FROSTBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
Closing the Achievement Gap

I. Definition of Achievement Gap for Frostburg State University

The University of System of Maryland’s Closing the Achievement Gap Initiative addresses the threat posed by the state’s widening college retention and degree completion gap for lower income and underrepresented (primarily African-American and Hispanic) students. The initiatives as outlined in this report support the state’s initiative and will further ensure that all Marylanders have the opportunity for educational attainment that leads to success.

Frostburg State University (FSU) has identified its achievement gap as significant differences between retention and graduation rates for males and females. Female students show substantially stronger retention and graduation rates than males. Differences in retention and graduation rates based on race or household income are comparatively small. Therefore, FSU’s achievement gap efforts have been focused on increasing overall retention and graduation rates in an effort to generally narrow the differences in attainment and specifically, between male and female students.

II. Common Goal Initiative: Focus on Underrepresented Minorities and Low Income Students

As shown in the tables below, the University continues to show a significant gap for male versus female students, with more narrow gaps for low income, Hispanic, or African-American students as a whole. As a rural comprehensive institution, FSU is particularly proud of its enrollment level and the academic success of its African-American students, who comprised 25% of FSU’s undergraduate student population in fall 2012. As shown in Figure 1 (below), the African-American graduation rate is nearly identical to that of the entire undergraduate student population demonstrating a significant improvement over the past decade. When students’ gender is taken into account, African-American females graduate at higher rates than all other cohorts; the overall average is therefore affected by the lower graduation rates for African American men. Graduation rates for Hispanic students are reported in Figure 2; the number of Hispanic students enrolled at FSU (23 for the fall 2006 entering cohort) is so small, that conclusions based on a percentage gap are likely to be idiosyncratic and misleading.

Graduation rates for low income students are reported in Figure 3. Low income students currently comprise 38% of the undergraduate cohort. As was the case for African Americans, the graduation rate for low income students is, on a consistent basis, essentially identical to that for the overall population.
III. Institutional Trend Data: University System of Maryland Common Graduation Rate Metric

Figure 1
Six-Year Graduation Rate
African American vs. All Students
Fall First-Time, Full-Time, Student Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2001</th>
<th>Fall 2002</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>As of Fall 2008</td>
<td>As of Fall 2009</td>
<td>As of Fall 2010</td>
<td>As of Fall 2011</td>
<td>As of Fall 2012</td>
<td>As of Fall 2013</td>
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<td>As of Fall 2018</td>
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<td>290</td>
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<td>43%</td>
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<td>42%</td>
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<td>As of Fall 2010</td>
<td>As of Fall 2011</td>
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<td>990</td>
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<td>927</td>
<td>1013</td>
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<td>1030</td>
<td>1031</td>
<td>1028</td>
<td>825</td>
<td>814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-yr Grad Rate</td>
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<td>48%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<td>6%</td>
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</table>

Data Source: P409 Student Research Population File, Enrollment Information System

Figure 2
Six-Year Graduation Rate
Hispanic vs. All Students
Fall First-Time, Full-Time, Student Cohort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fall 2001</th>
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<th>Fall 2003</th>
<th>Fall 2004</th>
<th>Fall 2005</th>
<th>Fall 2006</th>
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<td>35%</td>
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<td>49%</td>
<td>48%</td>
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</table>

Data Source: P409 Student Research Population File, Enrollment Information System
**Figure 3**

*Six-Year Low Income vs. All Students Graduation Rate*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall 2001</th>
<th>Fall 2002</th>
<th>Fall 2003</th>
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<th>Fall 2006</th>
<th>Fall 2007</th>
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<td>253</td>
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<td>371</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-yr Grad Rate</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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<td>52%</td>
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**Low Income**

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<td>990</td>
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<td>927</td>
<td>1013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-yr Grad Rate</td>
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<td>49%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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**Gap**

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<tr>
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<th>Fall 2009</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1001</td>
<td>990</td>
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<td>1013</td>
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<td>6-yr Grad Rate</td>
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<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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Data Source: P409 Student Research Population File, Enrollment Information System

**IV. Additional Detail on the Institutional Achievement Gap**

**Figure 4**

*Second-Year Male vs. Female Retention Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Fall 2003</th>
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<th>Fall 2006</th>
<th>Fall 2007</th>
<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd-yr Reten Rate</td>
<td>74%</td>
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<td>70%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<td>69%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>452</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd-yr Reten Rate</td>
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<td>75%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>74%</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall 2007</th>
<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gap</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: P409 Student Research Population File, Enrollment Information System

**Figure 5**

*Six-year Male vs. Female Graduation Rates*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Fall 2001</th>
<th>Fall 2002</th>
<th>Fall 2003</th>
<th>Fall 2004</th>
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<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>538</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-yr Grad Rate</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<td>34%</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<td>53%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-yr Grad Rate</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
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<th>Fall 2008</th>
<th>Fall 2009</th>
<th>Fall 2010</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gap</td>
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<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
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</table>

Data Source: P409 Student Research Population File, Enrollment Information System
V. Summary of Major Initiatives to Address the Gap

This summary discusses Frostburg State University’s progress toward achieving the initiatives outlined in its November 2011 Report on the Achievement Gap. Increasing the persistence and completion rates of undergraduate male and female students is a priority of the University and the central goal of its Closing the Achievement Gap strategy. Over the reporting period, the University has increased the overall second-year student retention rate, as well as the rate for its female students. However, the achievement gap between males and females has widened.

The University’s second-year retention rate of undergraduates improved from 71.0% (cohort fall 2010) in fall 2011 to 72.0% (cohort fall 2011) for fall 2012. Its second-year retention rate for male students stayed the same at 69.0% (cohort fall 2010) in fall 2011 and for the fall 2011 cohort reported in fall 2012. During the reporting period, the rate for all females increased from 73.0% to 75.0%.

Despite the efforts described below, the six-year graduation rate of male undergraduates decreased from 38.0% for cohort year 2005 to 34.0% for cohort year 2006. The University also experienced a slight decrease in the six-year graduation rate for females, from 54.0% for cohort year 2005 to 53.0% for cohort year 2006, leading to an increase in the achievement gap by gender from 16.0% for the cohort year 2005 to 19.0% for cohort year 2006. (See Figure 5 above).

As a result of these outcomes, the University is engaged in a critical review of all of its initiatives that comprise Frostburg’s completion agenda in order to increase the overall retention and graduation rates.

Initiatives and Outcomes

1. Hire a position focused on achievement gap efforts, an Assistant Provost for Student Success and Retention

   - Outcome:
   In January 2012, the University hired an Assistant Provost for Student Success and Retention, who has been charged with providing leadership and coordination for University-wide programs and efforts to improve FSU student persistence and reduce time to degree. The Assistant Provost’s duties include meeting with faculty and staff to create and implement revised retention and advising strategies. These strategies include identifying students most at academic risk; identifying particular “gatekeeper courses,” majors, and periods of students’ careers where student academic problems most often occur; reengineering programs and courses designed to improve students’ entry-level skills in reading, writing, and mathematics; identifying what successful students do and modeling support services according to their behavior; and developing specific programs and strategies to sustain the University’s success in second-year retention into subsequent years.

The Assistant Provost led the efforts to strengthen the University’s academic advising programs by providing more professional development opportunities for academic advisors. One important initiative was the redesign of the course progress report. This advisement tool specifically focuses on effective course advisement that leads to increased progress to graduation and reduces time-to-degree. These opportunities promote better continuity and effectiveness in student advising.
2. Implementing course redesign

- Outcome:
  Beginning in fall 2011, the Department of Communication Studies applied the National Center for Academic Transformation (NCAT) model to its Introduction to Human Communication course in an effort to eliminate a bottleneck issue and allow for more students to enroll per section. The Department of English’s Freshman Composition course underwent a redesign pilot during fall 2012. Full implementation of the course redesign of the Office for Programs Advancing Student Success (PASS) and Department of Mathematics’ Intermediate Algebra course took place in fall 2011, with three primary goals: improving the success rate, reducing the gender achievement gap, and improving student performance in subsequent mathematics courses. Results to date have been extremely encouraging: the gender achievement gap has been eliminated and the student failure rate has declined. In addition, a pre-test for subsequent mathematics courses indicated that students from the redesigned sections performed statistically the same as those not required to take the developmental mathematics course. For the fall 2011 cohort, students in the redesigned intermediate algebra course also earned more overall passing grades during the spring 2012 semester than those not enrolled in the course. The Department of Mathematics’ College Algebra course underwent redesign pilots for the fall 2012 semester.

Next, Frostburg will engage in the process of redesigning introductory courses in biology and chemistry.

3. At-Risk Student Early Alert System

- Outcome:
  In the spring of 2012, the President’s Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness (PACIE) reviewed FSU’s early warning system and retention initiative, MAP-Works. Based on PACIE’s findings and feedback from other key constituents on campus, the University decided to discontinue MAP-Works and invest in a more streamlined platform called Campus Labs to facilitate faculty and staff usage and increase the number of intentional interventions for identified students.

  Beginning in the fall of 2012, one of Campus Labs’ components, Beacon, became Frostburg’s early alert system for students who are struggling to reach their academic potential. This web-based solution focuses on a variety of factors that are the strongest predictors of student success, including social skills, confidence levels, and attitude toward learning. Beacon evaluates students’ probability for academic success, produces reports for students and advisors, and recommends campus-wide resources for at-risk students. The platform also serves as a critical retention tool by enhancing communication between faculty and staff concerning students’ class attendance, academic engagement, and other issues hampering their success.

4. Need-Based Financial Aid

- Outcome:
  Frostburg’s Closing the Achievement Gap strategies include the increased allocation of need-based student financial aid to make education more affordable. More than 80% of FSU students receive some form of financial aid. Since 2007, FSU has allocated additional funds toward need-based awards. Spending on institutional aid has increased by 55% between 2007 and 2012.
Among those need-based awards are at least $100,000 each year to first-generation, low-income college students who participate in the University’s Student Support Services Program. The University intends to continue increasing the amount of need-based awards allocated to students over the next five years.

5. Offering Extensive Student Support and Tutoring Service

- Outcome
In its Strategic Plan, Frostburg cites “increasing student quality and improve student persistence to graduation” as an institutional priority. The University continues to develop and expand upon strategies and resources that help to attract quality students to its campus and enhance retention and graduation rates.

The University’s Closing the Achievement Gap strategies also focus on expanding and strengthening student support, monitoring, and advising programs. During the fall 2012 semester, the University strengthened its academic advising programs by providing more professional development opportunities for academic advisors. These opportunities promote better continuity and effectiveness in student advising. The University also provides extensive student support through the services offered through Programs Advancing Student Success (PASS), the TRiO program, Student Support Services and the Center for Advising. Support includes tutoring, mathematics support, study groups, academic advising, career development, and assistance with the financial aid process. PASS has also developed a persistence program to help students improve their grades, study effectively, and attain a Bachelor’s degree. Students who earned below 2.3 GPA their first semester are offered a course their second semester that teaches strategies to help them succeed in spite of the academic and personal obstacles that impeded their progression in the past. Below are the current assessment results.

Assessment Results

- TRIO Student Support Services program data: the Fall 2011 first-time student cohort has a retention rate of 87%, with 91% of females and 80% of males returning for their third semester.
- PASS office staff have visited First Year Experience classes, attended Academic Probation meetings, and presented workshops to inform students of academic support services available to them. Nearly 1,400 students learned of services through these outreach activities during the Fall 2012 semester.
- More students are taking advantage of tutoring services. The Fall 2012 data show a 13% increase in the number of students using individual and group tutoring services.

Another important strategy is the Maryland College Access Challenge Grant. In February 2012, FSU was awarded $31,324 to improve the persistence rate of Pell-awarded, academically at-risk freshman and sophomore male students. The main components of the program, entitled The Championship Forum, are intrusive advising with academic coaches, mandatory workshops covering financial literacy, learning strategies, and personal growth topics, and weekly study hall sessions. Participants who fulfilled program requirements were eligible for stipends of $250 each semester. Below are the results for FSU’s fall 2012 ‘Championship Cohort’.

Initial Assessment Results

- 100% of the program participants receive a Pell award and meet the definition of low income.
• 79.6% (39) of the 49 program participants are African-American, Hispanic, or multi-racial.
• Of the 10 participants who entered the program on academic probation, eight now have cumulative grade point averages above 2.0.
• 33% (16) of the program participants earned a 3.0 or better for the fall 2012 semester.
• 93.9% (46 of 49) of participants remain at FSU and are making steady progress toward graduation.

6. Interventions for Students on Probation and Warning

• Outcome
During August 2012, students who were on probation or warning were invited to attend workshops held during the first week of fall semester. The purpose of the workshops was to introduce these students to key administrative personnel, institutional policies and procedures, GPA calculations, and strategies for academic success, including a listing of campus resources and the schedule of enrichment workshops sponsored by the Advising Center.

While the number of students on probation/warning in proportion to the total FSU undergraduate student population and the fall semester 2012 was consistent with that of fall semester 2011, students on probation and warning who attended the workshops and followed through with the suggestions (filing an academic plan in PAWS, visiting with their academic advisors, and attending developmental workshops) were in better academic standing at the conclusion of fall semester than students in the overall cohort. Fewer were dismissed, and fewer remained on probation. The increased number of students on warning reflected that most were able to retain a cumulative GPA of over 2.00.

Figure 6
Status of Students falling under the Standards Governing Academic Probation and Dismissal at conclusion of fall semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Status</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
<th>Fall 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dismissed</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Probation</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warning</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removed from Probation/Warning</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>643</strong></td>
<td><strong>690</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Source: Office of the Provost

A study of the outcomes concluded that students being better informed on institutional policies and becoming increasingly engaged with the support network and advisors on campus may have driven students’ improved academic status. Based on these outcomes, the expectations for students on probation/warning in respect to engagement with campus resources and the number of interventions will be increased for the spring 2013 cohort.

VI. Statement of Intermediate Goals

1. Transition from Learning Community model to First-Year-Experience model

In order to improve retention rates for freshmen, the President’s Advisory Council on Institutional Effectiveness in 2011 recommended the founding of a work group to review
current practices in respect to Frostburg’s Learning Community Program. (Note: At the conclusion of fall semester 2012, 46% of students on probation were freshmen.) After monthly discussions during 2012, it became evident that the University should transition from a Learning Community Program to a First-Year-Experience in order to centralize the administration of efforts and to ensure continual academic support during students’ pivotal freshman year. Emphasis needs to be placed on providing students with the skills necessary for success, e.g. quality advising/mentoring, fluency in core skills and critical thinking, and collaborative pedagogies that model cross-disciplinary problem solving. By emphasizing such skill sets, students will ease into their majors and disciplinary courses. Topics for discussion during 2013 include the extension of the IHE (Introduction to Higher Education) into a second semester, the continued linkage of the IHE course to GEP content courses where students can apply new skill sets, the design of instructional programs targeted at transfers, the expanded use of peer mentors, and the training of IHE instructors focusing on the pedagogical model of collaboration essential for effective programs.

2. Near-Completers

Frostburg State University recognizes that the graduation of students who have stopped-out constitutes a critical component of the institution’s completion strategies. The University was recently awarded a One-Step-Away Grant by MHEC in the amount of $60,000 to identify, re-engage, re-enroll, and graduate students who have stopped-out and met the other parameters set by the grant’s guidelines. A preliminary analysis of the demographic details of the cohort reveal:

- The male to female ratio is 54% to 46%, representative of FSU’s Achievement Gap between males and females.
- Black/African-Americans are represented in greater numbers than in the overall student population; 41% within the cohort are Black/African-American.
- 64% of students received Pell Grants while previously enrolled at University.

If the policies and procedures to be developed under this grant result in an infrastructure that has demonstrated success in the selected cohort, such policies and procedures will be integrated into the normal practices of the institution. Additionally, through the data collected on this cohort, the institution will identify a particular student profile for those most likely to stop-out. Current students with a similar profile could be identified and interventions instituted to ensure their persistence to graduation.

3. On Course to College Success Program

The On Course to College Success program targets first and second year students who have cumulative GPAs below 2.3. The program consists of a specialized one credit Introduction to Higher Education Course that is designed to provide a general structure for success at FSU, an opportunity to address and solve the problems encountered during previous semesters, and a support system comprised of peers and instructors. Throughout the past four semesters, 47 students have completed the course. Out of these students, 81% were eligible to continue at FSU the next semester and 64% persisted through the next semester. In addition, 78% had a grade gain ranging from .07 to 2.846 on a 4.0 scale.
VII. Six-Year Glide Path to Resolving the Achievement Gap

Institution: Frostburg State University

Group 1: First-time Full-time Male Undergraduate Students
Comparison Group: First-time Full-time Female Undergraduate Students

Group 2: First-time Full-time African American Undergraduate Students
Comparison Group: First-time Full-time Undergraduate Students

Group 3: First-time Full-time Hispanic Undergraduate Students
Comparison Group: First-time Full-time Undergraduate Students

Group 4: First-time Full-time Low Income Undergraduate Students
Comparison Group: First-time Full-time Undergraduate Students

Institution: Frostburg State University

Target Group 1: First-time Full-time Male Undergraduate Students

Target Group 2: First-time Full-time African-American Undergraduate Students
Target Group 3: First-time Full-time Hispanic Undergraduate Students

Trajectory 21 30 39 45 49 53 54 54 55 55 55 55 55 55 55 55
Actual 21 28 35

Target Group 4: First-time Full-time Low Income Undergraduate Students

Trajectory 44 43 46 50 51 53 54 54 55 55 55 55 55 55 55 55 55
Actual 44 41 42
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