$50,000
Annual Total	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$100,000

Summary

The QEP team has designed a comprehensive assessment plan of success outcomes to determine the impact of the Enhancing Academic Advising to Improve Retention, Persistence and Graduation Rates QEP. Results will be shared with the university leadership team at regular intervals as they become available to guide the implementation of the QEP Goals. The UC Dean will be responsible for gathering and sharing assessment results with the university community on an annual basis. This will provide a robust method of tracking students' success indicators, including enrollment, retention, persistence, degree maps, course success, and graduation rates.

Appendix A. QEP Steering Committee Meeting Minutes



FORT VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY QEP SACSCOC STEERING COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes
September 18, 2018

Committee Chair: Dr. Gregory Ford, Dean
Committee Co-Chair: Ms. Juone Brown, Faculty Senate President
C.W. PETTIGREW CENTER ROOM 110

Present: Dr. Michelle Drew, Dr. Dawit Abera, Dr. Celia Dodd, Mr. Shawn Modena, Dr. Peter Dumbuya, Mrs. Becky Larson, Mr. Don McCarthy, Dr. Meigan Fields, Dr. Berlethia Pitts, Mrs. Rosie Petties, Mrs. Anita Allen, Mrs. Sharee' Lawrence, Mrs. Linda Bell, Dr. Masoud Naghedolfeizi, Dr. Tiffani Holmes, and Mrs. Letasha Pope

I. Greetings

The QEP SACS committee convened in the C. W. Pettigrew Center room 110 at 11:00 a.m. The meeting was called to order by Dr. Gregory Ford, at 11:05 a.m. on the above date. Dr. Ford greeted the body. Dr. Ford presented PowerPoint information to the group on the SACS Accreditation QEP timeline for substandard 7.2. Committee members can search the SACS website for additional information or questions. Dr. Ford explained as committee chair he will not give orders but delegate individual tasks to the QEP sub-committees. The QEP timeline substandard 7.2 has five components.

1. Minutes
2. Activities
3. Evidence
4. Resources
5. Plan

II. Areas of Evaluation

- ☐ Solicit Diverse Ideas
Institutional Constituencies share information
- ☐ Focus on Improving Specific Learning Outcomes
- ☐ Commits resources to initiate, implement and complete QEP budget.
- ☐ Assessment Plan
- ☐ Planning Current Processes and Strategic Plan

Dr. Dine Byrd asked how the committee will perform evaluations. Dr. Ford said the committee would determine how to define student success and assessment. Dr. Celia Dodd wondered whether the committee would have access to view previous examples documents. Dr. Ford will share documents from the old QEP plan and summary report thru one drive. Dr. Dawit Abera asked if the institution had

Appendix B. Comparator Peer Institutions for Graduation Rates.

Comparator Peer Institutions	Graduation Rates (%)									
	2018		2017		2016		2015		2014	
	6 YR	4 YR	6 YR	4 YR	6 YR	4 YR	6 YR	4 YR	6 YR	4 YR
	2012	2014	2011	2013	2010	2012	2009	2011	2008	2010
Mansfield University of Pennsylvania	51	37	55	39	54	33	50	34	54	38
Winston-Salem State University	48	23	49	21	47	20	46	17	46	17
Lincoln University	47	29	46	30	43	27	42	24	41	23
Alcorn State University	40	19	32	15	30	16	34	17	40	20
Francis Marion University	39	18	37	14	40	18	42	18	41	15
Virginia State University	39	19	42	20	44	25	49	29	43	23
Concord University	38	21	35	18	34	18	39	20	34	18
Fairmont State University	35	19	36	18	28	14	30	15	32	16
Fayetteville State University	35	16	33	17	32	17	32	16	35	17
Norfolk State University	35	15	39	15	37	24	33	18	34	18
South Carolina State University	34	16	36	15	38	19	36	15	38	15
Fort Valley State University	28	9	26	7	25	8	29	12	32	11
Coppin State University	24	12	24	10	17	6	18	5	18	5
Langston University	24	9	19	8	18	7	21	7	6	6
University of the Virgin Islands	22	5	24	6	23	10	24	9	26	11
Chicago State University	18	4	12	2	14	3	11	2	19	2

Source: IPEDS

Appendix C. The University College Annual Budget Worksheet

SCHOOL/AREA Title III/Academic Affairs		DEPARTMEN Establishing a University College		AMENDMENT REQUEST NO. 1	
RECOMMENDED BY:		APPROVED BY:			
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR/DEPARTMENT HEAD		Office of Sponsored Programs		DATE	
DATE					
APPROVED BY:		APPROVED BY:			
DEPARTMENT HEAD		Title III		DATE	
DATE					
APPROVED BY:		APPROVED BY:			
DEAN		Management of Fiscal Operations		DATE	
DATE					

2019-2020 Budget Period

20000-1028500-14600-61000-3345076

ACCOUNT NUMBER					
OBJECT CODE	DESCRIPTION	ORIGINAL BUDGET	APPROVED AMENDMENTS	REQUESTED AMENDMENTS	AMENDED BUDGET
500000	Personal Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
511000	Salaries - Regular Faculty	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
512000	Salaries - Part time Faculty	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
513000	Salaries - Summer Faculty	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
516000	Salaries - Other -Faculty	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
521000	Salaries - Professional /Admin	0.00	0.00	502,277.00	502,277.00
522000	Salaries - Staff	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
523000	Salaries - Graduate Assistants	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
524000	Salaries - Student Assistants	0.00	16,865.52	30,000.00	46,865.52
525000	Salaries - Casual Labor	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
526000	Salaries - Other - Staff	0.00	0.75	0.00	0.75
539000	Personnel Services	0.00	0.00	47,182.00	47,182.00
551000	FICA	0.00	0.00	47,182.00	47,182.00
552000	Retirement Systems	0.00	0.00	37,182.00	37,182.00
553000	Group Insurance	0.00	0.00	34,205.00	34,205.00
	TOTAL - Personal Services	0.00	16,866.27	698,028.00	714,894.27
640000	Travel	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
641000	Travel - Employee	0.00	5,712.53	5,000.00	10,712.53
651000	Travel - Non-Employee	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL - Travel	0.00	5,712.53	5,000.00	10,712.53
					0.00
700000	Operating Supplies & Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
712000	Motor Vehicle Expense	0.00	6,181.81	0.00	6,181.81
714000	Supplies and Materials	0.00	0.00	5,000.00	5,000.00
715000	Repairs and Maintenance	0.00	1,228.56	0.00	1,228.56
717000	Utilities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
719000	Rents - Non-Real Estate	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
720000	Insurance and Bonding	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
727000	Other Operating Expense	0.00	0.00	55,000.00	55,000.00
733000	Software	0.00	5,635.00	0.00	5,635.00
742000	Publications and Printing	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
743000	Equipment/Furniture Purchase - Small Value	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
744000	Information Tech. Equip. Purchase - Small Value	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
748000	Rents - Real Estate	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
751000	Per Diem & Fees	0.00	1,340.00	0.00	1,340.00
752000	Per Diem & Fees - Reimbursement & Direct Expense	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
753000	Contracts	0.00	2,858.50	10,500.00	13,358.50
771000	Telecommunications	0.00	1,956.26	5,000.00	6,956.26
781000	Scholarships	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
783000	Stipends	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL - Operating Supplies & Expenses	0.00	19,200.13	75,500.00	94,700.13
					0.00
800000	Equipment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
818000	Lease/Purchase	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
833000	Software	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
841000	Motor Vehicle Equip Purchase	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
843000	Other Capital Purchases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	TOTAL - Non-Personal Services	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
					0.00
951100	Allocated OH - Spons Agreements (Indirect Cost)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
					0.00
	TOTAL BUDGET	0.00	41,778.93	778,528.00	820,306.93

Appendix D. First and Second Year Programs Fall 2019

Tuesday, August 27, 2019 @ 11:00am | PETTIGREW | Collab with Academic Affairs

What's Next: Understanding Your Major? (FYE)

This forum gives students the opportunity to understand their major, majors offered, what type of careers rise from them and an intro to what the course work looks like from the Deans of the Colleges or a faculty representative.

Tuesday, August 27, 2019 @ 3:30pm | CTM | Collab with University College/Advisors

Why Am I Here: Understanding the Academic Track (SYE)

Sophomores have the moment to review what requirements that are remaining to be completed within University College before becoming a junior.

Tuesday, September 17, 2019 @ 11:00am | PETTIGREW | Alumni of FVSU (?)

"I Did Study, But I Got A..." (FYE)

This forum focuses on the different type studying skills and how to maximize time in your schedule and still have a student life.

Thursday, September 19, 2019 @ 3:30pm | CTM | Maybe an Alumni

"What's Your Read?" (SYE)

Program is catered to personal introductions, body language, elevator pitches, being able to articulate who you are and what you want. (Maybe Speed Greeting like Speed Dating Game - icebreaker).

Tuesday, September 24, 2019 @ 7:00pm | CTM | Cranford/Alumni/Panel

"Crucial Conversations w/ Cranford" (FYE/SYE)

Unwind dialogue of the college experience from the classroom to the yard, from the residence hall to the dining hall, personal to professional.

Tuesday, October 8, 2019 @ 11:00am | PETTIGREW | Collab with Counseling/Speaker (?)

"Halftime Report" (FYE)

Have a counselor/therapist to come in and do/suggest some minor exercises that can help a student release worry and stress. How to notice signs of depression, stress in self and others that may be harmful.

Tuesday, October 22, 2019 @ 7:00pm | CTM | Collab with Marketing or Outside Source

"The Power of a Hashtag" (FYE)

Workshop on branding and social media. Learn how your hashtags has the greater audience and it can help or hurt you depending on how it's used.

Wednesday, October 23, 2019 @ 3:30pm | CTM | Collab with Graduate School & Writing Center

"My Aspirations Are: Generating a Personal Statement" (SYE)

Program catered to refining the resume and generating a personal statement.

Monday, November 4, 2019 @ 3:30pm | CTM | University College

"Junior Year, Is That You Playa?" (SYE)

Final review of what's required to complete the University College requirements before becoming a junior. Preparing for transition and pairing with Faculty Advisors.

Tuesday, November 5, 2019 @ 7:00pm | CTM | Cranford

"Crucial Conversations w/ Cranford" (FYE/SYE)

Unwind dialogue of the college experience from the classroom to the yard, from the residence hall to the dining hall, personal to professional.

References

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American Association of State Colleges and Universities. (2004) “*Graduation Rates as a Measure of Institutional Performance: Why Now? Why Not? What Needs to be Done?*” Volume 1, Number 6, 12/2004.

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Supporting Documentation

-  [University System of Georgia \(USG\)](#)
-  [ThoughtExchange](#)
-  [USG Academic Affairs Policy Manual: USG By the Numbers](#)
-  [Federal Pell Grant](#)
-  [Parent Plus Loan](#)
-  [Ruffalo Noel Levitz](#)
-  [Inside Higher Ed](#)
-  [NCES, National Center for Education Statistics](#)
-  [Peer selection](#)
-  [USG Graduation Rates Definition](#)
-  [National Survey of Student Engagement](#)
-  [DegreeWorks](#)
-  [Degree maps](#)
-  [Title III](#)
-  [ThoughtExchange](#)
-  [Curriculog Management System](#)