CHANCE Program Strategic Plan

Your Future, Our Focus

Executive Summary

CHANCE envisions a partnership between the campus and community that provides continuous support for students wanting to earn a college degree. Research shows that the future demands a highly productive and culturally diverse workforce designed to lead the nation’s economic advancement into this century. CHANCE’s efforts attempt to reflect the global marketplace by bridging ethnic and cultural barriers, valuing individualism and differences, while capitalizing on the diverse gifts students have to offer.

CHANCE’S Mission

The guiding mission of CHANCE is to identify, recruit, admit, and assist capable students whose pre-college education has not fully enabled them to take maximum advantage of their potential and the opportunities of higher education at NIU.

Vision

To prepare and graduate students who will continue to engage in lifelong learning and demonstrate academic competence and a commitment to civic involvement.

Strategic Assumptions of the CHANCE Model

The strategic assumptions listed serve as the foundation for the development of a model that outlines the theoretical framework and foundation for working with students in the CHANCE Program. The assumptions are based on the principles expressed in the phrase “The POWER of Education”, “The POWER of NIU”.

We assume that

- Success in program initiatives builds on success of other initiatives.
- Financial resources are available to support program initiatives.
- All aspects of the strategic plan operate at a level supporting a vital and productive program.
- Success of CHANCE’s plan relies on collaboration with academic departments and faculty.
- Linkages between pre-college, campus, and professional career experiences encourage CHANCE student success.
- Institutional support is integral in attracting external resources.
• Effective collaboration with campus units is vital to ensure comprehensive services to students at all levels (i.e. Career Services, Financial Aid, Residence Life, Housing…).
• Success of CHANCE students is based on a variety of services that offer support throughout the undergraduate experience.
• Program services and resources (staff and financial) are focused on and directed to resources and support that other campus units do not provide.

**CHANCE’s Strengths and Opportunities**

Below are factors that influence the work that CHANCE does. These items are crucial to building and planning of the program’s components and focus on CHANCE strengths and opportunities.

**Strengths**

The collaborations with other departments, both academic and student life.

The diversity of the staff, their life and academic experiences.

The support system that is in place for students before they arrive at NIU and throughout their time as a student on this campus.

The monitoring of individual student academic and personal progress.

The attempt to empower students with as much knowledge and know-how to make it through their first year successfully and to carry those skills into their remaining years at NIU.

Strong Counselor relationships with students and departments on campus.

A program that promotes retention of enrolled students.

Enhancing and increasing ethnic and racial diversity on campus.

The open door policy which allows us to help all NIU “students”.

Offering alternative admission into the university.

Offering students the opportunity to strengthen their mathematics skills.

Providing under-prepared students with holistic support services in the areas of academic and personal service.

Enriching students’ first year college experience through the incorporation of a specialized UNIV courses.

Creation of an academic national honor society Chi Alpha Epsilon.
Opportunities

CHANCE has the opportunity to affect families and youth from challenging schools and neighborhoods by offering the opportunity to attend college.

Making better use of our alumni.

Collaborating with more offices on campus to provide research opportunities for students.

Making better use of technology to offer additional options for courses.

Information sharing.

Providing work opportunities for students via on campus or summer employment.

Evening and weekend programming and additional study hours for students experiencing academic challenges.

Development of more effective strategies to encourage students to attend classes regularly.

Working to build stronger relationships with academic advisors to ensure that our student’s needs are being met.

Continue to develop conferences, workshops and specialized programming.

Encourage students to seek comprehensive resources and supports.

Incorporate the use of MapWorks and other assessment to gain feedback from students regarding issues on academics, and personal experiences.

Knowledgeable CHANCE Counselors to assist students when they are struggling academically.

Perform an analysis of all programs and services offered by CHANCE to insure that the department continuously strives for, meets and/or exceed national benchmarks among comparable institutional programs.

To allow the entire university to become familiar with the mission and goals of the CHANCE Program.

Strategic Initiatives and Focal Points 2010-2020

Building on our strengths and opportunities, CHANCE has developed an action plan focusing on strategic methods that coincide with NIU’s mission. These focal points are actionable approaches that are presented in a specific timeframe. Many of the
techniques rely on the use of NIU staff, facilities, and financial support. The strategic approach acknowledges and builds on NIU and CHANCES strengths and opportunities. The essence of this strategic plan is consistent with NIU’s mission, values, and core competencies. The plan goals’ champion “The POWER of Education and The Power of NIU”.

**Strategic Goal Focus:**

- On-campus Support
- Pre-college Initiatives
- Recruitment
- First-Year Experience
- Retention and Graduation
- Career Planning and Development
- Graduate Education
- Resources
- Evaluation

**Overarching Goals and Sub-goals**

CHANCE articulates a set of goals and sub-goals that address our program’s greatest needs. The sub-goals offer meaning to the overarching goals. The goals are listed in regard to priority over a three to ten year period. We expect the goals and sub-goals proposed to come to fruition, pending the availability of resources. They are prioritized according to importance, desirability, and need.

**STRATEGIC INITIATIVES**

**PRIORITY ONE**

**GOAL 1**

*Increase On-Campus Support*

CHANCE must engage in approaches designed to increase on-campus support at all levels to support and sustain our mission.
Sub-Goal

Create a supportive campus environment where all CHANCE students feel valued by the institution.

Higher education and NIU’s future is reliant on broadening opportunities for all, especially for CHANCE students. Communicating to the campus that diversity is a central part of a students’ education will support the inclusion of all at NIU. Formalizing a top-level commitment to CHANCE supports our goals, activities and academic outcomes. This approach creates the foundation for on-campus support through education and awareness. Developing a “top down” and “bottom up” support helps us better measure success through multi-level institutional support.

Strategies

- Communicate to the University that diversity is a central part of NIU’s commitment to educating students.
- Address faculty, staff, and student perceptions regarding CHANCE students.
- Encourage recognition of CHANCE as part of the campus-wide mission and strategic plan.

The campus mission includes providing educational services to urban, non-traditional students. A supportive campus environment for all students encourages and promotes the campus community. Expanding the awareness and knowledge of differently admitted students helps students feel valued and wanted by the institution and impacts retention.

Goal 2

The First-Year Experience

CHANCE works primarily with students who are underrepresented. Students and staff are exposed to a diverse community of professionals and students through various interactions across disciplines and offices which hold diversity as a priority. By connecting our students to institutional social, cultural, and academic support during their initial entry, it encourages the enhancement of diversity by helping students to adjust to a new living environment.

Developing initiatives to enhance students’ curricular and co-curricular experiences supports and enhances the diversity of the classroom environment. These initiatives
will allow students to take command of their learning experiences so that they are more likely to participate in the classroom environment.

**Sub-Goal**

**Enhance and maintain a collaborative, supportive, and progressive learning environment within the CHANCE Program.**

**Strategies**

- Improve student academic performance.
- Structure UNIV 101 courses to maximize student learning.
- Develop academic mechanisms to address poor academic performance in difficult courses.

Creation of support mechanisms through courses such as UNIV 101 establishes a line of communication for new students early in their university experience. In many ways, this academic initiative serves as a “home base” for CHANCE’S freshmen class. Success in this area shows students how to more effectively negotiate the university environment.

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**Goal 3**

**Improving CHANCE Retention and Graduation Rates**

Creating a mechanism designed to graduate and reenroll NIU students supports the campus interest in supporting diversity. This initiative also speaks to NIU’s commitment to supporting all students through a non-traditional admissions program.

**Sub-Goal**

**Develop intrusive procedural approaches to increase student retention and graduation.**

**Strategies**

- Plan a systematic analysis of CHANCE attrition patterns to identify pockets of retention risk.
- Implement a series of approaches designed to address retention and graduation of all CHANCE students from freshmen through senior year.

This goal will ensure that potential CHANCE Program students are provided various resources that enhance the potential for academic success. Ultimately, the mission and
core-values of the university will be upheld through the implementation of this goal and the climate of the university may be viewed more favorably among CHANCE students.

**PRIORITY TWO**

**Goal 4**

*Evaluation Plan*

Regular evaluation of all CHANCE programs helps support students more effectively and models more clearly for staff and the university community clear transition points. The use of varied sources of information to increase the validity of our program efforts continues to encourage the continuation of diversity that CHANCE offers to the NIU campus.

**Sub-Goal**

*Evaluate the effectiveness of CHANCE support services.*

**Strategy**

- Identify and define appropriate qualitative and quantitative data to measure program objectives.

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**Goal 5**

*Expand Pre-College Initiatives*

Expanding pre-college initiatives supports the campuses interest in preparing students to successfully complete their first-year courses and encouraging continued enrollment for the second year.

**Sub-Goal**

*Enhance and develop pipeline programs for CHANCE students.*

**Strategies**

- Focus CHANCE resources on academic entry and continuation points.
- Plan programs that expose student to resources designed to enhance students’ intellectual and academic competence.
• Offer opportunities for pre-college students to develop effective interpersonal skills.

Using early intervention promotes student acclimation and academic success, especially for underprepared students. Research show that planned initiatives prior to full-time college matriculation support academic and social enhancement and persistence into the second year of college study.

Goal 6

Recruitment

By implementing and establishing effective recruitment strategies, the CHANCE program aims to promote the value of higher education, fulfill the university’s initiative to attract, admit, and support a diverse undergraduate population, while facilitating a successful transition in collaboration with university resources available to students.

Sub-Goal

Develop a comprehensive recruitment model designed to identify, recruit, and admit a diverse population of students through CHANCE.

Strategies

• Develop a recruitment model that fosters a seamless admissions process for CHANCE applicants.
• Recruit and admit more Latino students.

The goal and mission of CHANCE and NIU is to service a variety of students throughout the state of Illinois. Recruiting and admitting Latino students offers a rich environment for the campus community. A model to support recruitment of Latino students encourages success and enhances campus diversity. This model might include a variety of partners such as student and faculty participation in recruiting. By communicating with the Latino community and exposing students to the riches of NIU, students are guaranteed a much better "institutional fit".

Goal 7

Securing Resources
Creating policies and approaches that encourage the development and use of a diversity of resources is current. Securing resources includes educational professionals in schools, associations, external sponsors, fundraising professionals, informational resources, web and on-line materials.

Sub-Goal

Enhance and develop external support for program initiatives and student scholarship support.

Strategies

- Develop a network to build financial and in-kind contributions for the CHANCE Program.
- Create a CHANCE Alumni Advisory Board.
- Develop a list of activities to engage campus and community partners.
- Research potential funding sources to support new initiatives.

This component will enhance CHANCE’s perception on and off campus. Extra resources will support office efforts to broaden student opportunities. Utilizing community and campus partners allows CHANCE to broaden their network base throughout the state of Illinois.

PRIORITY THREE

Goal 8

Career Planning and Development

This goal will ensure that CHANCE students are exposed to career development and are introduced to professional opportunities at potential diversity-sensitive work settings. Implementation of this goal upholds the mission, core-values and imperatives of the University. This goal will ultimately strengthen and extend CHANCE’s and NIU’s regional and global impact in the professional community.

Sub-Goal

Build a collaborative career development network for CHANCE students.
Strategies

- Use career education programs to strengthen student bonds with NIU.
- Create specialized career development and graduate education services to support post-college outcomes.

Research suggests that students become more mature, knowledgeable, and focused when confronted with making choices about one’s lifework. Planning and developing programs designed to enhance student skill sets in areas related to the context of work, such as workplace readiness supports a student’s need to achieve clarity about their career goals.

Goal 9

Support Graduate Education

Planning to attend graduate school can potentially put CHANCE students on a “fast-track” to a career which supports retention. This initiative will strengthen CHANCE students’ working and research relationships with department faculty.

Sub-Goal

Encourage CHANCE students to explore graduate school education.

Strategies

- Expand student knowledge of the benefits of graduate school education.
- Create value-added experiences that support student interest and preparation for graduation education.

Research indicates that student contact with faculty members encourages persistence and high educational aspirations. Students learn about the normative values of the academy and develop a bond with the institution. Student interaction with faculty also has significant positive correlation with enrollment in graduate or professional school.