



# Cleveland State University

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

**May 16, 2024**

## **RESOLUTION 2024-40**

### **APPROVAL OF ODHE COLLEGE COMPLETION PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the Ohio Department of Higher Education mandated in 2014 that each public university in the State of Ohio complete a College Completion Plan that would be approved by the University Board of Trustees and submitted to the Chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education; and

**WHEREAS**, the legislation further mandated that the board of trustees of each institution of higher education update its plan at least once every two years and provide a copy of their updated plan to the Chancellor upon adoption; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cleveland State University developed and implemented a College Completion Plan in 2014 through a joint effort led by the Provost's Office involving both the university administration and faculty; and

**WHEREAS**, the Cleveland State University has reviewed the progress in student success since the original CSU College Completion Plan was adopted in 2014; and

**WHEREAS**, the University set completion goals for 2022 to 2024, and outlined strategies to reach the new completion goals in the updated College Completion Plan, which was approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, the Academic Affairs and Student Success Committee has reviewed the College Completion Plan as presented by the University Administration and recommends full Board approval:

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Cleveland State University Board of Trustees approves the 2024 College Completion Plan.



## College Completion Plan

May 2024

### Institutional Overview

#### Mission

Empowering Students. Creating Knowledge. Engaging Communities. Shaping Our World.

#### Vision

We will be a nationally recognized and student-focused public research institution that provides accessible, affordable, and Engaged Learning opportunities for all. We will be both:

- An anchor institution for Northeast Ohio, recognized for cutting-edge research, creative activity, and innovative collaborations that drive economic development and enrich the lives of our students and citizens, and;
- A beacon institution whose vitality attracts diverse and talented students, faculty, and staff from within and outside the region, thereby enhancing our distinctive and inclusive living, learning, and working environments.

## **Barriers to Persistence and Completion**

### **Student Characteristics**

Cleveland State University serves a dynamic and diverse population of undergraduate students. As Cleveland State draws the bulk of its students from Cuyahoga County and the surrounding counties, the economics and population dynamics of the region play a significant role in the makeup of the student body at CSU. Cleveland, OH is identified as the poorest major city in the United States (32.7% poverty rate in 2021), and Cuyahoga County's poverty rate (17.9%) is significantly higher than the poverty rate for Ohio. Over a third of CSU's undergraduate students annually receive the Pell grant, most receiving the maximum Pell award. Additionally, the institution serves a high number of transfer students and other non-traditional students.

Various academic and nonacademic barriers exist for college students with limited financial resources, and often multiple barriers are interconnected. Academic barriers are one of the main reasons low-income students struggle to graduate from high school and attend college. They need access to educational resources that more affluent students possess. Also, students may come from secondary schools that do not have a rigorous college preparatory curriculum, so they are more likely to graduate high school without being sufficiently prepared for college academically. Beyond academic challenges, low-income students are susceptible to financial pressures.

To discuss barriers to persistence and completion in 2024, mentioning the learning losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is an integral part of persistence. While CSU has taken significant steps to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on students, the virus and the economic effects of measures taken to prevent its spread have affected students' ability to succeed academically. Students have arrived at the University having experienced varying mitigation strategies while in secondary school. National research shows that learning losses in math and writing impact college success. Students have struggled to adapt to college in face-to-face and remote classroom settings.

### **Institutional Barriers**

Cleveland State University made a significant new investment in need-based aid in 2020. However, one of the most important institutional barriers to completion is the limited funding for need-based financial aid. Most Cleveland State students have significant unmet financial needs.

## Progress Toward Completion Goals for 2022-2024

Cleveland State University has made some progress toward its 2022-2024 Completion Goals. However, there are several areas where we have fallen short of our established goals. A key driver of these unachieved goals is the learning loss students have encountered because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the tables below, we report on our progress towards our goals. We are reporting both the completion data as we report to IPEDS as well as the data reported from the Higher Education Information (HEI) system.

### Completion Goals for IPEDS Cohort

2022-2024 Goal	Progress Toward Goal
6-year graduation rate for IPEDS Cohort: 54%	<p>The 6-year graduation rate for the IPEDS cohort of students who entered in Fall 2017 is <b>49%</b>. (IPEDS)</p> <p>The 6-year graduation rate for the first-time full-time cohort of students who entered the university in Fall 2017 is <b>54%</b>. (HEI)</p>
Fall-to-Fall retention for IPEDS Cohort - 77%	<p>Fall-to-Fall retention rate for the IPEDS cohort of students who entered in Fall 2022 is <b>69%</b>. (IPEDS)</p> <p>Fall-to-Fall retention rate for the first-time full-time cohort of students who entered the university in Fall 2022 is <b>70.2%</b>. (HEI)</p>
Improve the median number of hours passed in the first year from the current 28 hours to 30 hours by Spring 2024.	While this median number of hours passed had been steadily increasing until 2019-20 academic year, the number has regressed. For the Fall 2022 IPEDS Cohort, the median number of credits passed is <b>24</b> .
Improve the percentage of first-year students who complete their first semester in good academic standing from current 77.3% to 80% by the end of Fall 2023.	While this percentage of first-year students who complete their first semester in good academic standing had been steadily increasing until 2019-20 academic year, the number has regressed. For the Fall 2022 IPEDS Cohort, this number is <b>71%</b> .
Increase the percentage of students who complete 67% of the credits for which they register from the current 80.1% to 88% by Fall 2023.	While this percentage of students who complete 67% of the credits for which they register had been steadily increasing until 2019-20 academic year, the number has regressed. For the Fall 2022 IPEDS Cohort, this number is <b>70%</b> .
Increase the percentage of first year admits who take and pass either ENG 100 or ENG 101 in Fall and return for a second Fall from 74% to 80% by the end of AY 2022.	While this percentage of first year admits who take and pass either ENG 100 or ENG 101 in Fall and return for a second Fall had been steadily increasing until 2019-20 academic year, the number has regressed. For the Fall 2022 IPEDS Cohort, this number is <b>68%</b> .

### Completion Goals for Transfer Students

2022-2024 Goal	Progress Toward Goal
68% Retention for students who transfer <30 credit hours	Current retention rate for students who transfer less than 30 credit hours from another institution is <b>68.1%</b> .
80% Retention for students who transfer 30-59 credit hours	Current retention rate for students who transfer 30-59 credit hours from another institution is <b>80.8%</b> .
83% Retention for students who transfer 60+ credit hours	Current retention rate for students who transfer 60+ credit hours <b>83.1%</b> .
Reduce time to graduate for transfer students with 60+ transfer hours to 2.3 years	The time to graduate for transfer students with 60+ transfer hours has been declining, with current rate for our most recent cohort of students standing at <b>2.5</b> years.

### Revised Completion Goals for 2024-2026

#### Completion Goals for IPEDS Cohort

2024-2026 Goal
Increase the 6-year graduation rate for IPEDS Cohort entering in Fall 2019 to <b>51%</b> .
Increase Fall-to-Fall retention for IPEDS Cohort entering in Fall 2024 to <b>71%</b> .
Improve the median number of hours passed in the first year from the current 24 hours to <b>26</b> hours by Spring 2026.
Improve the percentage of first-year students who complete their first semester in good academic standing from current 71% to <b>74%</b> by the end of Fall 2025.
Increase the percentage of students who complete 67% of the credits for which they register from the current 70% to <b>73%</b> by Fall 2025.
Increase the percentage of first-year admits who take and pass either ENG 100 or ENG 101 in Fall and return for a second Fall from 68% to <b>72%</b> by Fall 2025.

#### Completion Goals for Transfer Students

2024-2026 Goal
Increase the retention rate for students who transfer <30 credit hours to <b>70%</b> .
Increase the retention rate for students who transfer 30-59 credit hours to <b>81.5%</b> .
Increase the retention rate for students who transfer 60+ credit hours to <b>84%</b> .
Reduce time to graduate for transfer students with 60+ transfer hours to <b>2.4</b> years

## Completion Strategies

CSU is undertaking various initiatives intended to continue the progress already achieved in improving retention and graduation rates for its undergraduate student population. These initiatives, along with details and status updates on past initiatives are listed in Appendix A.

## Revision of General Education at CSU to the Inquiry Core Curriculum

### Overview

The first two years of a student's experience at CSU are critical to completing their degree. Over the last two years, faculty have worked to create the new ***Inquiry Core Curriculum***. This will launch in the fall 2025. The faculty focused on developing the new core curriculum to be student-centered, relevant, and taught using inquiry-based teaching pedagogies. The core curriculum includes:

- Core competencies which include the skills every CSU student will develop through the core curriculum;
- Inquiry pathways based on student interest and resulting in a micro-credential; and
- An inquiry launch course that is subject specific and prepares student with the skills and knowledge they need to be successful.

Each of these components of the new Inquiry Core will facilitate an increase in retention each semester and result in a higher percentage of students graduating in a timely fashion.

The CSU Inquiry Core reimagines and updates the general education system at Cleveland State University. It aims to provide a foundational education for all CSU students, organized around a minimum of 36 credit hours, divided into two categories: Foundations of Inquiry and Methods of Inquiry.

Built around developing nine Core Competencies, students will complete 36 credit hours of coursework across various disciplines. Each course will engage students in exploring important questions and problems, introducing them to the methods and standards of the discipline along the way and assessing their experience with signature assignments. Inquiry Pathways provide a further opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of an important issue and strengthen a sense of community with their peers by completing three core courses around a shared theme.

### ***The Core Competencies***

A Core Curricular education should prepare all students for success in life and whatever career(s) they pursue after graduation. The Inquiry Core is designed around nine core competencies that reflect the demands of modern life and the skills most in demand among employers. With the Inquiry Core, CSU is promising that all students who complete the program will be:

1. Effective written communicators
2. Effective oral communicators
3. Critical quantitative reasoners fluent in interpreting and using data
4. Efficient and ethical consumers and creators of information
5. Sophisticated users of digital technologies
6. Professional and constructive collaborators

7. Ethically conscious and responsible decision-makers
8. Culturally aware and civically minded members of local and global communities
9. Critical and creative thinkers

Core Curriculum courses will feature a signature assignment that assesses one or more of the core competencies outlined in the new curriculum.

### *Inquiry Pathways*

A central goal of the Inquiry Core Curriculum is to help students develop the ability to assess and solve problems using diverse methods. Any student completing their core curriculum at CSU should be able to do this, but we are also introducing the option for students to complete part of their core through a series of courses investigating a similar topic or theme.

Core Curriculum courses may be included in one or more *Inquiry Pathways*. These pathways are organized around important themes and allow students to explore that theme from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Students completing at least three core courses in a single Inquiry Pathway will have that success indicated on their transcript and will be awarded a micro-credential. Not all students will be required to complete courses within a pathway; students may also take a collection of courses of their choosing as long as they meet the Core Competency requirements.

An initial set of pathways constructed by the Director of Core Curriculum based on input from faculty are 1) Environmental Sustainability, 2) Leadership, and 3) Cultural Diversity and Social Justice. In spring 2024, faculty submitted possible pathways; those pathways are being reviewed and faculty will design courses for 4 more pathways this summer. In fall 2025, students choose from seven pathways. The Core Curriculum Director will regularly review existing core curricular offerings to identify where pathways may already exist.

To provide the support necessary for faculty to learn to teach in inquiry-based ways, CSU is offering support for faculty in summer 2024 to participate in the following:

1. Create sections of an Inquiry Launch course which will replace the Introduction to University Life course (ASC 101) at CSU. The Inquiry Launch will continue to include skills students need to be successful in college, and these skills will be explicitly embedded in contextual courses that interest students.
2. Create the courses in the pathways described above as well as 4 others.
3. Participate in workshops related to teaching in inquiry-based ways and developing signature assignments.

CSU will provide further professional development for faculty in summer 2025 and the summers following to support inquiry-based teaching methods and assessment practices that support student retention.

The new Inquiry Core Curriculum will be fully in place for students to enroll in Fall 2025. Students who are yet to complete their general education requirements as of Fall 2025 will be provided advising plans that will facilitate their transition from the old general education requirements (GenEd08) to the new Inquiry Core.

### **Student Experience Project**

Alongside the professional development for faculty teaching in the Inquiry Core Curriculum, the university is participating in the Student Experience Project. The Student Experience Project (SEP) is a collaborative of university leaders, faculty, researchers, and national education organizations committed to innovative, research-based practices to increase degree attainment by building equitable learning environments and fostering a sense of belonging on campus [<https://studentexperienceproject.org>].

Supporting faculty members who participate in the inaugural phase of this project at CSU is the beginning of transforming CSU students' experience in our classrooms. In the summer and fall of 2024, CSU will launch the first SEP Learning Community of 12-15 faculty members. These faculty members will participate fully in SEP and serve as SEP leaders in spring 2025. The goal is to support over 100 faculty to participate in the SEP Learning Community in the 2024-2025 academic year. This project has been shown to increase retention rates at other universities nationwide.

### **Interdisciplinary Undergraduate Degree Pathways**

As a regional public university, Cleveland State University is committed to supporting the Northeast Ohio region in shaping the future of work. As well, we are committed to providing educational experiences that are meaningful and fulfilling to our students. In support of these commitments, we have created a new initiative to launch a group of integrated degree programs. These programs bring two different disciplines together in a carefully curated manner that provides students with a strong platform for future growth in either of these disciplines, or more importantly, at the intersection of these areas. Our programs are currently under review at the Ohio Department of Higher Education. The list of programs is presented below:

#### **Bachelor of Arts**

Criminology + Journalism  
Economics + Mathematics  
English + Computer Science  
Psychology + Design  
Sociology + Journalism

#### **Bachelor of Science**

Computer Science + Electrical Engineering  
Computer Science + Physics  
Design + Computer Science  
Mechanical Engineering + Electrical Engineering  
Mechanical Engineering + Physics  
Music + Computer Science  
Psychology + Criminology  
Engineering Tech + Technical Selling

These programs are well aligned with the state's workforce development priorities. Students are motivated to graduate with degrees that have strong relevance to the future of work. Companies want to hire graduates who can function in multidisciplinary settings.

## Workforce Development Priorities

CSU's efforts to promote college completion are linked in various ways to the University's efforts to serve the economic needs of the Northeast Ohio region. Several elements of those efforts are worthy of note.

### Cleveland Innovation District

In January 2021, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Lt. Governor Jon Husted announced the formation of the Cleveland Innovation District (CID), joining the top health care providers in Northeast Ohio, the Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, and the MetroHealth System, with the top post-secondary educational institutions in the region, Case Western Reserve University and Cleveland State University. The stated goal in the creation of the CID is "creating a pathogen center with global reach to improve the lives of millions of people and to generate more than 20,000 jobs in Ohio over 10 years." Cleveland State University's role in the CID is generating new talent in Northeast Ohio, including the conferral of 9,500+ degrees in the fields of Life Sciences and Technology over the course of the 10-year agreement. CSU has already made significant progress in attracting new students, as well as new faculty resources to the region to study in these fields. The University has awarded, to-date, 2,031 degrees in the targeted STEM/CS programs. Enrollment in these programs has increased 27% relative to 2019, and year-over-year retention of first year undergraduate and master's students has increased by eight points. Two hundred different organizations employed students in co-op/internships from the targeted programs and increase of 115% from the previous year. Eighteen new faculty and four new staff have been added to support and grow these programs.

Team NEO (Northeast Ohio), a network partner with JobsOhio, is a regional economic development organization whose work is grounded in research and outcomes through the lens of vibrancy and equity.

Team NEO partnered alongside Cleveland State University's Career Development & Exploration to present a five-part Connections to Careers workshop and certificate program for staff of Cleveland State University (CSU) predominantly from academic advising and career coaches as a professional development opportunity to inform them about the regional labor market. These workshops were based on insights from Team NEO's Aligning Opportunities report series and aligned with Team NEO's Emerging Talent Portal. As students get their information from university faculty and staff with whom they interact regularly, it is opportunistic to have staff able to relay accurate information about the labor market and in-demand career paths. These modules offer a deep dive into Northeast Ohio's most in-demand sectors.

The series was designed to first introduce participants to an overview of the Northeast Ohio regional economy, then progress to isolated information about each of the three highest-growth sectors of work in Northeast Ohio (manufacturing, I.T., and healthcare), and a closing session designed to demonstrate the integration between the larger regional economic development work and the college's work as a partner in building talent pipelines.

Roughly 40 staff members across the institution earned the certificate for Connections to Careers for Spring 2024. The intent is to offer the series again in Fall 2024, inviting more faculty and staff from across the University who did not have the opportunity to participate.

Session one: Overview of the NEO Economy	Sessions two, three and four: In-demand NEO Industries	Session five: Redesigning Career Advising
Current and future trends in the overall economy w/audience feedback survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manufacturing/IT w/skills activity</li> <li>• Healthcare w/employer panel</li> <li>• Careers for liberal arts/social sciences majors w/job description activity</li> </ul>	Discussion and activity to engage the audience to imagine a more effective career advising process where all faculty and staff assist students to careers

### Career Development Opportunities & Data to Support College Completion

Career Development & Exploration (CDE) at Cleveland State University offers forward-thinking programs and services to help all students at the University achieve their career success goals. Throughout the 2023-24 school year, we saw participation in activities across campus, employer engagement, and the number of students reaching out to increase. See the data below (accurate through March 2024). Our most well-attended events included Dress for Success and the University-Wide Career Fair, with 492 and 1001 students in attendance. The Engineering Connections Fairs also have robust attendance from the College of Engineering, with over 1000 students in attendance looking for internships, co-ops, and jobs twice per year. Programmatically, CDE is proud to have Kaplan All Access for private and free test preparation for graduate entrance exams, licensure exams, and micro-credentials to allow students to level up their skills for the future.

With individualized coaching, workshops, training, and classroom presentations across each college annually, the CDE team seeks to leverage the University to help students achieve their highest goals now and in the future, reducing or eliminating barriers to career success for our multicultural and diverse student community.

### Workforce-Focused Learning Communities

The College of Business started the Sherwin-Williams Business Learning Community in fall 2023 with 20 students, and the first cohort will complete the program at the end of Spring 2024. In March 2024, we began recruiting sophomores for the second cohort of students starting the program in Fall 2024. In addition, during the Fall 2024/Spring 2025 academic year, the College of Business will run two different learning communities for cohort one (returning Fall 23 students) and the second cohort (new sophomores to the program for Fall 24). However, both cohorts will engage with each other regarding various co-curricular events and programs. Cohort one will serve as peer mentors for cohort two students.

The Sherwin-Williams Career Accelerator Business Learning Community is an exclusive program for high-achieving second-year students studying the majors of accounting, finance, or information systems. The Career Accelerator is an opportunity for sophomores to connect their academic studies with a career connection experience with exclusive resources and shared experiences in preparing for a career after graduation while also supporting the student's academic studies in completing a Bachelor of Business Administration Degree

with a major from the following areas: accounting and finance, and a Bachelor of Science Degree with the major of information systems.

Students who participate in the Career Accelerator will have opportunities to explore career options for the majors of accounting, finance, and information systems through the Monte Ahuja College of Business and Sherwin-Williams professionals. Students will have access to resources that promote student success and personal well-being. In addition, students will have exclusive access to career engagement and mentorship opportunities within the College of Business with support from Sherwin-Williams, including participation in co-curricular activities and experiences that allow students to explore and prepare for careers that may include the completion of internships.

With financial support from JobsOhio and Sherwin-Williams Company, CSU will launch similar learning communities comprised of students majoring in Chemistry and Engineering in Fall 2024.

## Requirement for ORC 3345.81 (D)

*Provide a report prepared regarding the institution's collaboration with other institutions of higher education through an initiative of the chancellor to assist students who have some college experience, but no degree, in earning an associate degree, certificate, or credential.*

Through the Ohio College Comeback Compact (OCCC), CSU works in collaboration with the following institutions to release transcripts and forgive outstanding balances: Kent State University, The University of Akron, Youngstown State University, Stark State Community College, Cuyahoga Community College, Lakeland Community College, and Lorain County Community College. Through this pilot partnership with ITHAKA S+R, over 9,000 students have been identified as being eligible to return to school; as of Spring '24, 1,834 have been identified as compact-eligible CSU students. In addition, CSU Transfer Student Services routinely encourages current and former community college students to obtain a credential in accordance with the 2025 Ohio Educational Attainment Goal in which 65% of our population will have an associate's degree or higher. This effort also includes utilizing Reverse Transfer.

**Results:** 24 students have re-enrolled into CSU since Fall '22. 4 have graduated and we have 1 slated to graduate this semester for a total of 5.

*Provide information about the institution's efforts to assist students in attaining an associate degree, certificate, or credential while earning a bachelor's degree or using college credit transferred between institutions of higher education.*

CSU participates in two main initiatives to assist students in attaining an associate degree, certificate, or credential while earning a bachelor's degree. CSU actively works with our three main community college partners: Cuyahoga Community College, Lakeland Community College, and Lorain County Community College to support the Credit When It's Due (CWID) state program under which, twice a year, the state provides reports of potential reverse transfer candidates to schools, using the data they collect to identify students. In addition, we have dedicated arrangements in place with these same community college partners that goes beyond the CWID candidates identified by the state. CSU has a question built into the admission application that asks students if they allow us to provide transcripts to their previous schools for reverse transfer purposes. For any such student who gives permission, CSU provides transcripts to the community college and actively reaches out to students who do not provide authorization via their application to explain the benefits of sharing this information and seeking their permission. To support both of these efforts CSU sends transcripts to partner institutions 2-3 times per year.

## Requirement for ORC 3345.351

Provide the number of students “disenrolled from the state university” within the past five years who:

- Have been disenrolled for four or more semesters, including summer sessions.
- Did not complete a bachelor's degree. For community colleges, complete a degree or certificate.
- Have a grade point average of 2.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale.
- Have completed at least forty-five credit hours.

Term	Number of applicable students who have been disenrolled as of term
Summer 2019	78
Fall 2019	232
Spring 2020	269
Summer 2020	73
Fall 2020	233
Spring 2021	344
Summer 2021	92
Fall 2021	229
Spring 2022	351
Summer 2022	62
Fall 2022	191
	2154

Describe the plan and timeline used to contact students meeting the preceding criteria who are eligible or close to being eligible to receive an associate degree.

As of census date in each term, we will create a report that lists all students who have been disenrolled in each of the preceding four terms. These students will be sent communications to clearly indicate that they are eligible or close to eligible to receive an associate degree. As well, for students who disenroll after completing 90 or more credits, we will provide communication to clearly indicate what they will need to do in order to receive a bachelor’s degree.

Provide the number of students contacted, and number of students who received a degree or reenrolled.

None at this point. We will begin this outreach to students in Summer 2024.

## Appendix A – Completion Strategies

### Completion Strategies Focused on First-Year Students and General Student Population

#### Advising External Program Review

In Spring 2022, CSU worked with NACADA, the National Academic Advising Association, to initiate an external program review of CSU's advising policies and structure. The program review consisted of data collection/review, stakeholder interviews, and group feedback sessions. NACADA delivered five recommended changes for CSU to consider:

1. Focus resources on making the CSU organizational model work more effectively and efficiently to achieve student success goals.
2. Create an Academic Advising Committee that reports to the Provost.
3. Create a unified advising identity that aligns with the NACADA Pillars of Academic Advising.
4. Commit funding to hiring additional academic advisors to meet advising needs.
5. Invest in those who engage in academic advising at CSU.

#### Increase Success in First-Year Mathematics Courses

**Precalculus Mathematics:** Students whose degree program requires calculus, but who are not calculus ready as deemed by the placement test, begin their mathematics coursework in MTH 167 (Precalculus I). With funding from the National Science Foundation Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation in STEM (LSAMP) and internal funding, CSU's Operation STEM program recruits 35 students for a two-week summer bridge program that provides mathematics review, study skill training, campus orientation, and STEM career information. Additionally, in the fall and spring semesters, ALL students taking Precalculus I & II are instructed with mandatory supplemental instruction lead by student peers (STEM Peer Teachers).

**Calculus Mathematics:** For students whose degree program requires calculus and who place into Calculus I (MTH 181), CSU has replicated the efforts described above for precalculus. With funding from an NSF LSAMP grant and internal funding, CSU runs a 40-student summer bridge program.

#### Intrusive Advising for First-Year Students with Early Warning System/Student Retention Software

CSU has implemented a pro-active, developmental, holistic, and relational advising model for all first-year students to provide close monitoring as they transition to University, to facilitate communication between students and advisors, and to allow faculty to warn advisors about students having academic problems before the appearance of midterm or final grades. They are supported by a student early alert and retention software system (Starfish) that allows students to make appointments with advisors online, promotes communication among advisors, professors, student support systems, and students, and provides a place for easy storage and communication of notes about student progress. The system also enables faculty to raise early "flags" regarding students who are not attending consistently or have academic difficulty and prompts advisors to intervene with flagged students. Advising and early alert systems are regularly assessed to determine changes and improvements needed to provide optimal student services and support.

### **Support for Academic Success in Entry-level Courses**

We will expand offerings into other STEM disciplines by expanding on successful efforts in the Tutoring and Academic Success Center (TASC) and the Mathematics Learning Center that provide tutoring, supplemental instruction, embedded tutoring, and academic success coaching. Rebranded the Student Success HUB, and with initial funding from the Cleveland Innovation District grant from JobsOhio, we will expand similar services for introductory biology, chemistry, and physics courses needed by all STEM students.

### **Ohio Strong Start in Science (OhioSSS)**

CSU will participate in the grant-funded, statewide *Strong Start in Science* Program to increase the percentage of students who complete college-level requirements in biology and chemistry. This is built on the successful (and ongoing) efforts of the state-supported *Strong Start to Finish* program, which developed corequisite coursework in first-year writing, mathematics, and statistics.

### **Digitized degree mapping tools to track student progress towards graduation**

A "best practice" adopted by many universities involves tracking student progress on degree maps. Advisors (and students themselves) monitor student progress by reviewing the completion of semester-by-semester degree maps that specify what courses students should complete each semester. When a student fails to complete critical courses or strays from the degree map and takes courses that are not specified, this can be an early indicator that the student is losing momentum or is 'off track.' A digitized degree map allows for the easy, early identification of such students so that advisors and other support staff can intervene to assist. CSU currently lacks a digitized degree mapping tool; the goal is to identify the best available degree mapping tool and implement it by the end of the academic year 2024-25.

### **Viking Reboot**

A new course titled "Viking Reboot" addresses a subset of students who fall out of good academic standing after their first semester: students whose cumulative GPA falls between 1.5 and 1.99 (165 in Spring 2022). Only 42% of students in this GPA range from Fall 2021 are back for Fall 2022. UNI 102 support and repeat course options will allow these students to progress toward their degrees. We aim to increase their retention rate by at least 15% and have them finish the Spring semester in good academic standing (GPA above 2.0). Our first offering was Spring 23, and we saw a 20% increase in students who achieved good academic standing at the end of Spring 23. A similar section is underway in Spring 24.

### **No Record Policy**

A new policy of grade forgiveness for freshman students and transfer students with fewer than 30 credit hours has been recommended for implementation pending a final approval from the Faculty Senate. Under this policy, students who receive a D or F grade, or those who withdraw from a course in their first semester will have the option for this D/F/W grade to be excluded from their GPA calculation. The grade will still be recorded in the internal systems and will be visible to advisors. However, the D/F/W grade will not impact the student's GPA. This is intended to have a positive impact on student success by providing students with a second chance. The student will still need to repeat the same course, or another course to meet the same curricular requirement, at a future point to meet

requirements for graduation. Additionally, a student taking a 'no record' in a course will receive additional advising help to ensure that the circumstances leading to the original D/F/W grade can be mitigated when repeating the course in a subsequent term. This strategy has proved effective in other institutions where it has been deployed, and we are hopeful that this will help us retain more students. The new policy will be implemented by Fall 2024.

### **Campus Assessment Response and Evaluation (CARE)**

The CARE Team is a multidisciplinary group of campus professionals working proactively and collaboratively to respond to campus community concerns. The CARE Team is committed to improving campus safety and student success by proactively and collaboratively managing situations and individuals that pose, or may reasonably pose, a threat to the safety and wellbeing of the campus community. The team coordinates with students, faculty, staff, and concerned others, using objective and thoughtful approaches to identifying, assessing, and intervening with individuals of concern. The CARE Team serves as the primary centralized location for receiving, triaging, and reviewing reports about concerning behavior.

- **Education:** The CARE Team is responsible for providing education and guidance to faculty, staff, and students regarding threatening behavior or behaviors disturbing or disruptive to the campus community.
- **Intervention:** The team is also responsible for establishing procedures to identify risk and threat, assess for risk and threat, and determine the appropriate means of intervention and action.
- **Prevention:** The CARE Team focuses on early identification and intervention of at-risk students to prevent health and safety emergencies on campus.

### **Completion Strategies Focused on Transfer Students and General Student Population**

#### **Equity Transfer Initiative**

Cleveland State University has partnered with our two largest community college partners, Cuyahoga Community College and Lorain County Community College, in the 2-year Equity Transfer Initiative led by the American Association of Community Colleges. The Equity Transfer Initiative aims "to advance transfer pathways and align them to increase transfer and completion for underrepresented student populations." As part of the initiative, CSU and its partners have identified ten total pathway programs in various in-demand fields to highlight and facilitate improved transfer rates between institutions. Program initiatives have included improved coordination between senior leadership in addressing transfer equity, streamlined pathways between associate's and bachelor's degrees, improved advising, and joint visit days for prospective students.

#### **Mandatory Orientation for transfer students**

To ensure a successful transition and awareness of available resources. Currently, orientation for transfer students is optional, so at least some students enroll at CSU with no introduction to the University and its services and facilities. This increases the likelihood that they will not be engaged with the University and will not seek help or know where to seek help if they encounter academic or other problems.

## *Enhanced Completion Strategies focused on Target Student Populations*

### **Graduation Success Coaching**

Our model for Graduation Success Coaching for small cohorts of students has proven successful in getting students the resources and guidance they need to manage their time at CSU. Given this success, we have looked at ways to disseminate this model to other Division of Student Belonging and Success offices. This year, our CARE, TRIO, and Disability and Testing Services programs began integrating best practices from Graduation Success Coaching into their regular processes. Such practices ensure that students have extra support and a personal connection to a staff member. This approach, which is the theme of the Division of Student Belonging and Success, will lead to lasting and impactful connections during a student's time at CSU.

### **The Sullivan Deckard Scholarship Opportunity Program**

The Sullivan-Deckard Scholarship Opportunity Program allows youth aged out of foster care to pursue an undergraduate degree. Support for the program provides guidance, tuition, housing support, and work-study opportunities for students matriculating into the University and aging out of foster care. The program provides a holistic approach, offering students guidance, economic security, academic coaching, and emotional support throughout their college careers.

### **TRIO/Student Support Services**

The Student Support Services (SSS) Program is one of 8 TRIO-funded programs offered through the U.S. Department of Education. It has been part of the Cleveland State University campus for over 50 years. The TRIO/SSS program is designed to help first-generation college and low-income students progress toward graduation. TRIO program provides opportunities for academic development, assists with basic college requirements, and motivates students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education. Student Support Services (SSS) projects may also aid current SSS participants receiving Federal Pell Grants. The goal of the SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants.

### **ReConnect to College**

A partnership with College Now Greater Cleveland and supported by a grant from APLU/USU the ReConnect to College program provides outreach to “stop-out” students to encourage them to complete their degrees. The program focuses on removing financial and academic barriers to degree completion.

### **Degrees when Due**

Degrees When Due (DWD) is a state- and nation-wide initiative that conducts outreach to former students with some credits earned but no degree. The aim is to get them to reengage with CSU and return to complete their degree. The national sponsor is the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP). Our local partner on re-engagement activities is College Now Greater Cleveland.

### **Pathways for Adult Students**

CSU has taken several important steps to ensure that adult students have easy access to efficient pathways to graduation. CSU has in place several mechanisms by which adult students obtain credit for prior experience. For Veterans, CSU honors ACE recommendations for awarding credit to veterans and CSU staff are trained in reading joint services transcripts for the purposes of determining whether credits can be awarded. Veterans (and others) can also earn credit through the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and DSST exams. Credit by exam options available on campus have been inventoried and are now listed on a single, easily located web resource on CSU's website. Veterans (and others) can also receive credit for prior experience by enrolling in a portfolio assessment program in the College of Urban Affairs. A goal for the future is to expand portfolio assessment to programs outside Urban Affairs. Beyond that, however, CSU has been actively collaborating with community colleges in the region to develop efficient pathways for transfer students. CSU offers several BA and BS programs on site at Lakeland and Lorain County Community Colleges, eliminating the need for students to commute to the main downtown campus. In addition, CSU has worked with Cuyahoga Community College to develop aligned degree maps showing students how they can complete an associate and bachelor's degree in eight full-time semesters (thereby reducing excess credit hours taken by transfer students). More than twenty aligned degree maps have been developed for CCC/CSU programs with several more in preparation. Work has also begun on a similar set of degree map alignments with Lorain County Community College and a meeting is planned to extend the work to Lakeland Community College as well.

### **Alternate Careers Course**

We created a 1-credit, letter-graded career exploration course for first year pre- and transitional nursing students who achieved below a 3.25 cumulative GPA. It occurs over an eight-week period in the middle of the spring semester. It teaches these aspiring nurses about other majors at CSU that lead to helping and healthcare type career fields. In the first year we were able to lift the first-year retention rate of this cohort by 29.3% to 69.3% and in its second year retain 65.2% of this population. We are expanding this model for a similar course for pre-engineering students who struggle with their mathematics courses in their first term.

### **CSU Living Learning Community**

The CSU Living Learning Communities (LLC) program ensures free on-campus housing, academic support, mentoring services, and additional wrap-around support services to CMSD graduates studying at CSU who receive Say Yes to Education scholarships. The LLC uses strengths-based practices to identify and confirm the educational pathway that best suits its strengths. In addition, career exploration, leadership development, motivation and self-efficacious practices, and additional student success topics will inform their community and facilitate critical thinking about how these values manifest in the residential community, on campus, and globally.

### **Revised Collection Threshold Strategy**

In-house collections staff works one-on-one with students who continue to have an unpaid balance but a desire to continue academically. Students can continue academically while rehabilitating their financial status with the University. Individual monitoring has allowed us

to remain compliant with regulations and allow approximately 1,000 students to advance yearly. The University continually evaluates national best practices related to appropriate collection strategies and impact on retention and completion.

#### **“Project Restart” Debt Forgiveness Pilot**

The University identified students in good academic standing but with an unpaid balance owed to the University to participate in a pilot that would allow students to re-enroll and forgive a portion of their delinquent balance by meeting academic and financial thresholds. The pilot was deemed successful as total student debt was not increased and the University received new revenue in exchange for a modest amount of debt forgiveness. Plans are in place to continue this program beyond the pilot year.

#### **Veteran and Military Success Center (VMSSC)**

The VMSSC supports veteran and military-connected community as they pursue their higher education goals. Student veterans are one of the most diverse populations along with many being first-generation college students. We utilize a holistic approach to this support as we understand transition and reintegration from the military back into the community has many complexities and each student’s circumstances are unique. Our staff work with our students on an individual basis to navigate the education benefits process from admission to graduation.

#### **Disability and Testing Services (ODTS)**

The ODTS is charged with providing services to students with disabilities and engages CSU’s diverse community to ensure all aspects of the University experiences are accessible. ODTS also provides resources and supports for exams and assessments at CSU. We partner to facilitate access by removing barriers through accommodations and services which empower and support students with disabilities. There are over 10,000 students registered to receive accommodations in a wide variety of areas of the campus experience. The office works to determine eligibility for accommodations, engages in an interactive process, while also supporting testing administration initiatives for select campus partners. ODTS acts as a resource to educate the campus community on the disability experience, valuing disability as a form of diversity and the importance of equity.