

## Task Force Proposal Template

**Task Force Name: Retention and Black Student Success**

**Task Force Lead: Antonio Green**

**Date: 07/19/24**

### Executive Summary

- **Introduction:**

- Hello, my name is Antonio Green, President of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. National Pan-Hellenic Council, and GVSU Senator. Throughout the summer, my taskforce and I have been meeting continuously to create, provide, and enhance the BIPOC students experience through retention and success. With our ideology of what retention and success looks like, Our main goals have been to create community through empowerment of students and their abilities, being more intentional on freshman and sophomore student success (proactivity vs reactivity), and improving the communication process through a centralized integrated system that potentially will cater to personalized student issues (Navigate). The way that we hope to implement this is through Peer-to-Peer Mentoring as a Partnership through OMA and the Honors college and Enhancing the RA's curriculum to improve their ability to connect students directly to the appropriate campus resources and establish a process for linking advising alerts with housing directors.

- **Goals:**

- Through implementation of these processes, we hope to see an increase in retention for years to come, increased morale of BIPOC students, and an increase in academic excellence as evidenced by a higher GPA average and a higher level of awareness of the resources available on campus throughout the academic year.

**Recommendation 1:** Enhancing the RA's curriculum to improve their ability to connect students directly to the appropriate campus resources and establish a process for linking advising alerts with housing directors.

- **Description:**

- Enhancing the RA's curriculum to improve their ability to connect students directly to the appropriate campus resources will ensure students are getting the correct amount of support and resources needed to excel in their studies and college life. This will potentially consist of Lakerdock workshops, listing of important offices, weekly reminders/updates on different resourceful departments etc. Establishing a process for linking advising alerts with housing directors will

give GVSU the ability to have RA's reach out to on-campus "high-risk" students in person.

- **Rationale:**

- We concluded that the problem is not the lack of resources but rather their insufficient visibility and promotion. This lack of visibility creates a disconnect between students and the staff, faculty, and departments equipped to assist them effectively. Thus, by empowering RAs, we believe we can communicate these resources more effectively than through email or phone calls. Additionally, for "high-risk" students living on campus, we can establish a process for RA's to engage with them directly in person.

- **Data and research that support the recommendations.**

- For the Winter 2024 semester 138 of 422 FTIAC students (32.7%) completed the MySuccessCheck survey. 129 were classified as "low risk;" 5 were classified as "medium risk;" and 4 were considered as "high risk."

- **Expected Outcomes:**

- We expect to more effectively engage "high-risk" students living on campus, helping them achieve academic success and retention. We believe this will reduce the number of first-time students who don't attend or fail the majority of their classes.

- **Resources Needed: Financial, human, and other resources required.**

- Housing and Residential Life
- CLAS Academic Advising Center
- Student Academic Success Center
- The Office of Support and Belonging

- **Implementation Steps: Step-by-step plan to implement the recommendation.**

- Review the RA Curriculum
  - Conduct a thorough review of the current RA curriculum.
- Identify and Add Key Resources
  - Identify essential resources students need.
  - Incorporate any missing resources into the RA curriculum.
- Develop Biweekly Update Process
  - Create a biweekly process to update RAs on available student resources.
  - Ensure RAs can remind their students of these resources regularly.
- Hold Cross-Divisional Meeting
  - Organize a meeting with key offices: Housing, Academic Advising, and SASC and The Office of Support and Belonging.
  - Develop a method to direct Navigate alerts to Housing directors.
- Create Weekly High-Risk Student Report
  - Develop a weekly report identifying high-risk students by on-campus housing floor.

- Distribute this report to the respective RAs.
- Establish Follow-Up and Communication Process
  - Implement a process for RAs to confirm follow-up with at-risk students.
  - Ensure this communication is recorded and fed back into Navigate.
- **Timeline: Estimated timeline for implementation.**

**\*Implementation for GVSU Academic Year 2025-2026**

**August-September**

- Review the RA Curriculum: Go over RA Curriculum in search of a way we can integrate more resourceful and impactful information to students throughout the outsourcing of RA's.

**September-October**

- Identify and Add Key Resources: Identify any missing resources, information or communications that students may need throughout the academic year to ensure success in their academic and social life.
- Once Identified, add in any pieces of information that are not already included.

**October-November**

- Develop a Bi-weekly Update Process to better assess what students resources are in need as the semester continues. These resources need to be constantly emphasized to increase the outreach to students throughout the whole academic year.
- Hold a Cross-divisional meeting to aid the communication between departments and ensure that progress is being made, resources are being shared, and making sure that housing directors have a way to share the information coming from navigate to better assist the students and their specific needs.

**December-January**

- Creating a weekly high-risk student report which aids all departments involved to better understand the progress that is incrementally being made throughout the school year. This Report also serves as a way for departments to redirect their attention based on the results of the weekly report.

**January-March**

- Establish a follow-up and Communication process to gather informative data on students throughout the housing floor to ensure each student is receiving adequate support.

- Make sure that this information is submitted into navigate across departments so that the information is clear and transferable throughout the university
- **Plan to evaluate the success of the recommendations.**
  - Establish Follow-Up meeting with data presented through navigate towards the end of the year to check on the progress that came from students and their success throughout the academic year.

**Recommendation 2:** Collaborate the Honors College and the Office of Multicultural Affairs to create a Peer-to-Peer Mentorship Program that will aid “At risk” students in their academic success.

- **Description: Detailed explanation of the recommendation.**
  - This recommendation deals with preventative retention as it relates to BIPOC students coming into Grand Valley State University by assessing Peer-to-peer This initiative is to ensure that students are getting the connectivity, community, and are striving at their best as it relates to their academic success as well as their sense of belonging at Grand Valley State University. This is important because if students
- **Rationale: Why this recommendation is being made**
  - At the Previous townhall held during the 2023-2024 academic school year, students shared their concerns as it relates to the lack of visibility of resources on campus. This inturn severely hindered their academic progression through the university as it relates to not only academic success, but also sense of belonging at Grand Valley State University. As the years progress, more and more students feel that they do not belong, and as the sense of belonging decreases, so does the will to stay at Grand Valley State University. Providing and connecting other BIPOC students that are excelling in their studies will provide the “at risk” students with guidance and direction through college to ensure that they receive the belonging and academic support they deserve.
- **Data and research that support the recommendations.**
  - Rendón (2009) suggested that meeting the needs and expectations of ethnically diverse first-generation college students requires best practices that include helping students develop a sense of belonging at their respective institutions and creating opportunities to invest in the student’s own capacities, strengths, and potential.
  - Based on the survey findings, the majority (86%) of the mentees expressed that the mentoring program did help to improve their overall college experience. This was significant for the program, especially since over three-fourths of the participants

identified as being a part of an underserved group (i.e., first-generation, lower socioeconomic status, students of color) which commonly have unsatisfactory college experiences compared to students whose parents are college graduates, come from a middle-class background, or identify with the dominant racial group (Tate, 2017).

- As mentioned previously, the students with mentors felt significantly more connected to the university, perceived significantly more support at the university, and felt significantly more like an active part of the university than students without a mentor. According to Tinto's social integration theory (Tinto, 1975,1993), students with peer mentors should be more likely to persist and graduate because they reported feeling more integrated to the university than non mentored students. The results of this study are consistent with prior research showing that peer mentorship is beneficial to students' feelings of integration (Chapman & Pascarella, 1983; Hughes & Fahy, 2009; Tinto, 1997), academic success (Leidenfrost et al., 2011; Rodger & Tremblay, 2003; Salinitri, 2005), and level of social support (Grant-Vallone & Ensher, 2000; Mallinckrodt, 1988).
- **Expected Outcomes: What is expected to be achieved.**
- Throughout this initiative, we expect students to excel academically and socially. Finding a place to feel secure and comfortable in their own skin without having to feel stuck or isolated from the college community.
- **Resources Needed: Financial, human, and other resources required.**
- Office of Multicultural Affairs
- Honors College
- Black Excellence 365 (Program)
- Laker Familia
- Native Student Success Program
- **Implementation Steps: Step-by-step plan to implement the recommendation.**
- Identify all departments of associated
- Discuss protocols and rules for mentorship
- Provide structure and direction for all associated departments as mentorship takes effect
  - Create an environment where every and all departments understand the expectations and the goals of the mentorship program.
- Establish a sign-up process for the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Honor College (HNR 300~Implementation)
  - Create a sign-up protocol with a capped amount of students that ensures mentors are qualified academically and socially to help "at risk" students.
- Match Mentors to Mentee
  - Through the Signup process, match mentees with qualified students to help throughout the school year.
- Create a monthly Follow up regime between Mentor and Mentee
- Check in with Mentors and Mentees
- **Timeline: Estimated timeline for implementation.**

## **August-September**

- Identify all departments of associated
- Discuss protocols and rules for mentorship
- Provide structure and direction for all associated departments as mentorship takes effect

## **September**

- Establish a sign-up process for the Office of Multicultural Affairs and Honor College (HNR 300~Implementation)
- Match Mentors to Mentee

## **September-December**

- Create a monthly Follow up regime between Mentor and Mentee throughout the academic year

## **January**

- Check in with Mentors and Mentees
- **Plan to evaluate the success of the recommendations.**
- Success can be evaluated through an interview process, evaluation questionnaire, and/or data collection for students that undergo and sign up for the mentorship program/experience. This said data can be taken back and evaluated for success of the mentorship program and the continuity of the implementation.