SMU
in
FOUR

START SMART. FINISH STRONG.

SMU in Four Year-One Annual Report

Introduction

SMU's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), branded **SMU in Four**, is designed to support the institutional goal of enhancing the University's ability to recruit, retain and graduate academically- and creatively-gifted undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds. The QEP seeks, specifically, to improve first-year retention rate from 91% to 94% and to improve the four-year graduation rate from 73% to 80%, all within five years--2020 to 2025. We seek also to improve retention and graduation rates among racially and ethnically diverse student populations, first-generation students, and Pell-eligible students. SMU has taken a research based approach to improving student retention, especially in the first two years, and this has led us to focus on student progress toward degree completion, which is the most essential measure of student academic success.

SMU's QEP consists of three essential pillars that direct changes to help students in their early years: the Early Alert Pillar, the Advising Pillar, and the First-Year and Gateway Pillar. The Early Alert Pillar improves the collection of early and midterm progress report data from faculty to support interventions that promote student success. Through this process students and faculty develop an increased understanding of the resources available to students who fall behind academically. The Advising Pillar implements improvements to academic advising through the integration of targeted technological solutions and strategic changes to academic policies. It also empowers advisors to require at-risk students to meet with advising staff for additional guidance and support. This pillar relies on changes to the advising experience, such that students view their assigned advisors as important campus resources as well as people who care about them and are invested in their success. The First-Year and Gateway Courses Pillar improves the design and instruction in first-year and gateway courses to promote student engagement and success and reduce any unintended equity gaps that might exist. It seeks also to expand faculty understanding of research-based best practices to promote student engagement in class.

Early Pillar

The Early Alert Pillar is charged to improve the collection of early and midterm progress report data to support student interventions to promote student success. Co-led by Dr. Sue Bierman, Executive Director of Student Academic Success Programs, and Audryanna Reed, Associate Director of High-Impact Practices, during the 2021 –2022 academic year, we present current pillar initiatives, year-one progress, and year-two plans.

Pillar Initiatives

The focus of the Early Alert Pillar was broadly addressed within a larger group compiling the initial Quality Enhancement Plan. Specific initiatives to address in year one was specified within the pillar committee, with representation from the faculty, student affairs, and academic affairs areas. These initiatives were as follows:

1. Improve the collection of early and midterm progress report data to support student interventions to promote student success. This includes how all the data about student success is managed and shared.
2. Increase the realization within the faculty about the importance of providing students with early and midterm feedback in order to increase the chances of student success in the course.
3. Increase student and faculty understanding of resources available to students who earn deficient grades.
4. Utilize the partnership between **Residence Life and Student Housing (RLSH)** and academic affairs early in the semester to promote services and respond to reports indicating deficiencies. Encouraging student behavior changes early in the semester allow time for turnaround.
5. Determine the effectiveness of current outreach methods. Ultimately answering the question, "are our current practices making a difference?"

Year One Progress

Faculty Collaboration

For years, faculty received information only about completion of the early and midterm progress reports. To help faculty understand how the reports were being used
by SMU, meetings were held at the departmental and chair level to explain the outreach that

occurs to those students with deficiencies and the resources suggested to help. Dashboards for Early Progress Reports (EPR)/ MidtermProgress Reports (MPR) were created for assistant/associate deans and chairs to track submission progress and reach out to faculty with incomplete reports. Reminders originating within schools/colleges/departments were thought to have more impact than reminders from the **Student Success & Retention (SSR)** Thank you notes (which included data) are now sent to those who provided the necessary information each semester

Data Management Collaborations

The Office of Student Advocacy & Support (OSAS) and **Student Success & Retention (SSR)** began utilizing the same case management software so that at-risk student information could provide a more well-rounded picture of students' challenges. Advising notes – OSAS was given permission to view advising notes to provide a more in-depth picture of the student experience. Outreach practice analysis – a statistical analysis based upon two types of outreaches (general vs. a personalized plan) was conducted, using behavioral change as an indicator effectiveness. There was no statistical change in student behavior changes to seek campus academic support demonstrated at EPR outreach and some change demonstrated after MPR. We plan to continue to monitor student behavior in resources utilization as a result of early alert interventions.

Residence Life and Student Housing Partnership

Peer Academic Leaders (PALs), undergraduate peer mentors trained by the University Advising Center to support enrollment and advising efforts, promoted availability of Early Alert reports, how to access, and what to expect with outreach. The Micro-Assessment survey was distributed to all undergraduate students with an 11% return rate in fall 2021 (N=6,891) and spring 2022 (N=6,708). Personalized outreach conducted for all students indicating their self-reported academic experience has been poor or terrible. **Faculty in Residence (FiRs)** and **Residential Community Directors (RCDs)** participated in EPR training in summer of 2022. In the push for early student behavior change, this group will outreach to those students in their Residential Commons who have multiple grade deficiencies through the fall 2022 semester. The Early-Alert Student Primary Report Guide resource was created to assist the faculty and staff with referrals.

Year-Two Plans

In year two, the Early Alert Pillar intends to:

1. Review data for the fall semester to determine if current outreach efforts (e.g., EPR, MPR, Micro-Assessment) are effective. Duplicate the statistical analysis from spring 2022 to determine if more outreach after EPR shows students with deficiencies seeking services. Specific student population (e.g., students of color, first-generation, and PELL recipients) data will be highlighted to identify and monitor potential equity gaps.

2. Determine how to help students seek academic support earlier (after EPRs). The pillar will work to answer, "what other means of outreach, programming, and service provided can be added to increase student participation in academic services to address the challenges noted on the EPR?" In addition to examining student-wide trends, we seek to identify and close potential equity gaps among students of color, first generation, and PELL recipients. This analysis will assess if some student groups are more or less likely to respond. Do students of color, first generation, and PELL recipients utilize services after outreach? Have they been utilizing services before EPRs are received?

3. Identify other behaviors that can be used to track outreach effectiveness. Previous behavior tracked consisted of changes in student participation in tutoring, Writing Center appointments, academic counseling and workshop attendance. We are looking to identify what other service participation should be included?

4. Help increase the number of accurate reports. Review all reports generated to compare EPR and MPR to final grades. How did students with no report submitted perform in final grade? Were there students marked as having no deficiency at EPR/MPR earning a drop/fail/withdrawal (DFW) as a final grade?

5. Visit with more departments to explain what is done after EPR/MPR information is received.

6. Identify other areas to broaden outreach opportunities.

Advising Pillar

The Advising Pillar is charged to implement changes to the advising experience so that students view their assigned advisors as important resources on campus who care about their situation. Led by Josh Beaty, Director of Student and Advisor Training, during the 2021 – 2022 academic year, we present current pillar initiatives, year-one progress, and year-two plans.

Pillar Initiatives

SMU in Four focuses on bridging SMU's gaps in advising in a several ways – technological tools, policy changes, and enabling advisors to be a more comprehensive resource to students. The student experience of advising can vary greatly – by school, department, or even advisor. Partly, because an advisor's role covers a lot of ground – mentor, counselor, teacher, or, yes, bureaucrat. Too often, a bureaucrat. So how can we use technology to automate some of the rote processes, to more easily connect faculty advisors to students, and to share information? How can we standardize processes and policies across schools and departments so that student experiences and expectations of advising can be more effectively managed? And how can we take burdens off of advisors and degree counselors so that they're freer to work with students on planning and areas of concern? In short, how can we make advising a better experience for everyone at SMU? These are the questions of concern to the Advising Pillar.

Year-One Progress

We introduced several technology tools in year one to improve the advisor and advising experience for both full-time and faculty advisors. **Booking.SMU** is an appointment scheduling site first used for library room reservations. The **University Advising Center** adopted **Booking.SMU** almost five years ago and other offices soon followed. By expanding the use to faculty advisors, we give students one familiar interface through their four years rather than disparate scheduling systems confusing to students and time-consuming for faculty and their administrative team members. By streamlining the appointment process, we can also use this centralized source of data to identify students who are not utilizing advising and nudge them to connect to necessary resources.

Similarly, we implemented Advising Notes to provide a consistent record of a student's interactions with various offices, to allow for more effective interventions, when needed.

Advising Notes is a tool within **my.SMU**, and each note has a category, subcategory, and subject which can be queried. For advisors, rather than various private note-taking practices – which can still exist for highly personal conversations – Advising Notes can be shared. With this implementation, faculty advisors can read about the student's past conversations with a pre-major advisor, so that these past conversations can inform future ones.

Advisors can request access to these tools through an Advisor Training course, which was launched in Fall 2021. This Canvas-based course, spans six modules, each covering a different aspect of advising – the Common Curriculum, policies and petitions, and common academic resources giving all advisors the same foundation of knowledge.

In Spring 2022, we conducted an advisor experience survey, with over a hundred respondents. The Advising Pillar asked about job duties, compensation, and faculty feelings about advising. What we found was an incredibly uneven landscape, in which the role of faculty advising changes depending on the department. Results will inform future work of the pillar.

Advising Call Out: National Survey of Student Engagement

The results from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) from 2019 informed SMU-in-Four's advising initiatives. A majority of the first-years and seniors surveyed in 2019 did not find advising to be as helpful as intended. But the results from 2022 are much more encouraging, with improvement in almost every area. Pre-major advisors have reached out to their first-year students slightly more, and, as a result, pre-major advisors have met with their students slightly more. Students then perceive their pre-major advisors as more helpful now than they have in the past. This is not an accident. It a direct result of intentional action from Ellen Richmond and the UAC office – more outreach, especially for students with early alerts; more accessibility, with Zoom now integrated with Booking so that students can choose in-person or online appointments; and Advising Notes allowing advisors to keep better notes and share those notes with relevant staff who may interact with that student. First-year improvement, compared to 2019 but also compared to our peer and aspirants, is proof of concept, but the results from seniors in 2022 show that we still have room to improve for declared majors. We hope that continuing our work with faculty advisors and changes to declared major advising will lead to a similar jump for seniors surveyed in 2025.

Year-Two Plans

For year two, we will expand the adoption of the booking appointment system and Advising Notes. The first hurdle to this task is ensuring everyone has been trained and has needed permission, and then engraining the tool into the advising process and routines. Similarly, we hope to simplify the **my.SMU** permissions process. Lastly, the **Office of Information Technology** configured a new tool within **my.SMU**, HighPoint Degree Planner, that helps students and advisors plan their path to graduation – and help departments plan for course demand in coming semesters. We will help with the training and rollout of HighPoint through AY 2022-2023.

We intend to create a centralized database of advisors to facilitate more deliberate training for new advisors, with clear expectations for advisors and their department chairs. Efforts are being made to standardize and automate communication to both students and advisors with the goal that newly declared majors and their advisors can be introduced to each other in a clear, timely way. Prisna Virasin, Achievement Advisor, with the help of several **University Advising Center** advisors are reviving the MustANG – the Advisor Network Group, with possible monthly events and a semesterly newsletter for both faculty and staff advisors.

Lastly, the results from the survey, NSSE, and other intuitional goals related to R1 aspirations will be reviewed by an Advising Task Force, which is charged with reviewing the structure of advising at SMU to see if any alternate models – or key revisions to the current one – can transform the way SMU advisors and students feel about the advising experience.

First-Year and Gateway Courses Pillar

The First-Year and Gateway Courses Pillar is charged with improving the design and instruction in first-year and gateway courses to promote student engagement and success and to reduce any unintended equity gaps that might exist. Led by Dr. Paige Ware, associate provost for Faculty Success, during the 2021–2022 academic year, we present the current pillar initiatives, year-one progress, and year-two plans.

Pillar Initiatives

Three initiatives are at the heart of this pillar: Course Redesign, the Student Engagement Institute (SEI), and the **Faculty Survey of Student Engagement**, or the FSSE, the faculty counterpart to the NSSE survey used to inform advising initiatives.

Course Redesign is focused on improving the design and wrap-around support of our large introductory courses to support student success. Specifically, the DFW rates, potential equity gaps across student groups, and levels of first-year enrollment are reviewed to identify courses poised for redesign. Support is then provided to designated departmental faculty to identify opportunities for the improvement and development of materials, assignments, tutorials, etc. to augment where the data indicate support is needed.

The SEI is a workshop-based initiative housed within the **Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE)**, designed to support faculty in the generation of ideas for successful pedagogical approaches for first-year courses.

The **FSSE** will be used to gather broader faculty feedback on areas for improvement and to support course redesign and SEI initiatives.

Year-One Progress

Last year, we piloted the course redesign process with the Department of Economics with the goal of reducing DFW rates and improving student learning and persistence.

This effort was led by Dr. Mea Ahlberg and Dr. Beth Wheaton. Their work culminated in two comprehensive inquiry-based reports, with detailed recommendations based on extensive

discussions with departmental faculty team members. By streamlining the appointment process, we can also use this centralized source of data to identify students who are not utilizing advising and nudge them to connect to necessary resources.

The CTE hosted the first iteration of the SEI in May 2022 at the Dallas Arboretum, which focused on aligning the strategic orientation and future of the SEI. Finally, the FSSE was administered to all SMU faculty in spring 2022, and the results made available last month are currently being analyzed to inform year-two guidance.

Year-Two Plans

Looking ahead to year two, work will continue with the Department of Economics to implement the recommendations identified in the year-one reports, and we will begin working with the Department of Chemistry on the next set of courses for redesign.
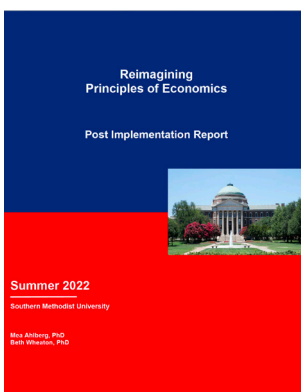
Additionally, the CTE is developing the curriculum for the SEI, with plans to pilot it in spring 2023. A key focus of this initiative will be to review available course-level data, identify equity gaps in student experience, and discuss pedagogical solutions for closing identified gaps.

Once the analysis is complete, the results of the spring 2022 FSSE administration will be made available and used to inform ongoing pillar work.

SMU in Four Support Team Highlights

The SMU-in-Four technology team is fluid, depending on the project type it supports. The types of projects supported include (a) implementing software, (b) integrating datasets, and (c) process analysis.

The Academic Technology Services team in OIT helps to implement technologies in support of teaching and learning and has implemented improvements in Canvas integrations, Simple Syllabus for faculty and students, Dropout Detective for early warning, and Feedback Box for anonymous student feedback in Canvas to support the SMU in Four initiatives.

In conjunction with **the Division of Enrollment Services**, the Data and Application Services team has implemented the modernized Student Information System with the implementation of the HighPoint Student Dashboard and HighPoint Schedule Builder. These tools will improve the student's self-service ability within the Student Information System. The team also implemented PeopleSoft's Advising Notes functionality to track advisors' conversations with students.

The Data and Application Services team, in conjunction with **University Decision Support**, implemented an EPR/MPR data mart with extensive capabilities for dashboarding. The team also implemented a New Student Tracking datamart to ensure that new students progress through the tasks necessary for a successful transition to SMU.

Several members of various teams participated in a review of how students are enrolled in classes and visualized the multiple outcomes. The process analysis also helped the SMU in Four leadership validate newly initiated practices of holding seats for incoming students.

The only major technology project for year two is the implementation of the HighPoint Degree Planner, which completes the planning cycle for the student by visually laying out the entire degree by semester. The team will continue to help students, faculty, and staff use the technology implemented over the first year.

Year-One Progress

Steering Committees

Faculty Steering Committee

The 14-member Faculty Steering Committee met seven times during the academic year. Their activities included (1) offering faculty input on the development of SMU in Four in the pillar and team-based meetings, and in their own departments; and (2) on the request of Associate Provost Kunovich, examining policies concerning

- » Pass/Fail
- » Course repeat
- » Course withdrawal

The meetings consisted of a discussion and familiarization of the committee members with the QEP and its goals. The chair distributed several research articles about these topics from the literature. The committee had particularly thoughtful and rich discussions about pass/fail and course withdrawal policies in terms of how they were practiced in other institutions and their appropriateness to SMU.

The committee discussed several drafts for changes in SMU's regulations concerning pass/fail and the use of course withdrawals. It set aside course repeat policies.

The proposed change for pass/fail was to move the deadline for declaring enrollment pass/fail from the 12th day of classes to the deadline for dropping a course. The proposed change for use of grade W restricted its use to four times during a student's enrollment at SMU and once per semester unless approved by the student's advisor. The proposed texts were approved by the committee in April 2022.

This coming year, faculty steering will continue to offer support and feedback to pillar teams in fall 2022, and it will revisit and continue academic policy conversations in spring 2023.

Student Steering Committee

The Student Steering Committee takes on various projects to improve transparency and understanding of the SMU in Four initiatives by the student body. The team meets with faculty and administration to discuss issues faced by SMU students and possible solutions to help students

best understand how to complete their degree(s) in four years.

In fall 2021, students reviewed the course catalog to identify possible gaps in understanding. Students compiled a list of information they look for in major descriptions, and they utilized this list to critically evaluate all majors in the catalog. Their findings revealed that there is no standard as to what must be included in a major description, making it difficult for students to find all the information needed to make an informed decision. In spring 2022, students were given a list of policies on which they were instructed to collect feedback from their peers. Policies included pass/fail policies, double-counting policies, and major declaration policies. Students then presented feedback, common issues, and possible solutions to SMU administration.

Students continue to brainstorm areas of improvement through an academic lens to further improve their access to information and clarity of requirements for on-time graduation. In fall 2023, students will begin evaluating the new HighPoint Degree Planner tool and the clarity of information on the Common Curriculum website.

Progress toward SMU in Four Outcomes Committees

The previous sections highlighted the great work of the essential pillars toward achieving the goals of SMU in Four. As a reminder, the overall goals of SMU in Four are aligned with the goals set forth in SMU's 2025 strategic plan. We want to increase the FYR rate from 91% to 94%, with a focus on reducing gaps in this rate by race/ethnicity, Pell eligibility in the first semester, and first-generation students. SMU hopes to sustain and improve our graduation rate of 74% in four years. We strive to achieve this rate for all students and close the existing equity gaps. We also want to close the graduation gap with our aspiration peers, which is closer to 80%.

We do not have to achieve these goals overnight but show progress over the five years of the QEP. The 2021–2022 academic year marked year one of this collective work.

FYR is a federally defined metric measuring the percentage of first-time, full-time students who return to the same institution for a second fall. It is meant to allow for apple-to-apple comparisons between different institutions or to show longitudinal progress at a single institution. SMU wants to achieve a 94% FYR rate. We currently have a five-year average of approximately 90%.

Figure 1 Differences in First Year Retention Rate

Differences in First Year Retention Rate

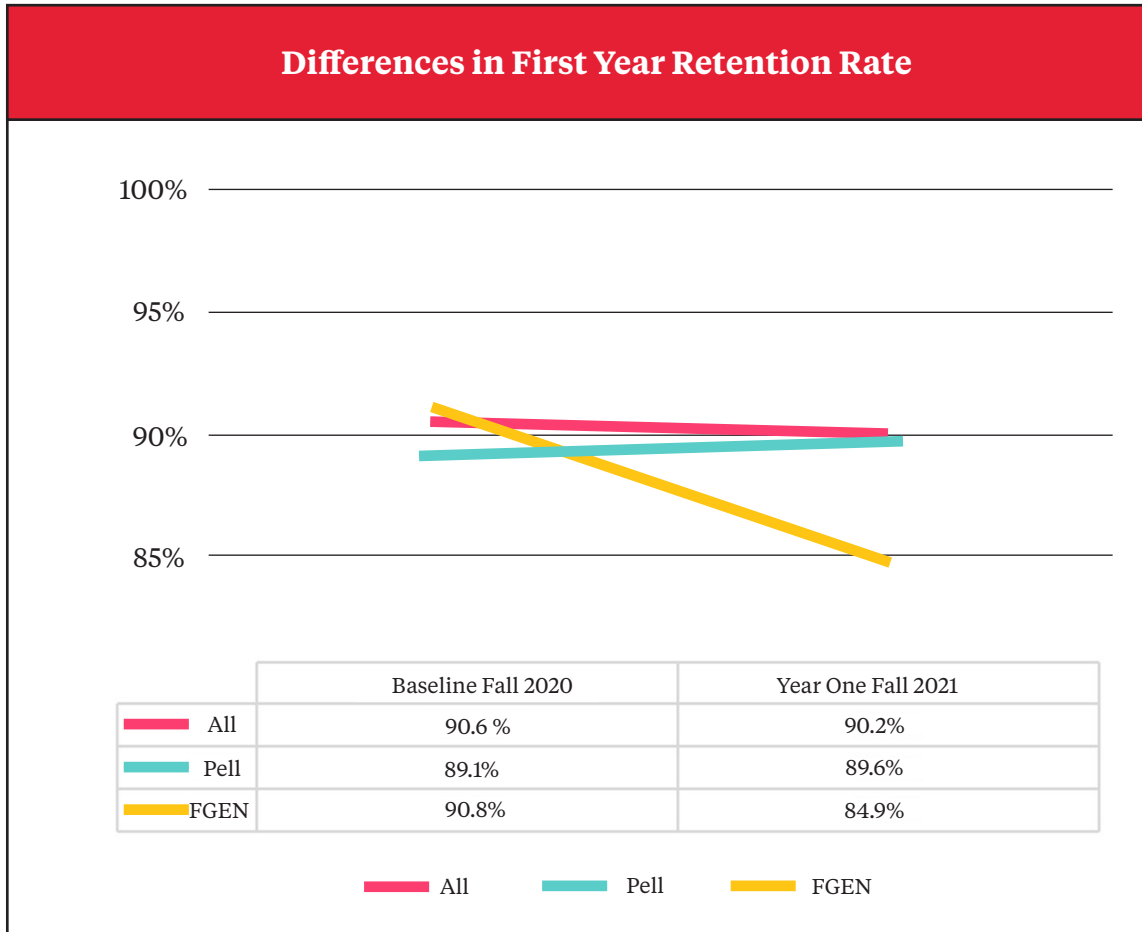|	Baseline Fall 2020	Year One Fall 2021
All	90.6 %	90.2%
Pell	89.1%	89.6%
FGEN	90.8%	84.9%

Figure 1 compares our overall FYR of 90% to the FYR rate for students who received a Pell grant in their first year (the aqua line) and for students identified as first generation during the admissions process. For the most recent cohort admitted in fall 2021, both groups have a lower FYR rate, with only 85% of first-generation students being retained. As you can see, the overall FYR declined slightly, while the FYR for first-generation college students declined substantially. Therefore, as we continue our work, we must remain diligent in closing equity gaps within our identified student populations to improve FYR (e.g., first-generation, race/ethnicity, and Pell-eligible students).

Figure 2   Differences in Four Year Graduation Rate

Differences in Four Year Graduation Rate

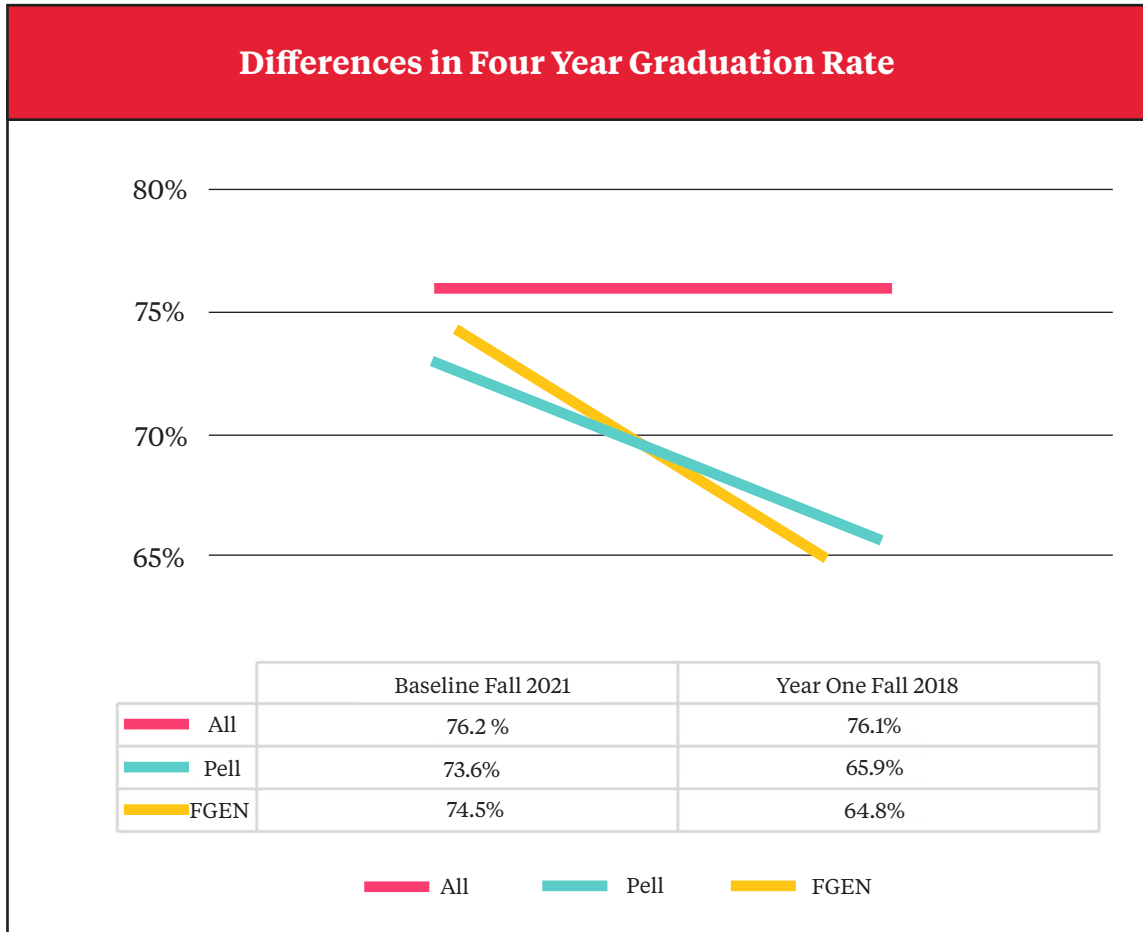|	Baseline Fall 2021	Year One Fall 2018
All	76.2 %	76.1%
Pell	73.6%	65.9%
FGEN	74.5%	64.8%

Legend: All   Pell   FGEN

Figure 2 illustrates the four-year graduation rate for all first-time, full-time students enrolled at SMU. The overall graduation rate was maintained at 76%; however, the four-year rate for Pell and first-generation students was lower for both cohorts, those admitted in 2017 and 2018, but the gap widened considerably for the 2018 cohort. The 2018 cohort experienced three semesters of interrupted academic coursework due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and students with fewer economic resources often struggled to maintain academic progress. Graduation rates must also remain a focus to the work of SMU in Four as equity gaps remain present in the four-year graduation rates. As noted in the goals for year two, each pillar has intentionally embedded goals that will monitor, explore, or work to minimize equity gaps present in year one and benchmark data.
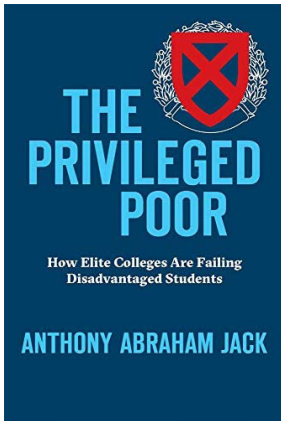
The Privileged Poor

We know that we still have more to learn about the student experience at SMU. In spring 2022, Dr. Elizabeth Loboa, provost and vice president of Academic Affairs, distributed the book *The Privileged Poor* by Dr. Anthony Jack. The research and student experience discussed in Professor Jack's book highlight why some first-generation and Pell students find it easier to navigate a school like SMU, while others struggle.

Call to Action

Reaching the SMU in Four goals takes a village. We invite the campus community to get involved in our collective work of retention and graduation. Review a few ways you can contribute to student success on the Hilltop

Getting Started

Sign Up for Blog
Subscribe for a weekly digest of SMU in Four happenings at blog.smu.edu/saes/subscribe

Goals
Get to know our goals and approach. Visit smu.edu/smuinfour

Engage in Campus Events & Activities
Periodically we offer events and activities to collect feeback or provide updates. We hope to see you there.

Volunteer Your Time
SMU in Four relies on volunteers to move our important work forward. Consider joining a pillar or team.

Roster

Year-One Roster

SMU in Four animate important efforts for student success. It relies on the contributions by a number of faculty, staff, and students. Below we enumerate members of SMU in Four during the first year of the initiative

SMU in Four Committee	Name
Advising Pillar	Josh Beaty
Advising Pillar	Prisna Virasin
Advising Pillar	Barbara Mohrle
Advising Pillar	Ellen Richmond
Advising Pillar	Nancy Skochdople
Advising Pillar	Janet Stephens
Advising Pillar	John Georges
Advising Pillar	John Easton
Advising Pillar	Randall Griffin
Advising Pillar	Laurence Winnie
Assessment Team	Molly Ellis
Assessment Team	Megan Murphy
Assessment Team	Caroline Kirschner
Assessment Team	Allison Kanny
Assessment Team	Edward Collins
Early Alert Pillar	Sue Bierman
Early Alert Pillar	Elsie Johnson
Early Alert Pillar	Dustin Grabsch
Early Alert Pillar	Lauren O'Brien
Early Alert Pillar	Don Vanewalle
Early Alert Pillar	Melissa Stanford
Faculty Steering Committee / Early Alert	Stephanie Amsel
Faculty Steering Committee / Early Alert	Brandi Stigler
Faculty Steering Committee /Advising	Scott Norris
Faculty Steering Committee	Larry Winnie
Faculty Steering Committee	Randall Griffin
Faculty Steering Committee	Don Vandewalle
Faculty Steering Committee	Brian Zoltowski
Faculty Steering Committee	Stephen Sekula

Faculty Steering Committee	Larry Winnie
Faculty Steering Committee	Randall Griffin
Faculty Steering Committee	Don Vandewalle
Faculty Steering Committee	Brian Zoltowski
Faculty Steering Committee	Stephen Sekula
Faculty Steering Committee	Stephanie Amsel
Faculty Steering Committee	Megan Murphy
Faculty Steering Committee	Elizabeth Russ
Faculty Steering Committee	Sidd Muralicharan
Faculty Steering Committee/ Technologogy	Mark Fontenton
Implementation Teams	Jim Bryan
Implementation Teams	Tom Carr
Implementation Teams	John Georges
Implementation Teams	Renee McDonald
Implementation Teams	Jie Sun
Implementation Teams	Kelyn Rola
Implementation Teams	Dick Barr
Implementation Teams	Elena Borzova
Implementation Teams	Jim Dees
Implementation Teams	Misti Compton
Implementation Teams	John Easton
Implementation Teams	Behrouz Peikari
Implementation Teams	Bruce Gnade
Implementation Teams	Kathy Hubbard
Implementation Teams	Duncan MacFarlane
Implementation Teams	Volkan Otugen
Implementation Teams	Behrouz Peikari
Implementation Teams	Dinesh Rajan
Implementation Teams	Sheila Williams
Implementation Teams	David Willis
Implementation Teams	David Sedman
Implementation Teams	Gretchen Smith
Implementation Teams	Sid Muralidharan
Implementation Teams	Corinna Nash-Wnuk

Implementation Teams	Tim Jacobbe
Implementation Teams	Megan Murphy
Implementation Teams	Marilyn Swanson
Implementation Teams	Lynn Romejko Jacobs
Implementation Teams	Don Vandewalle
Implementation Teams	Greg Sommers
Implementation Teams	Barbara Mohrle
Strategy Team	Molly Ellis
Strategy Team	Curt Herridge
Technology Team	Cassidy Porter
Technology Team	Michael Rossi
Technology Team	Bobby Lothringer
Communication Team	Sidd Muralidharan
Communication Team	Regina Moldovan
Communication Team	Beth Andresen
Communication Team	Daniel Eady

Year-Two Roster

Review members from SMU in Four for the second year of the initiative. Many of whom, are continuing on from year one

SMU in Four Committee	Name
Advising Pillar	Josh Beaty
Advising Pillar	Prisna Virasin
Advising Pillar	Barbara Mohrle
Advising Pillar	Ellen Richmond
Advising Pillar	Meghan Budig
Advising Pillar	Janet Stephens
Advising Pillar	John Georges
Advising Pillar	Megan Murphy
Advising Pillar	John Easton
Advising Pillar	Randall Griffin
Advising Pillar	Scott Norris

Advising Pillar	Scott Norris
Advising Pillar	Larry Winnie
Assessment Team	Yan Cooksey
Assessment Team	Adam Cebulski
Assessment Team	Caroline Kirschner
Early Alert Pillar	Sue Bierman
Early Alert Pillar	Adreana Julander
Early Alert Pillar	Cori Middleton
Early Alert Pillar	Lauren O'Brien
Early Alert Pillar	Jennifer Post
Early Alert Pillar	Melissa Stanford
Faculty Steering Committee	Greg Sommers
Faculty Steering Committee/Early Alert	Don Vandewalle
Faculty Steering Committee/Early Alert	Stephanie Amsel
Faculty Steering Committee	Libby Russ
Faculty Steering Committee/Early Alert	Brandi Stigler
Faculty Steering Committee/Advising	Larry Winnie
Faculty Steering Committee/FY Courses	Brian Zoltowski
Faculty Steering Committee/Advising	Randall Griffin
Faculty Steering Committee	Sid Muralidharan
Faculty Steering Committee/Advising	Megan Murphy
Faculty Steering Committee	Ginger Alford
First Year Courses	Jonathan McMichael
First Year Courses	Addy Tolliver
First Year Courses	Faye Walter
Implementation Teams	Jim Bryan
Implementation Teams	Tom Carr
Implementation Teams	John Georges
Implementation Teams	Renee McDonald
Implementation Teams	Jie Sun
Implementation Teams	Kelyn Rola
Implementation Teams	Dick Barr
Implementation Teams	Elena Borzova

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Implementation Teams	Jim Dees
Implementation Teams	Misti Compton
Implementation Teams	John Easton
Implementation Teams	Ginger Alford
Implementation Teams	Duncan MacFarlane
Implementation Teams	Volkan Otugen
Implementation Teams	Behrouz Peikari
Implementation Teams	Dinesh Rajan
Implementation Teams	Sheila Williams
Implementation Teams	David Willis
Implementation Teams	David Sedman
Implementation Teams	Gretchen Smith
Implementation Teams	Corinna Nash-Wnuk
Implementation Teams	Tim Jacobbe
Implementation Teams	Scott Davis
Implementation Teams	Marilyn Swanson
Strategy Team	Molly Ellis
Strategy Team	Dustin Grabsch
Strategy Team	Curt Herridge
Strategy Team	Sheri Kunovich
Strategy Team	Peter Moore
Strategy Team	Dayna Oscherwitz
Strategy Team	Paige Ware
Technology Team	Susan Flanagin
Technology Team	Bobby Lothringer
Technology Team	Cassidy Porter
Technology Team	Michael Rossi

Appendix

Reports

Year-One PowerPoint

SMU's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) – is the University's comprehensive approach to improving SMU's retention and four-year graduation rates. To this end, our QEP advances student academic success through its essential form: progress toward a degree. On September 28, the SMU in Four team shared updates on early-alert mechanisms, undergraduate academic advising, technology enhancements, gateway and introductory courses. Student retention and graduation numbers were also shared along with goals for year two of the five-year initiative. **View the presentation slide deck.**

Department of Economics Reports

During the first year of SMU in Four, the Department of Economics participated in the Course Redesign as part of First-Year & Gateway Course. Their year long work work culminated in two comprehensive inquiry-based reports, with detailed recommendations based on extensive discussions with departmental faculty. **View spring report. View the fall report.**

Micro-Assessment Reports (Fall)

For the fall 2021 semester, all enrolled SMU undergraduate students (n = 6,891) received an email invitation to complete the micro assessment, a two-question check-in survey as part of the SMU in Four initiative. The micro assessment is intended to capture the self-reported academic performance of respondents for the current term. The micro assessment supplements the Midterm Progress Reports (MPR). Whereas the MPR is a tool where faculty report struggling students based on deficient grades, the micro assessment enables students to receive support based on self-reported struggles with academic performance. The micro assessment is intentionally distributed around midterms and has built-in interventions to connect struggling students to SMU campus support resources. **Read the report**.

Micro-Assessment Reports (Spring)

For the Spring 2022 semester, all enrolled SMU undergraduate students (n = 6,708) received an email invitation to complete the micro-assessment, a two-question check-in survey as part of the SMU in Four initiative. The micro-assessment is intended to capture the self-reported academic performance of respondents for the current term. The micro-assessment supplements the Midterm Progress Reports (MPR).Whereas the MPR is a tool where faculty report struggling students based on deficient grades, the micro-assessment enables students to receive support based on self-reported struggles with academic performance. The micro-assessment is intentionally distributed around midterms and has built-in interventions to connect struggling students to SMU campus support resources. **Read the report**.

New Tools & Features
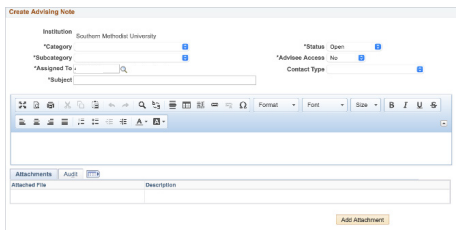
Advising Notes

In 2020, SMU implemented a new feature in People-Soft: Advising Notes. Pre-major advisors were the first to use this new tool, which solves a long-standing problem common to all SMU advisors—the inability to share student notes across offices. Advising Notes in my.SMU allows advisors to write and attach notes to a student's academic record. When other faculty advisors, degree counselors, or relevant ancillary staff want to learn more about past academic conversations and decisions, they can simply look at the student's notes in my.SMU. Every new note has the potential to benefit students in future conversations (whether with you or someone else) and helpfully documents conversations for any future questions or concerns from the student.
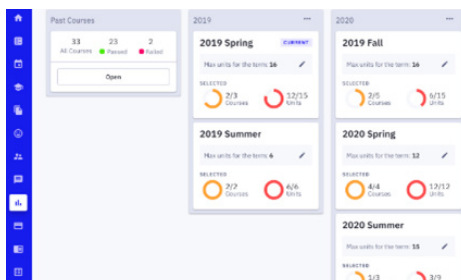

HighPoint Degree Planner

The HighPoint Degree Planner automatically helps students identify the courses they should take to graduate and shows them the sequence in which to take them. Students can explore various scenarios and see which plan fits their needs to graduate on time
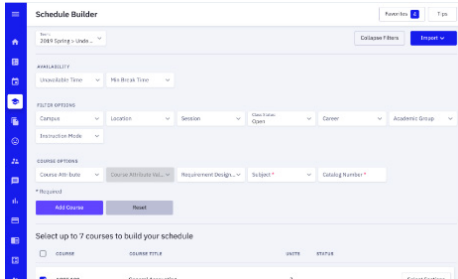
Schedule Builder

The HighPoint Schedule Builder gives students an easy way to build a perfect schedule that accommodates their lives outside of school. By granting transparency to overall availability in real time, students are able to find the right schedule to complete their degree on time.
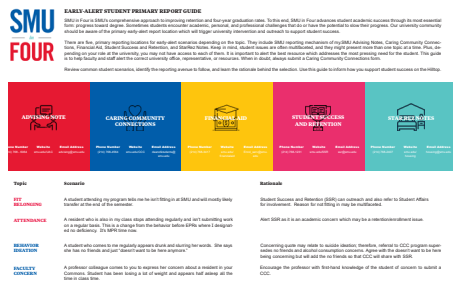
Early-Alert Student Primary Report Guide

SMU in Four is SMU's comprehensive approach to improving retention and four-year graduation rates. To this end, SMU in Four advances student academic success through its most essential form: progress toward a degree. Sometimes, students encounter academic, personal, and professional challenges that could slow their progress. Our university community should be aware of the primary early alert report location, which will trigger university intervention and outreach to support student success. There are five primary reporting locations for early-alert scenarios depending on the topic: the SMU reporting mechanism of my.SMU Advising Notes, Caring Community Connections, Financial Aid, Student Success and Retention, and StarRez Notes. Review the **guide**.

Simple Syllabus

Simple Syllabus is a centralized, template-driven platform that enables instructors to quickly personalize and publish interactive class syllabi. Syllabus creates a searchable database and eliminates the need for instructors to upload to a separate platform.

Advising Training Canvas Course

In this Canvas course, participants are able to (1) explore advising at SMU, including the structure of SMU advising and best practices for advising meetings; (2) learn about SMU degree requirements as well as academic policies, resources, and forms; and (3) practice using advising tools, such as Advising Notes and appointment scheduling software. Request the course by emailing advising@smu.edu.

Booking.SMU

LibCal, branded Booking.SMU, is a cloud-based appointment scheduling application. Booking.SMU is available to faculty and staff who provide one-on-one consulting services, such as academic advising or counseling. It is expected that all academic advisors will use Booking.SMU to schedule advising appointments at SMU. Setup your profile or book an **appointment**.

Early Progress Report

Progress grades are collected to support students' academic performance, success, and retention. Progress grades are used for advising purposes but are not recorded on the permanent academic record. As of fall 2021, early term progress grading includes all undergraduate students enrolled on the SMU main campus.

The early term progress grades are collected in September for the fall term and February for the spring term. Instructors can enter deficient grades C-, D+, D-, F, FA (failing due to poor attendance), or FT (failing due to poor testing), or indicate that the student does not currently have a deficient grade. Access the **dashboard**

Midterm Progress Report

Progress grades are collected to support students' academic performance, success, and retention. Progress grades are used for advising purposes but are not recorded on the permanent academic record. Since spring 2020, midterm progress grading has included all undergraduate students enrolled on the SMU main campus.

Data Warehouse

The purpose of the Data Warehouse is to take large amounts of data from different sources on campus and in different formats and transform it into consistent, accurate, and useful information. The goal is to enable SMU faculty and staff to access information more effectively to make better strategic, data-informed decisions. The Data Warehouse has significant data used for retention and graduation anaylsis to support SMU in Four.

DFW Dashboard

The DFW dashboard allows users to explore course DFW (final student grades of 'D', 'F', or a withdrawal) rates and counts. Users can filter by college/school, program, and student demographic variables. Access the **dashboard**

Dropout Detective
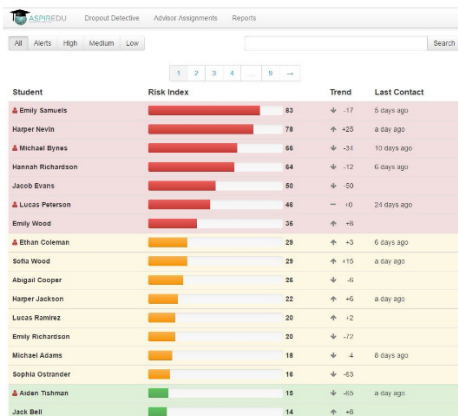
Dropout detective is a new tool inside Canvas that helps identify "at-risk" students. This robust tool can be used by administrators, advisors, and instructors to help increase student retention. The program scans Canvas and reviews grades, missing assignments, last date of attendance, and other factors that may indicate a student is at risk. A dashboard is updated each night with updated data and applies an algorithm to display a risk index that draws attention to at-risk students. Administrators, advisors, and instructors can easily click through data to get a closer look at the issues.

**World Changers
Shaped Here**

SMU

For more than 100 years, SMU has shaped minds, explored the frontiers of knowledge and fostered an entrepreneurial spirit in its eight degree-granting schools. Taking advantage of unbridled experiences on the University's beautiful campuses and SMU's relationship with Dallas – the dynamic center of one of the nation's fastest-growing regions – alumni, faculty and more than 12,000 graduate and undergraduate students become ethical leaders in their professions and communities who change the world.