



# **The Link between Data and Policy**

## **Dispelling Campus Myths about Timely Graduation**

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# Outline of Presentation

- Context
- Role of Institutional Research
- Information Collected
- Guiding Principles
- Recommendations
- 12 months later



# Background

- Visibility of graduation rates - *College Results Online*
- Continuing quest to improve quality of educational experience – *DEEP*
- HLC recommendation to raise admissions standards



# Role of Institutional Research

- Staff task force
- Compile and analyze data
- Link data and policy
- Monitor for improvements



# Information Collected

- Cultural Context
- Student Behavior
- Courses
- Institutional Practices and Policies



## Information Collected *Cultural Context*

- University messages and actions inconsistent
- KU traditions emphasize student flexibility
  - *“ease into college life”*
  - *“time to explore”*
- Costs associated with additional semesters not well understood



## Information Collected *Student Behavior*

- Average student course load declined from 14.7 credit hours in Fall 1982 to 13.4 credit hours in Fall 2004
- Initial course load during students' first semester sets a pattern for subsequent semesters



## Information Collected *Courses*

- Between 20% and 30% of first-time, first-year students do not successfully complete freshmen math courses
- Remedial math
  - enrolls 1,000 students each fall
  - around 300 students (30%) do not pass the course



# Information Collected

## *Institutional Practices & Policies*

- Graduation expectations not consistently communicated
  - advisors, faculty, administrators
  - program materials, speeches, brochures
- Some rules and guidelines not consistently enforced
- Some policies enable longer times to graduation



## Task Force Guiding Principles

1. KU expects and encourages timely graduation. Practices need to reinforce this principle.
2. Policies and practices need to encourage timely graduation.
3. A consistent message that graduation in four years is attainable.



# Guiding Principle 1

## Recommendations

- Set minimum enrollment of 15 hours
- Students must declare major by 60 hours
- Contact new frosh with math ACT of 18 or lower and recommend taking equivalent math course prior to enrollment at KU
- Develop standardized institutional policies for drops and withdrawals



## Guiding Principle 2 Recommendations

- Enforce existing policies of continuous math and English enrollment
- Check and enforce prerequisites
- Limit number of repeat applications to professional schools



## Guiding Principle 3 Recommendations

- Advising philosophy and practices should align with graduation goals
- Adopt “expectations setting” language of encouraging on-time graduation
- All publications should support timely graduation



## 12 months later ...

- Conversations with advisors/front line staff about importance of timely graduation ongoing
- Average course load for first-time, full-time students
  - essentially unchanged between Fall 2005 and 2006.
  - increased by almost 3% between Spring 2005 and 2006
- Task force formed in Spring 2006 to examine higher admissions standards
- Impact of recommendation to take remedial math prior to enrolling at KU known in Summer 2006
- Policy changes to drop/withdrawal policy approved by University Governance for Fall 2006



# Additional Information

Task Force Report:

[http://www.ku.edu/~oirp/GIF/  
GIF\\_TaskForceReport\\_090205.pdf](http://www.ku.edu/~oirp/GIF/GIF_TaskForceReport_090205.pdf)

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