



University Relations

1700 Van Hise Hall, 1220 Linden Drive, Madison, WI 53706
wisconsin.edu • facebook.com/uwsystem • twitter.com/uwsystem

universityrelations@uwsa.edu or 608-263-1700

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 7, 2019

News Release

UW System enhances efforts to address achievement gaps

MADISON, Wis. – The University of Wisconsin System is enhancing its efforts to ensure student success – especially for underrepresented students of color, first-generation students, and low-income students – by expanding student advising services.

The UW System Board of Regents in December entered into a five-year contract with Education Advisory Board (EAB) to use the company's Navigate Student Success Collaborative software to improve undergraduate retention and guide students on a path toward graduation, a key goal of UW System President Ray Cross's 360 Advising initiative.

"This program holds great potential for our campuses and students," said John Robert Behling, president of the UW System Board of Regents. "We need to make sure that once students come through our doors they are provided the support necessary to succeed."

President Cross said the student-centered software will enable advisers, faculty, and student support staff to help students at risk of dropping out before graduation.

"The University of Wisconsin System is committed to student success and we've seen a record number of graduates -- including students of color," Cross said. "But like our K-12 partners, we know higher ed has yet to close race- and income-based achievement gaps. This student-centered tool will assist our efforts to ensure every student remains focused on their educational journey."

Four UW System campuses already use EAB's Navigate software to some degree: UW-Eau Claire, UW-Milwaukee, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Platteville. Now the UW System will help expand use of the program to eight other System campuses.

At UW-Milwaukee, which began working with Navigate in the 2013-14 academic year, officials say the program is a key factor in increasing the retention rate of first-year students from 68 to 74 percent.

As a national model using the system, Georgia State University increased the number of undergraduate degrees awarded by 67 percent between 2010-11 to 2016-17; degree awards for students of color and Pell grant recipients also increased.

The software leverages technology to allow advisers, student success staff, and faculty to provide more targeted, personalized, and timely support to students.

Using a system of predictive analytics based on key factors such as class attendance and performance, major status, and financial factors, UW System advisers and faculty will be able to better build effective support around students and provide them personalized guidance at key moments on the path to graduation. Students will be able to access mobile planning and career guidance tools to help them connect with campus resources, schedule meetings with advisers, and make decisions about their college goals.

The UW System acknowledges more needs to be done to address achievement gaps.

In the last 10 years, the systemwide graduation rate gap between black and white students has increased. Of black freshmen enrollees in 2001, 30.6 percent graduated in six years compared to 60.2 percent of whites, a gap of 29.6 points. Of enrollees in 2011, 31.9 percent of black freshmen graduated in six years compared to 64.5 percent of whites, a gap of 32.6 points.

Gaps also exist between all underrepresented minority groups and white students and students who qualify for Pell grants because of their low-income status and other students.

The retention rate of first-year Pell recipients in 2016 was 75.4 percent, but 83.3 percent for non-Pell recipients, for example. The retention rate for underrepresented minority students that year was 75.3 percent, but 82.1 percent among non-underrepresented minority groups.

UW System: Achievement Gap

- In the last 10 years the 6-year **graduation rate gap** between black and white students **has increased**:
 - 30.6 percent of **2001 black freshman enrollees** graduated in 6 years compared to 60.2 percent of whites, **a gap of 29.6 points**
 - 31.9 percent of **2011 black freshman enrollees** graduated in 6 years compared to 64.5 percent of whites, **a gap of 32.6 points**
- **Of freshmen enrollees in 2011**:
 - 45.9 percent of **underrepresented minorities** graduated in 6 years compared to 64.7 percent of non-underrepresented minorities
 - 51.1 percent of **Pell grant recipients** graduated in 6 years compared to 66.8 percent of non-Pell grant recipients
- The **retention rate (year 1 to year 2) gap** between black and white students **remains in double digits** despite closing slightly:
 - 65.9 percent of black freshmen in **2006** enrolled the next year compared to 75.9 percent of whites, **a gap of 13.9 points**
 - 70.1 percent of black freshmen in **2016** enrolled the next year compared to 81.8 percent of whites, **a gap of 11.7 points**
- The **retention rate gap**:
 - Widened between **Pell and non-Pell recipients**, from 6.5 points in 2006 to 7.9 points in 2016
 - Closed slightly between **underrepresented minorities and other students**, from 8 points in 2006 to 6.8 points in 2016

###

The University of Wisconsin System serves more than 170,000 students. Awarding 36,000 degrees annually, the UW System is Wisconsin's talent pipeline, putting graduates in position to increase their earning power, contribute to their communities, and make Wisconsin a better place to live. More than 80 percent of UW System graduates stay in Wisconsin five years after earning a degree. The UW System provides a 23:1 return on state investment. UW System institutions also contribute to the richness of Wisconsin's culture and economy with groundbreaking research, new companies and patents, and boundless creative intellectual energy.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Mark Pitsch, UW System
608-265-3419, mpitsch@uwsa.edu
universityrelations@uwsa.edu