“Place all students on a positive career track journey including mentoring connections with alumni.”

Our group looked at this issue and after interviews with students we developed a timeline for helping NIU students create a positive career track during their time at the university. Following the timeline are some notes based on our conversations.

**Freshman Students**

- During Orientation and Welcome Days events make sure to include opportunities for students to start learning about the university opportunities which are available to help them reach their academic goals.
- Connect students with the Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS) to get them involved in new student programs:
  - MAP-Works
  - Edible Education
  - Four Year Degree Paths
  - Financial Cents
- Connect students with Career Services so students begin their academic career becoming familiar with the office and its’ services so first contact does not begin in Senior year.
- Connect students with student mentor.
- Connect students with Alumni mentor.
- Connect student with General Education Advisor*.
- NIU personalize the Freshmen student “My NIU” pages which would highlight information new students would need to know to help with first year planning – academics, Career Services workshops, university opportunities for networking, Financial Aid info, etc…
- Community Advisors (CA’s) should have Freshman floors with academic and career information for their students.
- Those working with students have them consider becoming “Research Rookies”.
- Get students involved in Themed Learning Communities.
- University needs to identify those students who are at risk and make sure to connect them with necessary campus services.

**Sophomore Students**

- Students continue working with Office of Student Academic Success (OSAS) to continue work learned during Freshman year and enhance their understanding of the university:
  - Edible Education
  - Financial Cents
  - Four Year Degree Paths
- Students remain in contact with Career Services.
- Students remain connected with Student mentor, if he/she still on campus. If not get another new student mentor for the year.
- Continue relationship with Alumni Mentor.
First semester Sophomore students continue advising with General Education Advisor. During second semester and remainder academic career at NIU, student would then be assigned a faculty advisor from their respective major area who would meet with student at least once a semester to discuss career goals and make sure the student is taking the required courses to meet their career goals.

“My NIU” pages are updated for Sophomore students with information Sophomore students would need to know to help with planning – academics, Career Services workshops, university opportunities for networking, Financial Aid info, etc…

Junior Students

- Students would continue working with Office of Student Academic Success:
  - Four Year Degree Paths
  - Edible Education
  - Financial Cents
  - Students join REACH Program
- Students increase work with Career Services attending job fairs, internship fairs, skills on resumé writing.
- Continue work with student mentor. Some of these students may become new student mentors themselves.
- Continue connection with Alumni mentor. Alumni mentors should now be possibly providing networking opportunities for mentees and assistance with job connections, internships.
- Students continue meetings with Faculty Academic advisor who will continue guide students on path to graduation.
- “My NIU” now updated for Junior students.
- Junior students begin internships, if not already done.

Senior Students

- Students working with Office of Student Academic Success now begins to focus on preparing students for graduation, Graduate School or life after NIU:
  - Four Year Degree Paths
  - Edible Education
  - Financial Cents
  - REACH Program
  - Destination Graduation
- Students continue to work with Career Services focus on interviewing skills and setting up job interviews. Working with Career Services staff students are advised to attend more Career and Internship fairs.
- These students would not become student mentors for newer NIU students.
• Continue connection with Alumni mentor. Alumni mentors should now be possibly providing networking opportunities for mentees and assistance with job connections, internships.
• Faculty advisor/mentor continues to help students on career path guiding them towards graduation or job. They will still ensure students have taken classes to help them reach their academic and career goals.
• “My NIU” now tailored for students preparing for graduation.
• Students wrap-up their internships.
• Graduation! Graduate School! Job! Out to the Real World!

Returning Students

• Huskies Reconnect Program – Used to bring students back to NIU who left in good academic standing. When these students return to campus, make sure they follow the proposed plan from the point they left in their academic career.
• University should strive to make sure the reason why the returning student left in the first place is alleviated and does not become a reason to leave the university again in the future, if at all possible.

Transfer Students

• Make course transfers easier for students who would like to come to NIU. Set-up a standardized list of courses which would make it easier for classes to convert to NIU.
• Again these students would join the plan in their respective point in their academic career.
• Extra consideration should be made to transfer students, especially those who start classes in the Spring semester. More activities need to be hosted especially for them to give them the opportunity to feel like part of campus – Transfer Student Fair, etc. There are programs which make contact with new Freshmen students on campus during their first few weeks to check on them, could the same be done for transfer students?

Comments/Notes:

• In group member’s individual meetings, most students shared they knew nothing about the university mentoring program – more publicity needs to be done to promote this activity for NIU students.
• During our group discussions we noted that mentoring on campus often already includes multiple individuals the student may come in contact with on campus (fellow students, professors (faculty), staff, alumni) and that is why we wrote multiple advisors into the plan.
• *In advising, we found during our interviews that many students did not meet with an advisor. During our group meeting, one of our members shared their College has new students work with an advisor for 2 or 3 semesters until all of the General Education classes are completed and then once done, they begin to work with a faculty advisor who the student MUST meet with before classes can be scheduled. This meeting helps the college ensure that students are meeting with a faculty person to review career/academic goals and staying on track to graduation.

• Transfer students who come from different universities often have problems converting their credits to NIU. Making course transfers easier might make it more welcoming for students to come to campus from different schools. Community college students often have an easier time transferring credits.

Bold Futures Group
Thursday, March 20, 2014
9:30 a.m.

Group Members:

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