Task Force 1: Admissions and Orientation Improvement Task Force
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Date: [07/24/2025]

Executive Summary:
Introduction: The Admissions and Orientation Task Force is dedicated to enhancing the admissions process and orientation experience for new students. The key focus areas include expanding the EDH 181 course offerings, scaling up the Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) program, implementing a comprehensive Upper-Class Peer Advising Mentors Program, and introducing a Multicultural Assistance program. These initiatives aim to improve student retention, academic performance, and overall satisfaction.

Summary of the Key Recommendations:

1. Expand EDH 181 course offerings for Fall and Winter semesters and make it mandatory for certain students.
2. Scale up the Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) program to additional departments and increase the number of tutors of color.
3. Implement the Upper-Class Peer Advising Mentors Program with an initial hourly pay rate of $14.
4. Introduce the Multicultural Assistance program inspired by Central Michigan University's Inclusion Assistants.

Goals:

- Enhance the freshman experience through improved orientation and support systems.
- Improve academic performance and social integration of new students.
- Increase Retention and Graduation Rates.

Immediate Term Recommendation - Expand EDH 181 Course Offerings

Description: Expand EDH 181 course offerings and make it mandatory for students with a GPA of 3.0 or Lower. Highly encourage all students to take the course.

Rationale: Increasing the availability of EDH 181 courses will provide support to struggling students, ensuring they have access to the necessary resources to succeed academically and socially.

Data and Research:
- Georgia State University's Learning Communities initiative pairs students in SLA courses, leading to higher retention and graduation rates.
- Michigan State University's Neighborhood Student Success Collaborative has a program like SLA, resulting in improved academic performance and engagement.

Expected Outcomes:
- Increased academic performance among participants.
- Higher retention rates.
- Improved student satisfaction and engagement.

Resources Needed:
- Financial: Budget for additional course offerings.
- Human: Recruitment of instructors and support staff.
- Other: Administrative support for managing course schedules and enrollments with the counsel of Student leaders who took the course before
- Consider adding $1,000 to a Professor's yearly pay in order for them to teach the course

Implementation Steps:
1. Assess current course offerings and identify gaps.
2. Hire additional instructors and support staff.
3. Develop marketing materials to promote the courses to target students.
4. Integrate EDH 181 into the summer bridge program curriculum.

Short Term Goals (0-6 months):
- Conduct needs assessment for course expansion.
- Hire additional instructors.
- Increase EDH 181 course offerings by 50%.
- Review and possibly revamp the Structure of the Course

Medium Term Goals (6-12 months):
- Monitor enrollment and success rates in expanded courses.
- Collect and analyze feedback from students and instructors.
- Adjust course content and structure based on feedback.

Long Term Goals (1-3 years):
- Achieve a 20% increase in academic performance among participants.
- Integrate EDH 181 as a standard offering for all first-year students.

Timeline:
● Assessment and planning: 1 month.
● Recruitment and hiring: 2 months.
● Marketing and integration: 1 month.
● Program launch: Beginning of the academic year.

Evaluation Plan:
● Conduct surveys to gather feedback from participants.
● Analyze retention and academic performance data.
● Adjust course offerings based on feedback and outcomes.

Recommendation 2: Medium Term - Scale Up the Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) Program

Description: Scale up the Structured Learning Assistance (SLA) program to additional departments, such as Psychology.

Rationale: Expanding the SLA program will provide more students with the structured support they need to succeed academically, thereby improving retention and graduation rates.

Data and Research:

● Programs with expanded SLA offerings see improved student outcomes (e.g., Georgia State University's Learning Communities and Michigan State University's Neighborhood Student Success Collaborative).

Expected Outcomes:
● Higher academic performance among students in SLA-supported courses.
● Increased retention rates.
● Improved student satisfaction and engagement.

Resources Needed:
● Financial: Budget for program expansion.
● Human: Recruitment of additional SLA coordinators and support staff.
● Other: Development of promotional materials to encourage participation.

Implementation Steps:
1. Identify the departments for SLA program expansion.
2. Recruit and train additional SLA coordinators and support staff.

3. Develop promotional materials to encourage student participation.
4. Integrate SLA into the curriculum of selected departments.

Short Term Goals (0-6 months):
- Identify potential departments for SLA expansion.
- Begin recruitment of SLA coordinators.
- Develop promotional strategy to increase participants, especially those of color

Medium Term Goals (6-12 months):
- Launch SLA program in new departments.
- Collect and analyze feedback from students and staff.
- Adjust the program based on initial feedback.

Long Term Goals (1-3 years):
- Achieve a 15% increase in academic performance in SLA-supported courses.
- Expand SLA program to all major departments.
- Establish SLA as a core component of academic support services.
- Continue to Adjust the program based on Feedback

Timeline:
- Identification and planning: 1 month.
- Recruitment and training: 2 months.
- Promotion and integration: 1 month.
- Program launch: Winter '25

Evaluation Plan:
- Conduct surveys to gather feedback from participants.
- Analyze retention and academic performance data.
- Analyze satisfactory levels of Students
- Adjust program offerings based on feedback and outcomes

Recommendation 3: Long Term - Implement Upper-Class Peer Advising Mentors Program

Description: Implement the Upper-Class Peer Advising Mentors Program with an initial hourly rate of $14 for mentors, increasing based on retention and performance metrics.
Rationale: Providing financial compensation and performance-based incentives will attract motivated and high-quality mentors, leading to better outcomes for mentees and the program overall.

Data and Research:

- University of Texas at Austin's Longhorn Center for Academic Equity offers paid mentoring positions for upperclassmen, showing increased retention rates among minority students.
- University of Michigan's Michigan Mentorship Program pays mentors an hourly wage, resulting in higher retention and graduation rates.
- Arizona State University's Peer Mentor Program compensates mentors with an hourly rate, leading to increased retention rates, particularly among first-generation college students.

Expected Outcomes:

- Increased freshman satisfaction and engagement.
- Higher retention and graduation rates.
- Improved academic performance among mentees.

Resources Needed:

- Financial: Budget for mentor salaries starting at $14 per hour, with potential increases.
- Human: Recruitment and training personnel.
- Other: Administrative and Student Leader support for monitoring the program.

Implementation Steps:

1. Recruit upperclassmen mentors.
2. Develop training materials and conduct training sessions
3. Create and manage mentor profiles for mentee selection.
4. Match mentors with mentees based on profiles and preferences.

Short Term Goals (0-6 months):

- Develop a detailed plan for the mentor program.
- Begin recruitment of mentors.
- Create a matching system for mentors and mentees.

Medium Term Goals (6-12 months):

- Launch the mentoring program.
- Monitor program success through surveys and retention data.
- Adjust mentor training and matching process based on feedback.

Long Term Goals (1-3 years):

- Achieve a 20% increase in retention rates for mentees.
- Expand the program to include more mentors and mentees.

- Establish the program as a key component of student support services.

Timeline:
- Recruitment and training: 1 month.
- Profile creation and matching: 1 month.
- Program launch: Beginning of the academic year.

Evaluation Plan:
- Conduct surveys to gather feedback from mentors and mentees.
- Analyze retention and academic performance data.
- Adjust compensation based on performance and retention metrics.

Recommendation 4: Long Term - Introduce Multicultural Assistance Program:

Description: Introduce the Multicultural Assistance program inspired by Central Michigan University's Inclusion Assistants.

Rationale: Implementing a Multicultural Assistance program will promote inclusion and a sense of belonging among students, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds. This will contribute to higher retention rates and improved student satisfaction.

Data and Research:
- Central Michigan University (CMU) has implemented this program under the name "Inclusion Assistants" (Central Michigan U. [@CMUniversity], 2024).
- Williams et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study on an inclusion assistants program at a PWI in the Midwest, finding positive impacts on students' sense of belonging and retention (Williams et al., 2021).

Expected Outcomes:
- Increased sense of belonging among underrepresented students.
- Higher retention rates.
- Improved student satisfaction and engagement.

Resources Needed:
- Financial: Budget for hiring Multicultural Assistants.
- Human: Recruitment and training personnel.
- Other: Development of support and supervisory structures.

Implementation Steps:
1. Research best practices from CMU and other institutions.

2. Develop job descriptions and recruitment materials.
3. Hire and train Multicultural Assistants.
4. Develop a support and supervisory structure to prevent overburdening.
5.

Short Term Goals (0-6 months):
- Research and plan the program structure.
- Develop job descriptions and begin recruitment.
- Develop training materials.

Medium Term Goals (6-12 months):
- Launch the program and begin supporting initiative.
- Monitor and evaluate program effectiveness and Student satisfaction
- Adjust support structures based on feedback.

Long Term Goals (1-3 years):
- Achieve a 15% increase in retention rates among underrepresented students
- Expand the program to include more assistants and reach more students.
- Establish the program as a core component of campus diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- Continue to revamp based on gathered feedback