

**Preliminary Advisory Report to the Undergraduate Council, Advising Coordinators' Team and Faculty Senate.**

**From USD Task Group  
April 16, 2008**

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On February 11, 2008, Dr. Don Foss, Senior Vice President and Provost, established the Task Group on University Studies Division. The Task Group is chaired by Dan Wells and members include: John Antel, Joel Bloom, William Fitzgibbon, Faye Jackson, Frank Kelly, David Mazella, Beth Olsen, Richard Scamell, Agnes DeFranco, Maureen Croft and Ed Hugetz.

**Task Group Charge**

1. Review relevant reports from the Enrollment Management Task Force (EMTF) and the data on the various sub groups that comprise the students of USD.
2. Review solutions to similar problems that have been devised at our sister institutions across the country.
3. By August 31, 2008 propose a plan for reducing the number of students in USD by 90% within two years.

**Driving Forces/Rationale****Benefit to the Students**

- Improve progress toward degree.
- Reduce time in College.
- Increase earning potential by timely graduation.

**Benefit to the University**

- Increasing graduation rates (National rankings).
- Increase retention rates (Increase enrollment).

**Thus far the Task Group has done the following:**

- Reviewed a history of USD and undeclared students at UH.
- Reviewed relevant reports and information from the EMTF on Undeclared majors
- Reviewed data on USD students, particularly with regard to retention and graduation rates.
- Reviewed "best practices" of 15 peer Urban Research Universities (continuing to collect data).
- Reviewed "best practices" of 22 other Research Universities (continuing to collect data).
- Currently collecting data on current Undeclared student profiles. Including percentages that entered USD via FTIC, transfer, or failed major routes.
- Currently collecting data on what colleges USD students eventually choose for their major.
- Developed a "Framework Plan", to be discussed with various stakeholders.
- Reported preliminary findings and discussed "Framework Plan" with the EMTF.
- Scheduled meetings with the Undergraduate Council, Advising Coordinators' Team and the Faculty Senate to discuss "Framework Plan".

**Preliminary notes and data collected**

1. Over the past 7 years, about 19.2% of UH undergraduates are in USD.
2. For the past three years, an average of 50.9% of USD students are freshman; 29.4% are sophomores; 14.1% juniors; 2.7% seniors.
3. From 2004-2006, an average of 37.7% of FTIC undergraduates are in USD. Also an average of 40.5% of the FTIC undergraduate USD students are in CSP.
4. The percentage of Fall 2006, FTIC students on Academic Notice/Probation at the beginning of Spring 2007 was 31.6% higher for USD students than for Non-USD students (29.7% vs. 20.3%).
5. The percentage of FTIC students on Academic Notice/Probation was 17.5% less for USD students in CSP. This trend was also seen for Non-USD students in CSP albeit to a lesser extent (7.2%).
6. The GPA of students in USD is lower than the GPA of Non-USD students. 17.6% lower for Fall 2005 cohort and 11.5% lower of the Fall 2006 cohort. CSP students have a higher GPA than Non-CSP students.
7. The 1 and 2 year retention rates for full time FTIC students in USD are lower than for those not in USD. From 2003-2005 the 1-year retention rate averages 7.9% lower and the 2-year retention rate averages 12.5% lower
8. Graduation rates for full time FTIC students beginning in USD are lower than for those not starting in USD. The 4-year graduation rate averages 48.4% lower; the 6-year graduation rate averages 14.5% lower.
9. Graduation and retention rates for students in USD with 60-75 hours are lower than for Non-USD students. The 1-year retention rate is an average of 16.7% lower; the 2 year combined retention/ graduation rate is an average of 18.3% lower; the 4-year graduation rate is an average of 31.2% lower.
10. An average of 12.1% of the UH transfer students enter USD with 60-75 hours.
11. Graduation and retention rates for transfer students beginning in USD are lower than for those not starting in USD. The 1-year retention rate is 7.8% lower; the 4-year graduation rate is 31.3% lower; the 6-year graduation rate is 22.8% lower.
12. One year retention rates for Fall 2004 transfer students are 16.2% lower for USD students than Non-USD students. Also 28% of Fall 2004 transfer students were in USD.
13. The colleges with the best retention rates were Business and Hotel & Rest. Mgmt. The colleges with the worse retention rates were NSM and Technology.
14. Of the USD students that declared a major between Spring 2005 and Spring 2007 29.5% chose Business and 27.9% chose Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.

**Discussions with USD advisors and administrators suggest:**

- Many USD students did well in HS and have high SAT scores.
- Many USD students have little incentive to leave USD before 60 hours and sometimes have incentive to remain in USD.
- Many students remain in USD in hopes of improving their GPA to allow enter into selected majors.
- Many students truly do not know what field they wish to go into, and wish to delay the decision making process

**USD Preliminary Framework Plan**

1. To accomplish the task of reducing the number of students in USD to less than 500, the "Undeclared" choice must be removed from Texas Common Application as a possible major.
2. The "Undeclared" status could still be used internally to account for the "relatively few" students acceptable to the University but not to a major of choice. Generally these students are accepted via the "Individual Review" process.
3. These students that are admitted as "Undeclared" would have a limit of 30 hours as "Undeclared". They would have required advising, be required to do block scheduling, and would be required to take a seminar class on career/major choice, etc.
4. Addition advisors and resources will be required to help undecided student make quality choices for their major (both FTIC and Transfer). An interactive web site (for example see Arizona State University) could provide assistance to help guide students to major selection. For transfers we recommend the CAS system be used to assist students in major choices.
5. New major options will be needed to satisfy disenfranchised students that can't get into major of choice or which no current major offers them what they want. Therefore, colleges should be encouraged to consider new major options that could engage these students.
6. No University-wide "General Studies" degree should be offered.