

## Summary of the 2015 Broncos FIRST Faculty and Staff Survey

### Background

- The Broncos FIRST team conducted a campus-wide survey during the Fall 2015 semester to learn more about faculty and staff views regarding the promotion of student persistence to graduation at WMU.
- The survey was offered in both electronic and paper formats to all faculty and staff. There were 1,096 respondents; a 24.5% response rate.
- This report addresses each of the questions asked in the survey in the order of their perceived importance by respondents, a summary of the commentary provided by respondents, and actionable items that members of the university community can do in order to contribute to student success.

### Who Participated in the Survey?

Respondents indicated individual characteristics including their role on campus and how long they had been employed at WMU.

Senior Administrative Leaders	69	6.9%
Faculty and Instructors	284	28.4%
Part-time Instructors and Teaching Assistants	83	8.3%
Staff - Student Affairs or Student Services	252	25.2%
Staff - Academic, Not-student Service	144	14.4%
Staff - Operations/Auxiliary/Facilities	168	16.8%

1-5 years	368	35.5%
6-10 years	187	18.1%
11-15 years	144	13.9%
16+ years	337	32.5%

### Participation in Student Success Programs at WMU

Respondents were asked to indicate if they had participated in programs that focused on student success offered by a variety of constituents including the university, their division, their college, their department, or any other entity.

- 92% of respondents (1,006/1,096) indicated they had been part of at least one program that focused on improving undergraduate success at WMU. Some respondents indicated they had participated in more than one student success program, including some that were offered by a different university entity. The following table represents the programs respondents participated in by who provided the program.

Offered by University	336	30.7%
Offered by Individual's College	229	20.9%
Offered by Individual's Department	430	39.2%
Offered by Individual's Division	111	10.1%
Other Undergraduate Success Program	71	6.5%

## How is Western Michigan University Contributing to Student Success?

Respondents were given a series of eleven statements related to student success. For this survey, student success was defined as persistence to graduation.

For each statement, respondents were asked to respond to the following four questions:

- 1) how effectively WMU currently addresses the problem area?
- 2) how important it is for WMU to improve?
- 3) how willing you are personally to work towards improvements?
- 4) who should be responsible for leading improvement efforts?

*This table shows the percentages of respondents rating each of the first three items 3 (Moderately) or 4 (Very)*

	Current Situation  (WMU currently does a moderately or very good job of addressing this problem area.)	Importance for Improvement  (It is moderately or very important for WMU to improve in this area.)	Personal Willingness to Contribute  (I am moderately or very willing to work towards improvements)	Who should be primarily responsible for leading efforts?
A01. Some incoming undergraduate students have gaps in their academic preparation leaving them under-prepared for the rigors of college.	29.10%	72.00%	56.40%	Faculty and Instructors (55%), Student Affairs or Student Services staff (47.4%), University Level Leaders (45.7%)
A05. Undergraduate students are successful when faculty and staff feel supported and empowered to make improvements.	28.60%	63.40%	53.00%	University Level Leaders (59.9%), College Level Leaders (57.4%), Faculty and Instructors (37.4%)
A02. Some undergraduate students have pressures or responsibilities not related to coursework that impact their academic performance.	23.00%	63.10%	47.20%	Student Affairs or Student Services (59.1%), University Level Leaders (40.1%), Students (30.8%).
A07. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty are motivated to improve student success.	23.60%	61.70%	45.40%	College Level Leaders (58.1%), University Level Leaders (57.2%), Faculty and Instructors (51.1%)
A11. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty, staff, senior leaders, and students work together to improve student success.	21.00%	59.50%	48.80%	University Level Leaders (51.2%), College Level Leaders (41.4%), Faculty and Instructors (34.0%)
A08. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty know what they can do to improve student success.	23.20%	58.70%	41.90%	College Level Leaders (55.3%), University Level Leaders (49.4%), Faculty and Instructors (45.9%).

A03. Undergraduate students are successful when they make efficient use of their study time.	33.70%	<b>57.50%</b>	41.20%	Faculty and Instructors (45.8%); Student Affairs or Student Services (45.8%); Students (44.9%)
A06. Undergraduate students are successful when there is a smooth integration of student support resources, programs, policies, practices, and structures.	30.50%	<b>57.50%</b>	40.90%	Student Affairs or Student Services (46.9%), University Level Leaders (46.5%), College Level Leaders (41.9%)
A04. Undergraduate students are successful when they take ownership and responsibility for their educational progress.	36.60%	<b>57.00%</b>	44.00%	Faculty and Instructors (46.6%), Students (45.9%), Student Affairs or Student Services (35.6%)
A09. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where staff are motivated to improve student success.	26.50%	<b>55.90%</b>	43.10%	University Level Leaders (48.4%), College Level Leaders (40.8%), Staff-Academic, Not-student Service (29.4%)
A10. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where staff know what they can do to improve student success.	20.60%	<b>53.20%</b>	39.70%	University Level Leaders (46.5%), College Level Leaders (38.7%), Staff-Academic, Not-student Service (28.2%)

The sections (by statement) below discuss the four questions noted above; they highlight areas where great differences exist, discuss the most common themes respondents addressed in open-ended responses, and share relevant quotes from responses.

**AO1: Some incoming undergraduate students have gaps in their academic preparation leaving them under-prepared for the rigors of college.**

*72% rated this area moderately or very important to improve*

Who should be primarily responsible for leading efforts? (Percent of respondents choosing this group)	Faculty and Instructors (55%)	Student Affairs or Student Services (47.4%)	University Level Leaders (45.7%)
Percent in this Role who see themselves as responsible	57.00%	48.80%	46.40%
Percent in this Role <b>Very Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	32.90%	52.60%	59.40%
Percent in this Role <b>Not at All Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	6.20%	4.20%	9.40%
How willing on average individuals in this role are to personally work toward improvement in this area	Moderately willing to personally work (2.93)	Moderately willing to personally work (3.26)	Moderately willing to personally work (3.25)

- Respondents overwhelming felt like many incoming students were not prepared for the academic rigors of college. They indicated that it was important for WMU to address student unpreparedness if the institution was going to continue to admit unprepared students. In open-ended comments, respondents most commonly identified gaps in preparation in the subject areas of math, reading, and writing.

-A student affairs or student services staff member stated, "If students are not academically prepared to succeed in a college environment, we need to seriously consider if we as a university are capable of (and willing to) provide the necessary supports to help these students succeed. Allowing students who are under-prepared for college to be admitted (and eventually fail) is a bad plan. We should commit the appropriate support services to this effort or recommend those students attend a CC until they have the necessary skills to succeed at WMU."

- To address this problem, respondents were divided on whether WMU should change its admission requirements in order to admit stronger students (17%, 34/202) or whether the institution needed to do a better job of working with underprepared students after they arrived (13%, 27/202).
  - 11% of respondents stated that it was important for the university community to help students understand how to take responsibility for their education and the importance of doing so and 10% indicated that students need clear expectations of what it takes to be successful at WMU. (23/202, 20/202)
  - Respondents suggested addressing student unpreparedness in a variety of ways. Six percent (13/202) of respondents thought that WMU should implement remedial courses for underprepared students (either during the summer prior to fall enrollment or during the academic year) and 5% (11/202) suggested the implementation of a mentor program for these students. Additionally, respondents (7%, 15/202) noted that many incoming students needed support with not only reading, writing, and math skills, but also learning things like study skills, time management, goal setting, reading, and problem solving skills. While some felt that it was everyone's responsibility to help with these skills, some suggested specific things like FYE courses to help build these skills.
    - "If we are going to admit students who are under-prepared we should be more willing to have an assessment and a 'pre-college' curriculum designed in the same manner that community colleges have been doing for a long time. There should be some sort of incentive for students to accept a referral to the writing center or reading comprehension classes." – A faculty member or instructor
  - 13% (27/202) of respondents indicated that students should have better preparation from their high schools and that WMU should reach out to high schools to implement programming to facilitate student readiness.
    - "A high degree of independence and preparedness must be the goal but many of the students we admit don't possess it upon admission. This needs to be cultivated or else we must raise and enforce our admission standards." –A student affairs or student services staff member
- Respondents (8%, 17/202) were concerned that the priorities of WMU were not focused on student success and 18% (37/202) indicated that they felt that greater funding and resources needed to be allocated for student success initiatives. Many commented (11%, 23/202) that it was essential that everyone (all faculty, staff, and administration) contributed to student success efforts, but 6% (13/202) said that any changes in student success efforts would have to come from above (administration).
  - "The university needs to FUND STUDENTS so that they can complete degrees, particularly those who come in unprepared. Students who come in underprepared often cannot join programs that require them not to work, so they work on the side to pay for classes, then they fall farther behind, etc. etc. TRIO does a great job, but this, of course, is not university funded but grant funded. The university leaders need to step up, frankly." –A faculty member or instructor

-One faculty member remarked, “If this is going to happen, all ‘groups’ have to participate. But the leadership must provide the resources and support true integration. WMU operates in a silo and does not seem to have either the interest or ability (or both) to change this.”

**AO5: Undergraduate students are successful when faculty and staff feel supported and empowered to make improvements.**

*63.4% rated this area moderately or very important to improve*

Who should be primarily responsible for leading efforts? (Percent of respondents choosing this group)	University Level Leaders (59.9%)	College Level Leaders (57.4%)	Faculty and Instructors (37.4%)
Percent in this Role who see themselves as responsible	72.50%	69.60%	44.30%
Percent in this Role <b>Very Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	48.20%	48.20%	45.70%
Percent in this Role <b>Not at All Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	7.10%	7.10%	6.50%
How willing on average individuals in this role are to personally work toward improvement in this area	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.14)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.14)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.15)

- Of those who responded to the open-ended portion of this statement, 10% (12/120) indicated that they did not feel that faculty and staff were supported by university leadership. Ten percent (12/120) stated that they did not feel empowered to improve their work with students and 30% (36/120) said that staff were ignored at the university. Some respondents (6%, 7/120) indicated that they did not feel like university leadership supported the work they did with students and that the university did not have the right priorities (19%, 23/120, e.g., research money is more of a priority and more rewarded than teaching).  
-Another faculty member stated, “I think a lot of faculty are internally motivated to help students succeed but I don't see too much where Western supports faculty to improve in this area. Faculty development does have some good workshops but there is no incentive to attend them, other than personal growth.”
- 10% (12/120) indicated that they felt like there was a culture issue at WMU because faculty and staff are not supported or empowered and 8% (9/120) cited a “do more with less” (more work with less faculty and staff, less salary, etc.) attitude at the university. Respondents (10%, 14/120) stated that it was essential for university leadership to allocate resources and funding to student success effort, including supporting and empowering university employees.  
-“Faculty who are passionate, supported by the departments and colleges, and who act in the best interest of their students can accomplish a lot with regard to empowering their students to take ownership of their educations.” –A faculty member or instructor
  - 19% (24/120) of respondents indicated that the rewards structure for both faculty and staff must change so that work with students is both prioritized and recognized.  
Additionally, salaries, especially for staff and part-time instructors, should be reevaluated

(8%, 10/118). Respondents (10%, 12/120) suggested that more full-time faculty and staff need to be hired in order to change the culture at WMU so that these personnel are more willing and able to improve the work they do with students.

**A02: Some undergraduate students have pressures or responsibilities not related to coursework that impact their academic performance.**

*63.1% rated this area moderately or very important to improve*

Who should be primarily responsible for leading efforts? (Percent of respondents choosing this group)	Student Affairs or Student Services (59.1%)	University Level Leaders (40.1%)	Students (30.8%)
Percent in this Role who see themselves as responsible	66.3%	47.8%	Not surveyed
Percent in this Role <b>Very Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	42.6%	32.8%	Not surveyed
Percent in this Role <b>Not at All Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	3.4%	14.8%	Not surveyed
How willing on average individuals in this role are to personally work toward improvement in this area	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement (3.15)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement (2.77)	Not surveyed

- When thinking about pressures and responsibilities not related to coursework that students faced, 8% (13/173) of respondents indicated that today's students are different than students of previous generations, and as a result, should be treated and supported differently. Many respondents specifically cited the fact that this generation of student has to work in order to be able to afford college, sometimes full-time and/or sometimes multiple jobs (15%, 26/173), which changes student abilities to be engaged with coursework and other activities on campus. 8% (14/173) also indicated that while resources and support should be available to students, in the end it is their responsibility to find a way to be successful. 10% (18/173) expressed concern for the cost of attending WMU.
  - 10% (18/173) of respondents indicated that university administration must prioritize and provide funding and resources in order to help students navigate the pressures and responsibilities in their life so they are better able to perform academically. Respondents indicated that it is essential that faculty and staff know about campus resources so that they can give students appropriate referrals (10%, 17 of 172), faculty and staff must take the time to reach out to students whom they think might need assistance (7%, 12 of 172), and 5% (8/172) noted concern that many students had long waits to see a counselor at Sindecuse and that more counselors need to be hired in order to handle the volume of students needing assistance.

**A07: Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty are motivated to improve student success.**

*61.7% rated this area moderately or very important to improve*

Who should be primarily responsible for leading efforts? (Percent of respondents choosing this group)	College Level Leaders (58.1%)	University Level Leaders (57.2%)	Faculty and Instructors (51.1%)
Percent in this Role who see themselves as responsible	73.90%	72.50%	50.00%

Percent in this Role <b>Very Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	53.40%	53.40%	47.30%
Percent in this Role <b>Not at All Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	8.60%	8.60%	5.80%
How willing on average individuals in this role are to personally work toward improvement in this area	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.24)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.24)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.20)

- Many faculty members say they are not motivated to improve student success both because they do not have the time and because they are not rewarded to work on their teaching and student success efforts. Instead, they are rewarded for grants and publications.
  - 18% (17/97) of respondents (fairly equally split among roles) who commented on this statement indicated that it was essential that faculty received incentives and were held accountable for making positive changes and being dedicated to teaching (16%, 16/97).  
-A respondent who opted not to indicate their role stated, “I think that WMU has a friendly atmosphere in which it is easy to make curricular changes, but...there is not a lot of support in terms of providing funding or making time for professors to do these things...With my incredibly heavy advising and teaching load, it is all that I can do during the semester just to teach my classes, meet with all the students who want to see me, make the dozens of committee meetings that I have each month, and even think (not necessarily do) [about] the research that I need to do for promotion.”
  - Many felt that faculty either were frustrated because they were already doing this work and it was not being rewarded and there were those for whom teaching would not remain a priority because they were not rewarded for their efforts. Teaching must be valued in the promotion and tenure process.  
-One faculty member shared concerns about rewards and recognition for supporting undergraduates, stating, “I think that faculty know what they need to do in order to support undergraduate education, and they are usually receptive to learning and to applying new techniques. What they are lacking is a robust cohort of colleagues who are personally rewarded for placing the teaching component of their jobs in a primary position vis-a-vis their other job duties.”
  - Some respondents indicated that teaching was not valued by university administration (15%, 15/97), and that generally speaking, the administration was not supportive of faculty (12%, 12/97). Administrators must recognize that more effort put into teaching and student success may mean a decrease in time for research grants and publications.  
- One faculty member said, “WMU needs to take its undergraduate mission seriously. Its need for RESEARCH is undercutting one of its strengths [teaching undergraduate students]. I question the commitment at the top levels of the organization.”  
-A student affairs/student services staff member stated, “Support for faculty time to work on student success must come from the University level leaders as well...Again, the support and the charge must come from the top = University level leaders. The expectation for these types of initiatives must be in balance (with) consideration of other responsibilities held by the faculty.”

- One part-time instructor or teaching assistant stated, “If you want to create better teachers, then create lines of tenure based on their ability to teach, attract, retain, and graduate students. Create a culture of teaching within the school that goes beyond the averages.”
- A student affairs/student services staff member stated, “Faculty need to be empowered and supported by their leadership to change from an outdated ineffective model.”
- 9% (9/97) indicated that any changes in this area would have to come from administration.

**A11: Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty, staff, senior leaders, and students work together to improve student success.**

*59.5% rated this area moderately or very important to improve*

Who should be primarily responsible for leading efforts? (Percent of respondents choosing this group)	University Level Leaders (51.2%)	College Level Leaders (41.4%)	Faculty and Instructors (34%)
Percent in this Role who see themselves as responsible	69.6%	56.5%	43.7%
Percent in this Role <b>Very Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	51.8%	51.8%	34.7%
Percent in this Role <b>Not at All Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	3.6%	3.6%	7.9%
How willing on average individuals in this role are to personally work toward improvement in this area	Moderately to very willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.37)	Moderately to very willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.37)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (2.95)

- Of those that made open-ended comments to this question, 38% (30/80) indicated that all university employees have a role in student success and 23% (18/80) stated that all university personnel collaborate in order to improve student success.
- Some respondents said that working together to improve student success was not a priority for the administration (9%, 7/80) and other discussed their perception of a lack of communication between university personnel (between individuals, departments, and administration with individuals or departments) (6%, 5/80).  
member said, “Decrease number of communication breakdowns between University Leadership/College Leadership, non-academic support staff, Student Affairs Staff, and Faculty. It seems like no one is currently on the same page in terms of which resources are available and/or beneficial for students.”
- One faculty member stated, “As the saying goes ‘the buck stops here.’ Upper level administration need to support success for faculty, staff and students by being open, flexible, supportive, and collaborative. And, taking responsibility for all the work of the university by jumping in the trenches with us instead of sitting in the ivory tower that is Seibert Hall.”

**A08: Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty know what they can do to improve student success.**

*58.7% rated this area moderately or very important to improve*



Who should be primarily responsible for leading efforts? (Percent of respondents choosing this group)	College Level Leaders (55.3%)	University Level Leaders (49.4%)	Faculty and Instructors (45.9%)
Percent in this Role who see themselves as responsible	73.9%	59.4%	45.4%
Percent in this Role <b>Very Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	42.1%	42.1%	39.0%
Percent in this Role <b>Not at All Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	10.5%	10.5%	5.8%
How willing on average individuals in this role are to personally work toward improvement in this area	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.00)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.00)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.03)

- Many of the responses to this statement echoed similar sentiments to those discussed with the statement related to faculty motivation to improve student success. Again, respondents indicated that many faculty would not put in the effort to improve student success, whether they knew what to do or not, unless there were sufficient incentives for doing so (14%, 9/62) and that changes would need to come from the administration (10%, 6/62) because their perception is that teaching is not valued (10%, 6/62). There were also more comments about faculty not knowing all of the resources on campus, which limited their ability to help students (16%, 10/62).
  - Of those who responded, 16% (10/62) indicated that faculty wanted to know what they could do to improve their teaching and student success, but that resources, most specifically time and professional development funds and opportunities, were necessary in order to make these changes (16%, 10/62).
  - Respondents were clear that faculty must receive the message from administration that teaching and student success are priorities that will be valued as much as securing grants and writing publications.
    - One respondent stated, "The entire campus has to be involved in student success. Little in the tenure process recognizes efforts and involvements in student support programs and initiatives."

### AO3: Undergraduate students are successful when they make efficient use of their study time.

*57.5% rated this area moderately or very important to improve*

Who should be primarily responsible for leading efforts? (Percent of respondents choosing this group)	Faculty and Instructors (45.8%)	Student Affairs or Student Services (45.8%)	Students (44.9%)
Percent in this Role who see themselves as responsible	48.9%	47.2%	Not Surveyed
Percent in this Role <b>Very Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	21.3%	29.7%	Not Surveyed
Percent in this Role <b>Not at All Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	12.9%	8.9%	Not Surveyed
How willing on average individuals in this role are to personally work toward improvement in this area	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (2.61)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (2.84)	Not Surveyed

- When asked about students making efficient use of their time, 11% (11/101) of respondents indicated that students should be able to figure out how to make efficient time on their own; however, 21% (21/101) of respondents indicated that it was necessary that WMU provide students with resources for important topics like studying and time management and for the administration to prioritize resources and funding towards helping students in this area (13%, 13/101). 9% (9/101) specifically cited the need for students to have physical space on campus where they could study (8%, 8/101) noted that the Bronco Study Zone was a step in the right direction).
  - Respondents indicated that students often did not know how to make efficient use of their time and as a result, university leadership should promote fun and hard work with clear guidelines about what it takes for most students to be successful (9%, 9/101). Some also said that students would benefit from mentoring relationships (5%, 5/101) and faculty should help students figure out what and how to study (6%, 6/101).
  - Respondents generally felt like students were ultimately responsible for figuring out what worked best for them, but that they should do that with the support and guidance of university personnel (19%, 19/101).

**A06: Undergraduate students are successful when there is a smooth integration of student support resources, programs, policies, and structures.**

*57.5% rated this area moderately or very important to improve*

Who should be primarily responsible for leading efforts? (Percent of respondents choosing this group)	Student Affairs or Student Services (46.9%)	University Level Leaders (46.5%)	College Level Leaders (41.9%)
Percent in this Role who see themselves as responsible	51.6%	59.4%	50.7%
Percent in this Role <b>Very Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	52.5%	37.5%	37.5%
Percent in this Role <b>Not at All Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	3.9%	7.1%	7.1%
How willing on average individuals in this role are to personally work toward improvement in this area	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.28)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (2.96)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (2.96)

- Respondents were concerned that students were often not able to find or not aware of the resources they need to be successful (12%, 8/66). Several noted that the structure of the university is often hard to navigate and students sometimes get passed around the university as they try to get their needs met (12%, 8/66).
  - A faculty member said, “there are so many resources here at WMU that already exist that NO ONE knows about. I am very familiar with how to navigate the university, and if it was difficult for me to find all of these resources, our freshman don’t stand a chance!”
  - A senior administrator stated, “It says something when someone in leadership does not (know) what is in place. That either means I’m incompetent, there is little in place, or it is poorly communicated and it is worth knowing that.”
  - Some suggestions from respondents were a central registry of student support services. This could be in the form of a page on the WMU website and/or handout given to university community members annually. Respondents also suggested that individual units do more

marketing of their resources for students and that the university website's search function be improved to better connect students with resources based on more search terms.

- 9% (6/66) of respondents were concerned with the siloed nature of the university. Disconnects were noted between administration and faculty, student affairs and academic affairs, and other groups. Respondents said there was a need for better collaboration across the university (9%, 6/66).
- There were concerns with the "top-down" nature of university bureaucracy (9%, 6/66), but also a strong desire for real leadership to help integrate student success efforts (11%, 7/66).

#### AO4: Undergraduate students are successful when they take ownership and responsibility for their educational progress.

*57% rated this area moderately or very important to improve*

Who should be primarily responsible for leading efforts? (Percent of respondents choosing this group)	Faculty and Instructors (46.6%)	Students (45.9%)	Student Affairs or Student Services (35.6%)
Percent in this Role who see themselves as responsible	52.1%	Not Surveyed	36.9%
Percent in this Role <b>Very Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	26.5%	Not Surveyed	37.9%
Percent in this Role <b>Not at All Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	10.4%	Not Surveyed	5.5%
How willing on average individuals in this role are to personally work toward improvement in this area	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (2.76)	Not Surveyed	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.05)

- 23% (23/101) of respondents indicated that it was essential that the university help students understand what it means to take responsibility for their education.
  - Overall, 17% (17/101) of respondents thought that while students ultimately needed to take ownership for their progress, they should do so with the help of university personnel and resources. This was another area of the survey where respondents indicated that it was important to remember the differences of this generation of students from previous generations (17%, 17/101).
  - Respondents indicated that students need clear expectations (20%, 20/101) from the university leadership, faculty, and staff about what it means for students to take ownership and responsibility of their education and that doing so is necessary. Some noted that this messaging of expectations should come early on during the student's experience, particularly at orientation, but also continue into classroom environments. Indeed, 8% (8/101) of respondents thought that it was also important for faculty members to help students in this process.
    - A faculty member stated, "There should be a university-wide campaign in this area. It should be not only aimed at helping students improve the use of undergraduate study time, but also at establishing a culture where significant study time for each course taken is a normal expectation. Many students need to learn to take responsibility for their own learning. We can all help them if we all speak with one voice about the importance of preparation and study time."
  - Of note, 8% (8/101) respondents indicated that it was essential that the administration support faculty in being consistent. Respondents stated that there were instances of students and parents/family members contacting administration because students were

dissatisfied with their grades where the administration did not back up the judgment of the faculty member. Respondents also indicated that parents “coddling” their children did not help them take ownership and responsibility for their educational progress and that this was something the university could work on.

**A09: Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where staff are motivated to improve student success.**

*55.9% rated this area moderately or very important to improve*

Who should be primarily responsible for leading efforts? (Percent of respondents choosing this group)	University Level Leaders (48.4%)	College Level Leaders (40.8%)	Academic, Not- Student Service Staff (29.4%)
Percent in this Role who see themselves as responsible	63.8%	52.2%	31.9%
Percent in this Role <b>Very Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	39.3%	39.3%	46.3%
Percent in this Role <b>Not at All Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	7.1%	7.1%	5.3%
How willing on average individuals in this role are to personally work toward improvement in this area	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.09)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.09)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.19)

- Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that staff are undervalued (16%, 13/81), underpaid (17%, 14/81), and overworked (19%, 15/81); seventy-five percent of the respondents sharing these items were staff members. The recent compensation project was mentioned several times (9%, 7/81) and those who commented on this statement seemed to indicate that staff were either going to go above and beyond regardless of their frustration because it was personally important to them to provide support for students or not do anything they did not have to because they felt like they were treated poorly.
- Many respondents talked about the lack of recognition of the value of the support they provide for students (22%, 17/81) and the importance of the relationships that staff form with students (20%, 16/81).
- A lack of sufficient staffing for both everyday tasks and supporting student success was cited by 9% (7/81) of respondents. Several respondents (15%, 12/81) also discussed how many staff members would like to better serve students; however, they lacked the time to be able to help (16%, 13/81).
  - A student affairs/student services staff member stated, “There is a general attitude among many offices that administration desires staff to ‘do more with less.’ Even with the recent changes to staff compensation, there is still a perception among staff members that they are under-supported, under-paid, their offices are under-staffed, and department budgets are being stretched to address a greater workload. When staff members have a greater workload and can barely keep up with their tasks, they aren't able to innovate. Well-staffed offices, where duties can be addressed timely, provide staff members with opportunities to brainstorm improvements.”
  - A respondent who opted not to list their role stated, "There is no way this university will improve academic progress without enough staff to support those efforts (academic advisors, etc.). The problem is not on the student but on the system, trying to accomplish and get positive

results on the cheap and not willing to pay for quality services. I thought we would have learned the lesson by now but that is not the case.”

- An Academic, not-student service staff member stated, “If our students had all the problems this survey supposes, and WMU's heart were pure...WMU employees would already be empowered to help...WMU took the wrong fork in the road a few generations back. It is now a fully-committed money-generating machine. The students are a commodity.”

**A10: Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where staff know what they can do to improve student success.**

*53.2% rated this area moderately or very important to improve*

Who should be primarily responsible for leading efforts? (Percent of respondents choosing this group)	University Level Leaders (46.5%)	College Level Leaders (38.7%)	Academic, Not- Student Service Staff (28.2%)
Percent in this Role who see themselves as responsible	62.3%	56.5%	29.9%
Percent in this Role <b>Very Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	36.8%	36.8%	45.7%
Percent in this Role <b>Not at All Willing</b> to personally work toward improvement in this area	8.8%	8.8%	6.5%
How willing on average individuals in this role are to personally work toward improvement in this area	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (2.96)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (2.96)	Moderately willing to personally work toward improvement in this area (3.10)

- The largest number of comments from respondents about staff knowing what they can do to improve student success were about helping employees know what they can do to improve student success (24%, 11/46) and the need for training and professional development and being given time away (not having to use leave time) to get training (22%, 10/46). Respondents indicated that university resources for the training of staff members should be promoted better so that more staff can take advantage of on-campus trainings (15%, 7/46). Again, respondents indicated that the role that played in supporting students was not always valued (13%, 6/46) and that any efforts that were put forth by staff to improve student success were not recognized by university leadership (11%, 5/46).

- A faculty member stated, “One way to improve student success is for the administration to provide an environment of respect and recognition for the faculty and staff. Faculty and staff work hard and are rarely recognized for their efforts. Clearly one mechanism for recognition would be for the university to compensate its faculty and staff at levels that match the institutions it seems to be striving to compete (MSU, U of M, etc.). However, this form of recognition is not the only mechanism and seemingly even being acknowledged for a job well done has been lost in this institution.”

- A respondent who chose not to indicate their role at the university said, “It is about time the University leaders focus on ‘staff’ and how the low number of employees at this institution is affecting enrollment, university reputation and academic performance. We have to stop being proud of telling everyone that WMU is one of the leanest universities in the nation. That is not a point of pride. When the staff and faculty hear this remarks what we hear is ‘We are working more and paid less because we are not allocating the resources needed to be better.’”

**What can WMU do to improve Student Success?**

Participants were asked what they thought the most important thing WMU could do to improve student success. A large number of survey respondents answered this question (n=597) and over 171 unique codes/themes were identified. The following is a summary of the most common themes and issues respondents discussed. It is important to note that this question was very broad and respondents could have responded with many different ideas, so the presence of, for example, 20 respondents saying the same thing is significant.

Respondents were concerned with the admission criteria at WMU. Some (44) felt that without question, the standards need to be raised. For example, one faculty member stated, "It's a great public service idea to help marginal students with limited support. It's just not where I want to spend my professional life. I want to help motivated, successful students reach in higher levels of success." In contrast, others stated that if the admissions criteria are going to remain the same, the institution cannot admit students and then leave them to figure things out on their own; rather, the institution must provide the necessary support for all of its students to be successful (8). A few respondents indicated that it was unfair to admit and take money from students that the institution knows will not succeed (5/597).

Many respondents also expressed concerns about financial aid, most specifically helping more students, offering more scholarships, meeting student need (41/597). Respondents (28/597) discussed the need to lower the cost of attendance (tuition, fees, etc.) and noted that students have to work a lot to be able to afford to attend WMU, which often has a negative effect on their ability to be successful (21/597). One student affairs or student services staff member commented on the nature of the reality for many of WMU's students. They suggested that WMU "Find better ways to provide the support services that students need. This is especially important for the non-traditional students who often have limited access to campus during 'business' hours. Campus culture is geared toward the traditional, residential student. More and more of our students do not fit this scenario. More and more of our students--including those in the 18-22 age range--have to work jobs as their primary life role. Therefore, our culture needs to change to accommodate these students." Both financial resources and more flexibility and student support structures would aid students like the ones this staff member talked about.

Respondents overwhelming felt that student success efforts at WMU need to be more structured (26/597) and that the university needs to cultivate a culture of student success (56/597). One faculty member stated, "I think WMU needs to make education its first priority, and until that happens nothing you can do with programs or initiatives is going to do any good. WMU does not currently support education. Professors are overworked and undervalued, students are overworked and over scheduled and broke, classes are too large to facilitate real learning, faculty are too busy to put in the real work that needs to be done for underachieving students, and faculty are treated so miserably by the administration that they have no incentive to do anything extra for WMU since they're already giving their life's blood. Until WMU makes some major changes on a massive scale, I can hardly blame students for dropping out before graduation. I'd drop out too if I were forced to deal with an institution like this one. WMU is Joseph Heller's 'Catch-22' playing out in academia. It's a nightmare."

In order to improve create student success structure and a culture of student success some suggested creating a position for a dean of student success, while others simply stated that student resources needed to be more structured, both individually, and in relation to each other. Respondents indicated the need to recognize who the students are that attend WMU (22/597). One part-time instructor or teaching assistant stated, "Many students work full-time in addition to attending school. Many cannot afford to purchase textbooks, so try to make it through classes without ever doing assigned readings. It

is very difficult for these students to have success in the present environment, and I wonder how much they are actually getting out of their educational experiences.” Other respondents noted that students come to WMU unprepared and recognized need for addressing unpreparedness through a variety of efforts (27/597). Some examples are offering a course (likely FYE) that stresses important skills needed for college like learning how to learn, study skills, and time management (13/597) in addition to remedial classes that students might need (5/597). Respondents also stressed meeting students where they are in terms of preparedness for college (26/597) and the importance of students meeting with advisors (37/597). Having an effective early intervention system in place (21/597) and identifying students who are struggling (17/597) was something respondents thought would be helpful. Respondents said that formal mentorship programs would also be helpful to increase student success (45/597). Respondents suggested formal mentorship programs for students with faculty, staff, and students serving as mentors to students.

Respondents articulated a clear need for creating a culture where everyone at the university has a responsibility in contributing to student success efforts (18/597). One part-time instructor or teaching assistant stated, “WMU is not guaranteed success in this effort [student success] or in its long term efforts to become a great university, it is up to all involved, top to bottom, but particularly the top, to create a place where students thrive, are challenged, and succeed.” Many stressed the importance of university personnel reaching out to students (51/597), developing relationships with students, and showing students that they cared about them and their success (48/597). Some respondents indicated that it was important to recognize that faculty play a key role in the success of students (22/597) and that it is important that faculty are engaged and involved with student success efforts, both in and out of the classroom (14/597). Additionally, respondents felt that the support students receive should be holistic in nature (37/597). In other words, it is important to address the health and developmental needs of students and things going on in their life outside of the institution that likely effect their academic success in addition to helping students learn specific material for their courses. A part-time instructor stated, “In the 16 years I've instructed, I often see capable young women and men fall behind and leave either because of finances, family, or personal problems. If these areas are addressed prior to them becoming insurmountable, then maybe we can help those students.”

Respondents also stressed the importance of asking students what they need and being sure to listen to student needs to help them (23/597). Taking the time to connect students with resources (28/597) and making sure that university resources are better publicized (38/597) were other factors that respondents thought would help improve student success. Additionally, participants indicated that student success efforts needed more resources (50/597). One faculty member stated, “Leadership is critically important. If leaders of a consistent direction, with resources and time, things can get done. When only words are used and there is no action or real tangible support given, nothing will get accomplished.” Some examples given were broad examples like funding for student success programs like the writing center, but others were more specific like more counselors (8/597), more full-time faculty and staff (31/597) because these personnel are currently overworked and not as able to help students. One faculty member said, “In order for students to develop a sense of engagement and strive for success, faculty and staff need to also have a sense of these. More and more, it seems, both faculty and staff approach their connection to WMU as ‘just a job...something to get through in order to get paid.’ Tons of money is dumped into making the campus look good--physically and externally--to incoming students. In comparison very little is put into supporting and those who support academics and even less recognition is given (other than some silly ‘award’ that folks nominate themselves for) for the value, roles, and responsibilities these groups play in student (and University) success. Student sense

of personal pride and success does not come from pretty landscaping, football stadium ‘improvements,’ classy dorms or cafeterias...nor from unengaged (and often disrespectful) faculty, staff who are overworked to the level of frustration and, therefore, out of patience to connect with students, etc.” This faculty said that the need for students to know that faculty and staff are engaged in their success and felt that the way that the university currently allocates resources inhibits the engagement of faculty and staff.

Many respondents indicated that it was important to help university employees know what they can do to assist with student success (17/597). Respondents also indicated that it was also important to provide rewards and incentives for faculty and staff (25/597) to be engaged with student success efforts, especially because some cited low morale among faculty and staff (8/597). One faculty member discussed faculty efforts for student success in relation to the distribution of financial resources at WMU. This person stated, “I appreciate that your work group would like to receive suggestions about what can be done within the current budgetary and staffing ‘realities,’ but I think that we have gone too long trying to solve a fiscal crisis in academic affairs with a teeny, tiny Band-Aid. Until the university leadership itself places instruction as its first priority, then we are destined to spend our time and effort fruitlessly engaged in lesser solutions that do not address the glaring problem. In my unit alone, we are hampered by the lack of a vitality that comes with new hires who bring up-to-date approaches to the classroom and to the entire operation of the department.”

**Differences between groups:** The following three tables show only areas where statistically significant difference existed between these three groups. There is disagreement in every area about how effectively WMU addresses the areas. However, with few exceptions, there is agreement about the extent to which improvement needs to happen. Even where there is difference in that extent, there is agreement that it is moderately to very important for WMU to improve. Finally, the willingness to personally work toward improvement differs in almost every area.



### How effectively does WMU currently address the problem areas?

	Senior Administrators	Faculty and Instructors	Student Affairs and Student Services
A01. Some incoming undergraduate students have gaps in their academic preparation leaving them under-prepared for the rigors of college.	2.38	2.25	2.43
A02. Some undergraduate students have pressures or responsibilities not related to coursework that impact their academic performance.	2.34	2.11	2.31
A03. Undergraduate students are successful when they make efficient use of their study time.*	2.51	2.33	2.63
A04. Undergraduate students are successful when they take ownership and responsibility for their educational progress.**	2.72	2.37	2.64
A05. Undergraduate students are successful when faculty and staff feel supported and empowered to make improvements.**	2.67	2.15	2.36
A06. Undergraduate students are successful when there is a smooth integration of student support resources, programs, policies, practices, and structures.**	2.5	2.25	2.57
A07. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty are motivated to improve student success.*	2.34	2.02	2.28
A08. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty know what they can do to improve student success.	2.4	2.1	2.22
A09. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where staff are motivated to improve student success.**	2.67	2.09	2.41
A10. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where staff know what they can do to improve student success.	2.34	2.12	2.3
A11. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty, staff, senior leaders, and students work together to improve student success.**	2.25	1.92	2.23

*The scale for these questions is: 1 = Not at all; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Moderately; 4 = Very*

*The numbers reported below are means. Those items showing one mean have no statistically significant difference between groups. In those items with difference, \* $p < .01$ , \*\* $p < .001$*

### How important is it for WMU to improve?

	Senior Administrators	Faculty and Instructors	Student Affairs and Student Services
A01. Some incoming undergraduate students have gaps in their academic preparation leaving them under-prepared for the rigors of college.	3.6		
A02. Some undergraduate students have pressures or responsibilities not related to coursework that impact their academic performance.*	3.28	3.15	3.45
A03. Undergraduate students are successful when they make efficient use of their study time.	3.26		
A04. Undergraduate students are successful when they take ownership and responsibility for their educational progress.	3.34		
A05. Undergraduate students are successful when faculty and staff feel supported and empowered to make improvements.	3.57		
A06. Undergraduate students are successful when there is a smooth integration of student support resources, programs, policies, practices, and structures.*	3.39	3.3	3.54
A07. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty are motivated to improve student success.	3.64		
A08. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty know what they can do to improve student success.	3.53		
A09. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where staff are motivated to improve student success.*	3.35	3.24	3.56
A10. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where staff know what they can do to improve student success.**	3.34	3.15	3.58
A11. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty, staff, senior leaders, and students work together to improve student success.	3.57		

The scale for these questions is: 1 = Not at all; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Moderately; 4 = Very

The numbers reported below are means. Those items showing one mean have no statistically significant difference between groups. In those items with difference, \* $p < .01$ , \*\* $p < .001$

### How willing are you personally to work toward improvements?

	Senior Administrators	Faculty and Instructors	Student Affairs and Student Services
A01. Some incoming undergraduate students have gaps in their academic preparation leaving them under-prepared for the rigors of college.**	3.25	2.93	3.26
A02. Some undergraduate students have pressures or responsibilities not related to coursework that impact their academic performance.**	2.77	2.57	3.15
A03. Undergraduate students are successful when they make efficient use of their study time.	2.67	2.61	2.84
A04. Undergraduate students are successful when they take ownership and responsibility for their educational progress.*	2.81	2.76	3.05
A05. Undergraduate students are successful when faculty and staff feel supported and empowered to make improvements.	3.19		
A06. Undergraduate students are successful when there is a smooth integration of student support resources, programs, policies, practices, and structures.**	2.96	2.51	3.28
A07. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty are motivated to improve student success.**	3.24	3.2	2.81
A08. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty know what they can do to improve student success.	2.96		
A09. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where staff are motivated to improve student success.**	3.09	2.32	3.4
A10. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where staff know what they can do to improve student success.**	2.96	2.26	3.32
A11. Undergraduate students are successful at institutions that provide an environment where faculty, staff, senior leaders, and students work together to improve student success.**	3.37	2.95	3.29

The scale for these questions is: 1 = Not at all; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = Moderately; 4 = Very

The numbers reported below are means. Those items showing one mean have no statistically significant difference between groups. In those items with difference, \* $p < .01$ , \*\* $p < .001$