



# UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

JOHN T. WILLIAMS ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
ROOM 2107  
PRINCESS ANNE, MARYLAND 21853-1299

OFFICE: (410) 651-6101  
CAMPUS: (410) 651-2200  
FAX: (410) 651-6300

October 3, 2006

Senator Ulysses Currie  
Chair, Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building, 3 West Wing  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Norman H. Conway  
Chair, House Appropriations Committee  
House Office Building, Room 121  
12 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Budget Committee Chairs:

Please find attached the University of Maryland Eastern Shore's submission relative to the use of \$1,500,000.00 allocated for Access and Success for FY 2007. As presented in the attached, these funds will be used to enhance our student retention efforts and provide access to students entering the University.

Should you have questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me or Dr. Ronnie Holden at 410-651-6230.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thelma B. Thompson".

Thelma B. Thompson, Ph.D.  
President

cc: Dr. Ronnie Holden  
Ms. Keshia Cheeks



**UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE**  
**Princess Anne, Maryland 21853**  
**ACCESS AND SUCCESS PROJECT**  
**2006 – 2007**

**Overview**

The mission of the Office of Retention (Access and Success) is to establish and maintain a successful relationship with students from recruitment through graduation. In order to foster this relationship, the importance of retention must be a priority in every service provided and every supported or sponsored activity. The success of students is paramount and business practices, policies and procedures as well as customer service must reflect a commitment to student-centeredness.

The Office of Retention (Access and Success) is organizationally structured to enhance every area on campus. Staffs are strategically employed in the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Life and Enrollment Management to support, and in some instances, create initiatives that will assist in the retention of every student.

High-risk students have a major impact on student retention at UMES. Higher than normal attrition rates affect the long-term academic curricula of the institution and the ability to plan effectively. A considerable number of the students enrolled at UMES are first-generation and/or from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The endowed funds at the University are not sufficient enough to bridge the gap between a student's ability to pay and the amount received in financial aid. Additionally, many of these students do not arrive at the University with strong academic preparation or study habits which will lead to success.

All of the above factors make it imperative for continued funding and other resources to be available to assist in meeting the challenging needs of these students. Students are more likely to persist to graduation in educational settings that provide clear and consistent expectations regarding institutional requirements, demonstrate effective advising about the choices students have about their programs of study and future career goals, and foster expectations that they will succeed academically, socially and personally.

**Access and Success Activities 2006 – 2007**

The on-going activities listed below will be conducted during the 2006 – 2007 academic year.

<b>Ongoing Activities</b>	
Math Courses—5 days/week	Enrollment 101
Reading, Writing & Math Study Skills	Intrusive Interventions
GRE Test Preparation	Academic Probation Interventions
Discipline Specific Tutoring	Academic Dismissal Interventions
Early Alert Program for At-Risk Students	Financial Aid Probation Intervention
Attendance Monitoring	Peer Mentoring in First-Year Courses
First-Year Experience Courses	Learning Communities

## **Enrollment 101**

The purpose of enrollment periods is to provide an opportunity for first-time students to access University services which will enhance their matriculation. These services include, but are not limited to, Noel-Levitz survey, photo ID, campus mailbox assignment, registration, placement testing, academic advising, and course scheduling. The intent is to complete all of these activities prior to the period of time designated for Orientation. The Orientation period, then, enables the UMES family to embrace first-time students and share with them the true meaning of matriculation at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. During 2006-2007 these sessions will commence prior to graduation in May and will end on July 31, 2007.

## **Intrusive Interventions**

The importance of intrusive interventions (advising) of at-risk college and university students (i.e., students who: are ethnic minorities, are academically disadvantaged, have disabilities, are of low socioeconomic status, and are probationary students) has been repeatedly emphasized in the professional literature. These strategies are typically used with at-risk students, and are special techniques based on prescriptive, developmental, and integrated models. Training of college and university advisors include the need for a comprehensive plan that addresses intrusive advising, adequate faculty and advisor training, web supports for targeted students, development of comprehensive databases for managing student data, and ongoing research to evaluate intervention effectiveness. All of the above has been accomplished and the interventions are currently on-going.

## **Academic Probation Intervention**

Academic Probation is an area where students who have a cumulative G.P.A. of less than 2.0 are monitored very closely. Students are placed on probation the first time the cumulative G.P.A. falls below the 2.0 mark. If the G.P.A. has not improved by the end of that next semester the student is academically dismissed. The students are contacted by email, phone calls, postal mail and classroom visits. Each of these communications offers the student a chance to meet with an advisor and set goals to be accomplished by the end of the semester.

One of the ways the probation students can be compliant to the program is by going to mandatory tutoring. This is a mechanism set up for the student to meet with their tutor three or more times a week. The tutors are students who have received a cumulative G.P.A. of 3.0 or better. They are a positive influence to the students they help and some become friends in the process. The tutoring program in Retention also works with Student Support Services to make sure every student has the most beneficial plan of action.

Retention also offers assistance to academic departments by helping with attendance issues. When a student fails to appear to class more than two times in a two week period, that student is contacted through our office by the same means mentioned earlier: postal mail, email, phone calls, etc.

## **Academic Dismissal Intervention**

Academic Dismissal Intervention is a two prong approach to insuring that a student whose GPA has fallen below University standards is assisted in their efforts to regain the academic momentum needed to proceed to graduation. Students readmitted to the university are assigned a probationary counselor and tutors as needed. Those students who are in their second semester of probationary status are also assigned counselors to insure maximum academic assistance.

### **Financial Aid Probation Intervention**

In the financial aid department we no longer wait for the student to contact us. We meet students where they are and that may mean postcards, letters, e-mails, telephone calls, etc. We remind our students that we care, but we are also holding them accountable for their futures. We therefore insure that we speak to and meet with every student on financial aid probation to insure that they know that we are actively aware of their situation.

Students who maintain contact with personnel at UMES are more likely to persist to graduation. For that reason, while students on financial aid probation are being contacted by personnel in the Office of Student Financial Aid, students on academic probation are being contacted by the Office of Retention and students who are on probation for both are being contacted by the New Student Advising Office. Additionally, one-to-one interventions allow students to view individuals in a more positive light and students who have positive feelings about their experiences share those feelings to influence others.

### **Peer Mentoring in First-Year Courses**

Mentors, selected for this project, are third or fourth-year students chosen through a selection committee. This committee will choose about 20 to 30 mentors, and will also create a large support network of faculty, administrators and staff members. The mentors will meet with these students in their first year experience course and at other times in the resident halls, or student union, additionally the program will consist of a scheduled mixture of one-on-one meetings and group events.

The program helps first-year (high risk) students with the transition into University life, and hopefully builds a series of close, nurturing relationships" between mentors and first year students.

### **Learning Communities**

A learning community is a social structure, which "purposefully restructures the curriculum to link together courses or course work so that students find greater coherence in what they are learning as well as increased intellectual interaction with faculty and fellow students" (Gabelnick, 1990 p. 5). It usually involves some combination of collaborative and active learning, team teaching, and interdisciplinary themes or approaches. Essentially, a learning community is "any one of a variety of curricular structures that link together existing courses--or restructure the curricular material entirely--so that students have opportunities for deeper understanding and integration of the material they are learning, and more interaction with one another and their teachers as fellow participants in the learning enterprise" (Gabelnick, 1990 p. 19).

Learning communities provide students with an opportunity to meet others who share common classes, which in turn "allows students to feel comfortable in those classes and enables them to build a network with peers that then functions as both an academic and social support system by providing study partners, sources of class notes, and help with homework, and class assignments" (Tinto, et al., 1993, p. 18). Clustering students to form learning communities allows faculty to: teach students college-survival and text processing skills; provide enrichment and accelerated instruction in selected courses; provide adjunct or supplemental instruction congruent with specific course content, lecture, and objectives; help students build personal communities around shared academic interests, and train students to study cooperatively, to become a support network for one another, that is, to become partners-in-learning (McEady-Gillead, 1992, p. 4).

Learning communities are seen as especially appropriate for lower division general education courses and for freshman. In essence, they "fundamentally restructure the curriculum and the time and space of students" (Smith 1993, pp. 32-33).

We have taken a cohort of incoming students that were admitted as conditional. These students were assigned classes together. Each student was scheduled to a first year experience course linked to an English and math course. We have also taken six groups of students based on their major and housing assignment and created additional learning communities for incoming freshmen using the same three course assignments. This three course combination constitutes the current learning community.

### **Desired Outcomes**

1. To improve computer-assisted tutorials in the Access and Success Reading, Writing and Math labs.
2. To provide alternative support modes to supplement traditional one-to-one and small group tutorial sessions.
3. To continue to provide mediated computer instruction for students needing Math 101 for five days per week.
4. To provide peer tutors for the majority of the math, science and general education courses and to provide peer tutors for 90% of the academic departments.

### **Projected Outcomes**

1. Student participation in the alternative support modes will increase the pass rate in the courses for which tutorial support was provided.
2. At least 75% of the students enrolled in Math 101 (5 days/week) will successfully complete the course with a "C" or better.
3. Pass rate for students receiving peer tutors in the academic departments will be 80% or better.
4. 75% of the students on academic probation will revert to academic good standing or no less than remaining on probation.

### **Access and Success Initiatives and Personnel**

#### **❖ Lecturers (11) - \$601,353**

UMES has experienced a faculty to student ratio as high as 22 to 1. It is currently 16 to 1. Recognizing the level of students served by this institution, it is the University's objective to reduce this ratio to 14 to 1. These faculty members will be teaching in the departments of English and Modern Languages, Math and Computer Sciences and the Natural Sciences.

#### **❖ Retention Counselor/Advisor (3) – \$207,094**

Each student identified as "at-risk" is assigned a counselor/advisor whose responsibilities included providing guidance to students for the successful completion of the first year, identifying, addressing and providing interventions for the retention of students from the

freshman-to-sophomore year and maintaining precise records to accurately reflect the academic and non-academic performance and behaviors of the counselees.

❖ **Probation Specialist - \$44,549**

Using data from the end of the spring semester to determine which students would be on probation for the up-coming fall semester, the Probation Specialist facilitates academic advisement, tutoring, counseling and overall monitoring for success. Identified students are contacted via postal mail, e-mail and telephone to report to the Office of Retention for services. Upon reporting, students are referred to and then monitored for the appropriate services.

❖ **Academic Coordinator - \$54,404**

Each Academic Retention Advisor works closely with the Academic Coordinator to monitor grades at midterm and finals. Additionally, the Academic Coordinator facilitates the registration and scheduling process, monitors changes in majors to ensure appropriate and timely linkages to advisors, monitors time to degree completion and coordinates hands-on training as necessary for advisors, faculty, staff and students as necessary.

❖ **Advising Coordinators and Support Staff - \$325,532**

In conjunction with the Title III activity entitled “Enhancing New Student Advising”, Access and Success is designed to enhance the advising services to first-time matriculants at UMES. In conjunction with Academic Affairs, the New Student Advising Office provides hands-on assistance to students on the use of the on-line student registration system as well as guidance in selecting courses appropriate to their skill levels.

❖ **Peer Tutors and Mediated-Learning Math Laboratory Assistants and supplies and materials- \$267,068**

Through Access and Success funding, tutors are employed to provide specialized academic assistance throughout the semester. These peer tutors provide tutoring in the Retention Office, within various academic departments and in the residence halls. They also work collaboratively with the peer tutors in Academic Support. Their availability and areas of expertise are widely advertised throughout the campus.

Students who test into Math for five (5) days per week as a result of the Accuplacer placement exam are required to attend classes in the Office of Retention Math Lab. Math lab assistants and peer tutors provide intensive hands-on academic support and study skills assistance. Students whose placement scores indicate higher-level skills in math have the option to take Math classes either two (2) or three (3) days per week.

## **Results**

In academic year 2002-2003 the established goal for the Access and Success Program as reported to MHEC was that the program at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore would achieve an annual return rate of 80% for the first time full time freshman cohort entering the institution in the fall of 2003. We also indicated that we would increase the annual return rate by two percent (2%) each year for the first time full time freshman cohort entering the university in the fall 2000, 2001 and 2003.

- I. The cohort used to determine the effectiveness of the Access and Success efforts are those deemed academically at risk as determined by the Noel Levitz Survey. This portion of the survey is scored between 1-99 with students scoring 65 and above being considered academically at risk. These cohorts, beginning with those entering in the fall of 2000, are reflected in Table I below.

**Table I**  
**Retention Rate of Academically at Risk Cohort**

<b>Fall 2000</b>	<b>Fall 2001</b>	<b>Fall 2002</b>	<b>Fall 2003</b>	<b>Fall 2004</b>	<b>Fall 2005</b>	<b>Degree Completion</b>
<b>Entering Cohort N = 158</b>	N = 119 <b>75.30%</b>	N = 97 <b>61.40%</b>	N = 89 <b>56.30%</b>	N = 47 <b>29.80%</b>	N = 14 <b>0.09%</b>	N = 64 <b>41%</b>
	<b>Entering Cohort N = 339</b>	N = 257 <b>75.80%</b>	N = 229 <b>68%</b>	N = 190 <b>56.10%</b>	N = 99 <b>29.20%</b>	N = 103 <b>30.40%</b>
		<b>Entering Cohort N = 298</b>	N = 267 <b>89.60%</b>	N = 191 <b>64.10%</b>	N = 166 <b>55.70%</b>	
			<b>Entering Cohort N = 253</b>	N = 210 <b>83%</b>	N = 151 <b>59.70%</b>	
				<b>Entering Cohort N = 343</b>	N = 272 <b>79.30%</b>	

- a. The students entering in the fall of 2000 were administered the Noel Levitz Survey. Of the 458 students taking the test 158 were identified as the cohort for Access and Success. In the fall of 2001, 119 of the 158 identified students returned to the university. This number represents 75.3% of the original cohort. Following this cohort longitudinally, we have determined that 61% returned in the fall of 2002; 56.3% returned for the fall of 2003; and 29.8% returned for the fall of 2004. As of the fall of 2005 (5<sup>th</sup> year) 64 students – 41% of this cohort had received their degrees.
  - b. During the fall of 2001, 766 students were administered the survey and 339 students were identified as the “at risk” cohort. Of the cohort 257 students or 75.5% returned for the fall of 2002; 229 students or 68% returned during the fall of 2003; 190 students or 56.1% returned for fall of 2004; 99 students or 29.2% returned for fall 2005 and (4<sup>th</sup> year) 103 or 30.4% received their degrees in spring 2005.
  - c. During the fall of 2002, 891 students were administered the survey and 298 students were identified as cohorts; 297 students or 89.6% of this group returned for the fall 2003; 191 students or 64.1% returned for the fall 2004 and 166 students or 55.7% returned for the fall 2005.
  - d. During the fall of 2003, 712 student were administered the survey and 253 were identified as at risk. Of the at risk group 210 or 83% returned for the fall of 2004 and 59.7% returned for the fall of 2005.
  - e. During the fall of 2004, three hundred forty-three (343) of the 904 students administered the survey were identified as “at risk” cohorts, 272 of this cohort of students or 79.3% returned for the fall 2005.
- II. Table II below provides the comparative data of the retention and graduation rates for the University of Maryland Eastern Shore as reported to University System of Maryland Institutional Research.

**Table II**  
**University of Maryland Eastern**  
**Retention and Graduation Rates**

Cohort Year	Cohort Year	Institution of First-Time Entry						
		Retention Rates			Graduation Rates			Enrolled
		2nd Yr	3rd Yr	4th Yr	4-year	5-year	6-year	
1987	327	64%	43%	35%	8%	18%	22%	2%
1988	446	67%	48%	40%	15%	26%	30%	2%
1989	522	63%	47%	38%	10%	22%	27%	2%
1990	494	68%	49%	42%	13%	24%	29%	2%
1991	569	71%	52%	45%	13%	27%	31%	1%
1992	499	68%	52%	38%	14%	25%	29%	2%
1993	523	72%	52%	44%	18%	32%	36%	1%
1994	739	64%	48%	43%	18%	32%	36%	1%
1995	714	75%	57%	48%	22%	37%	40%	2%
1996	728	74%	59%	46%	24%	37%	41%	1%
1997	646	76%	58%	52%	26%	40%	44%	1%
1998	622	70%	55%	49%	24%	39%	43%	
1999	533	74%	57%	52%	25%	38%	41%	
2000	780	66%	54%	47%	19%	30%		
2001	1,194	71%	56%	42%	16%			
2002	918	69%	51%					
2003	951	67%						

Source: ELS and DIS files

- a. Table II reflects the retention and graduate rates of the various entering classes at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore beginning with academic year 1987. The data as presented reflect the striking difference between those students involved in the Access and Success support efforts and the entering classes as a whole.

**A. First-Time Full-time Freshmen Cohort.**

- o UMES has almost doubled its freshmen class since 1989 (from 522 to 951 – 82% increase)
- o This past fall, UMES had a larger entering class than Bowie, Coppin, Frostburg and Salisbury (N=983)
- o UMES serves a predominately African-American student body whose SAT scores generally fall between 740 and 900.

**B. Second Year Retention Rate.**

- o UMES second year retention rate has increased slightly from 69% (1989 cohort) to 73% (2003 cohort). The fact that retention increased during a time of double digit freshmen class increases is noteworthy.

**C. Four-Year Graduation Rate.**

- o Since the late 1980s there has been a gradual increase in four-year graduation rates of first-time, full-time, degree-seeking freshmen: from 11 % (1989 cohort) to 18 % (2001 cohort).
- o However, the four-year graduation rate may not be the best measure of UMES performance given the fact that many in its freshmen class need assistance transitioning to college.

**D. Six-Year Graduation Rate.**



- The institution should be particularly proud in its increase in six-year graduation rates. Approximately half of UMES freshmen graduate within six years. For the 1989 cohort, that rate was one-third.

**Table III**  
**Application and Admission Data**

	<b>FALL 2005</b>	<b>FALL 2004</b>	<b>FALL 2003</b>	<b>FALL 2002</b>	<b>FALL 2001</b>
Applicants	3540	3137	3546	3310	3177
Admits	2494	2191	2377	2372	2432
Enrollees	1049	1047	1033	1114	1185
Acceptance Rate	70.4%	69.8%	67.0%	71.6%	76.5%
Yield	42.0%	47.7%	43.4%	46.9%	48.7%

The above data indicates the application and enrollment trends for the University of Maryland Eastern Shore for the period fall 2001 through fall 2005.