



# 2021-2022 Annual Report on Retention and Graduation University Senate

May 2, 2022

## Retention & Graduation Executive Committee Membership

Michael Bradford	Vice Provost for Faculty, Staff and Student Development
Daniel Burkey	Professor in Residence, Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education and Diversity
Sarah Croucher	Director of Academic Policy & Faculty Affairs, Office of the Provost
Nathan Fuerst, Chair	Vice President for Enrollment Planning & Management
Michael Gilbert	Vice President for Student Affairs
Lauren Jorgensen	Director of Institutional Research
Mona Lucas	Assistant Vice President for Enrollment Policies & Strategic Initiatives
Tadarrayl Starke	Associate Vice Provost, Institute for Student Success
Frank Tuitt	Vice President & Chief Diversity Officer
Dan Weiner	Vice President for Global Affairs

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# Retention & Graduation Highlights

- UConn ranks among best publics for **Storrs First Year** rates (*Fall 2021 Statistics*)

Fall 2021 Key Metrics	UConn	Rank
First Year Retention	92%	12
Four Year Graduation	76%	7
Six Year Graduation	83%	25
Average Time to Degree	4.1 years	1*

\*UConn is tied with four top research institutions.

- Areas of **achievement gaps** include:
  - Underrepresented Minority students – gap continues to be most prevalent at 4<sup>th</sup> year (7-15 percentage points)
  - Out of State and International students – gap is most prevalent after second year
  - Male students – gap is most prevalent at 4<sup>th</sup> year
- **Regional Campuses** overall completion rates declined for most cohorts in 2021.
- **Transfer student** completion rates remain high relative to national trends. But evident that effective four-year completion is not a reality for many transfer students.
- Probation statistics after Fall 2021 reveal uneven growth in probation of first year students. Disproportionate impact to underrepresented minority students.

Source: Office of Institutional Research

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# Student Engagement Committee

*How do advisor characteristics and advising load relate to advisee outcomes?*

## **Preliminary Findings:**

- The structure of advising at UConn is varied; isolating advising as an observable characteristic is a challenge.
- Complex data is required that tracks students over multiple years. Outcomes could include a range of measures such as retention and graduation rates, GPAs, responses to particular questions on the undergraduate SERU survey, or reported post-graduation outcomes in the First Destinations survey.

## **Recommendation:**

Continuation of work in 2022/2023, with anticipated report to the LTE advising working group in May 2022 and the R&G Taskforce over the summer.

# Research Committee

*What are the differences in student performance and student perceptions for the students who transfer to Storrs Campus from a Regional Campus, compared to students who entered at the Storrs Campus?*

## **Preliminary Findings:**

- a. STEM majors from regional campuses graduate at lower rates than STEM majors from 2 and 4-year colleges.
- b. Regional campus and 4-year college transfers graduate at a higher rate than 2-year college transfers.
- c. Next Steps: Look at additional variables that may affect outcomes; use those results to compare with Storrs students.

## **Draft Recommendation:**

- Develop onboarding program for new regional campus students at Storrs Campus.
- Social gathering for new transfer students to Storrs.
- First-Year Experience course for transfers.
- Require advisors to reach out to transfer students upon arrival to Storrs.
- Preparation of regional campus students in Biology/Science courses, including access to tutors.

# Undergraduate Enrollment & Fiscal Services Committee

*Research Question #1: Are there unknown barriers to the overall enrollment progression process that negatively impact retention and graduation of undergraduate students?*

**Preliminary Findings:** *(Barriers shared by colleagues across the university)*

1. Household responsibilities and work commitments students hold outside of their experiences at the university.
2. Lack of a financial plan or resources to finance a UConn education.
3. Financial Aid Verification Process may involve multiple steps.

**Preliminary Findings:** *(Barriers shared by students across the university)*

1. Limited comprehensive overview of their individual responsibilities are presented to students.
2. The university's preferred mode of communication is email and is not a communication method students utilize.
3. Density of text content on websites makes independent gathering of information a challenge.
4. Inconsistencies exist in advising experiences based on major, class standing, home campus, etc.
5. The timing of administrative processes or protocols aimed at helping students may lead to confusion.

**Recommendation:**

Continuation of its work in 2022/23. Gain better understanding of existing protocols, practices, general information provided to students, and communication methods.

# Undergraduate Enrollment & Fiscal Services Committee

*Research Question #2: Can UConn Policy Exception Grants (aka: Completion Grants) be awarded in a more strategic way to support retention and graduation in spite of the need-based eligibility criteria?*

## **Preliminary Findings:**

1. Administration of Policy Exception Grants has varied from year to year, and spans two broad purposes, awards to assist with financial hardships and awards to assist with outstanding fee bill balances.
2. Benchmarking survey presented availability of a pool of funding, funding sources, and priority consideration for receiving the funds (if applicable) varies greatly from institution to institution.

## **Recommendations:**

The UConn Policy Exception Grant Program should be converted into two separate programs, “Completion Grants” and “Hardship Grants”.

- UConn Completion Grants: Target upper division students to provide boost in financial assistance in an effort to enhance completion.
- UConn Hardship Grants: Assist students facing unanticipated expenses related to natural disasters, pandemics, books/supplies, emergency travel expenses, etc.

# R&G Taskforce Other Activity

- **Joint Taskforce Summits**

September 14, 2021

December 1, 2021

April 13, 2022

- **APLU Powered by Publics Initiative**

Focus on mentorship as a means to improve student success

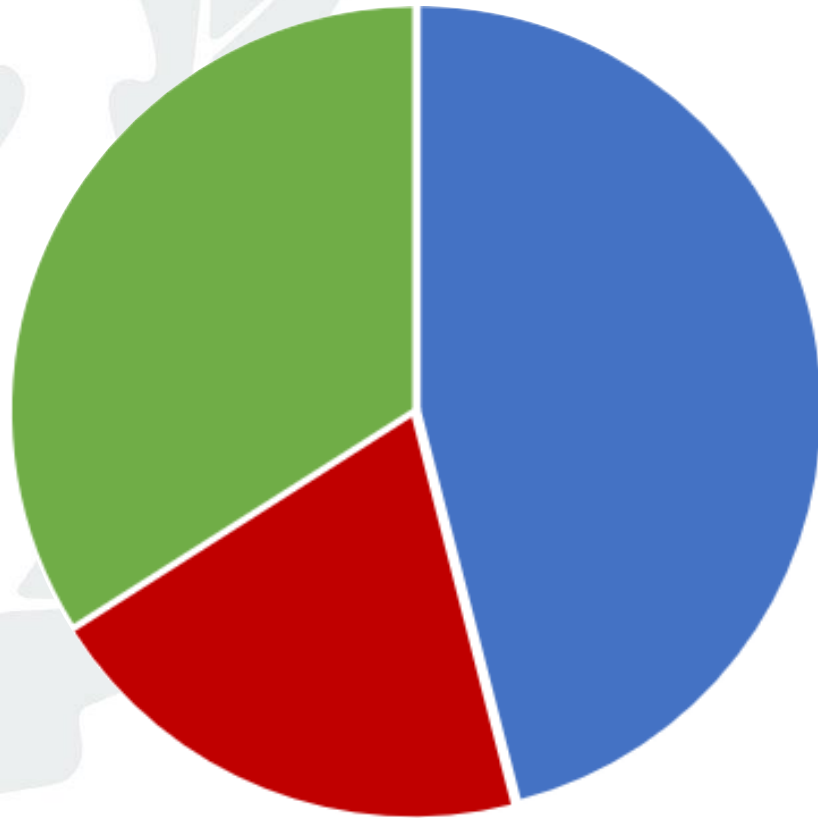
- **The Probation Taskforce**

Address the significant increase in Fall 2021 academic probation numbers

# Financial Aid

## Covering Financial Need

### Undergraduate Student Financial Need



■ Gift Aid ■ Self Help ■ Remaining Unmet Need

- Undergraduate students present gross financial need of **\$365M**
- **46%** of gross financial need is met with **gift aid**
- Students cover an additional **20%** with self help, including **loans** and a small amount of **work study**
- **Remaining unmet need** is **34%**  
Students make up through a variety of means:
  - College Savings Plans
  - Personal payments
  - Other outside assistance





# QUESTIONS?

**Want to join the R&G Taskforce?**

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