In October 2011, Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SE) was one of thirteen institutions in the country to receive a Title III-Part F grant. The grant is designed to assist Native American serving, non-tribal institutions with retention and graduation rates. To maximize opportunities for transformational activities, in April of 2012 President Larry Minks created a taskforce to review the first-to-third semester retention rates and graduation rates and provide recommendations for improvements. In fall 2013, a comprehensive report was completed that included 27 separate recommendations.

**Status:** On average, SE will lose 259 first-time freshmen between their first and third semesters. This attrition has a negative impact on the student and the institution. Students who stop-out after their first year are significantly less likely to ever complete a college degree. First-time freshmen attrition costs SE approximately $528,000 in tuition and fees in the following fall term (third semester).

Current ten-year average of first-to-third semester retention: 57.5%
Southeastern Oklahoma State University 2015 goal: 66%

**Highlights of Suggestions:**

- Transform remedial activities so students can move through coursework more efficiently
- Implement a coaching/case-management approach with freshmen advisors
- Provide additional academic support in classes in which freshmen traditionally struggle
- Provide faculty development opportunities for teaching first-year students
- Formalize electronic Early Alert Report system

**Status:** According to the Educational Policy Institute, SE loses $4,623,280 annually in revenue due to overall student attrition. Students who drop out before graduation often leave with increased debt and reduced earning potential.

Current ten-year average six-year graduation rate: 30.8%
Southeastern Oklahoma State University 2015 goal: 35%

**Highlights of Suggestions:**

- Improve the “hand-off” between professional advisors and faculty advisors
- Address course closure issues in high-demand majors (bottle-neck courses)
- Implement a formalized, required mid-term grade check system
- Each major publishes a detailed, course sequence plan demonstrating how students can complete a degree in four years (assuming no major change and completing 31 hours per year)
**Conclusion:**

Retention and graduation rates will continue to have major fiscal implications. The majority of SE faculty and staff are deeply passionate about serving the students of Southeastern Oklahoma. Retention and graduation rates will increase as SE continues to fully embrace and reward excellence in teaching and student service.

**Recommendations From Report (not in priority order):**

1. Target recruitment of ACT above 23, concurrent work completed and Oklahoma’s Promise participants.
2. Connect high-school students directly with faculty in discipline.
3. Budgeting decisions mindful of positive retention impact of Honors, PLC, student work, Band/Music participation and tuition waivers.
4. Accelerate and embed remedial opportunities.
5. Formalize coaching/case-management approach to freshman advising.
6. Formalize support programs for students on probation.
7. Enforce enrollment in ORIE 1002 policy for remedial students and undecided majors.
8. Adult students and alternative admission students should start with Student Support Services.
9. Clear message from Academic Affairs that lowering DFW rates in freshman classes are important.
10. Budget support for faculty development in supporting first-year students.
11. Course design evaluation of high DFW courses.
12. Develop a cohort of faculty with specific interest in first-year students.
13. Incentivize tutoring and support in high DFW courses.
14. Address bottleneck courses.
15. All faculty to participate in Early Alert Reports.
16. Mid-term grades for each class.
17. Each department publishes detailed four-year degree completion plan.
18. Intentional faculty assignment of gateway courses.
19. Improve handoff between professional and faculty advisors.
20. Maximize enrollments of students with two-year degrees.
21. Create International student support infrastructure.
22. Outreach to students with significant hours and no degree.
23. Increase presence in North Texas.
24. SE faculty partner with two-year faculty on teaching and/or research.
25. Transfer students host their two-year faculty on campus.
26. Identify cost-effective certificate programs.
27. Create an anticipatory enrollment management taskforce.

**Status:** To meet the graduation targets established by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, SE must graduate 25 more students per year.

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**Number of Graduates in 2011-2012:** 775  
**Southeastern Oklahoma State University 2015 goal:** 875

**Highlights of Suggestions:**

- Maximize enrollment of students who have completed Associate degrees
- Create an infrastructure for international student support
- Take full advantage of population growth in North Texas
- Implement formalized outreach program for students with significant hours but no degrees
- Create faculty partnerships with two-year feeder schools
- Establish an anticipatory enrollment management task-force to analyze future economic and demographic trends impacting enrollment and numbers of graduates