Bowie State University
Institutional Achievement Gap Report
2014 - 2015 Report

I.   Institutional Definition of the Achievement Gap

Bowie State University defined the achievement gap as the difference in graduation rates between African-American first-time, full-time degree-seeking freshmen at the University and all students in the USM.

II.   Trends in Retention and Graduation Rates for Selected Subgroups (see page 7)

III.   FY 2014 Initiative Summary and Assessment

The following initiatives were undertaken to assist in closing the achievement gap for Bowie State University for FY 2014. Many of these initiatives began after fall 2009 thus making it difficult to have an impact on earlier cohorts. While the graduation rate data for the 2006-2008 cohorts are disappointing, trends in the 2009 – 2013 cohort show increases in retention, progression and completion rates and reflect the efforts of the programs outlined below.

Bulldog Academy: The Bulldog Academy (BDA) is a 4-week residential academic program designed to provide a "jump start" towards a college education for a first-time freshman. Students are given the opportunity to earn up to 7 credits in English and mathematics.

Students live in campus residence halls Monday – Friday during July. In addition to taking English and mathematics classes, Bulldog Academy students become familiar with student support services including tutoring centers, and career and counseling services. English classes incorporated assignments using the Writing Center. Mandatory residence hall tutoring sessions are conducted on Monday - Thursday evenings. Study sessions are lead by peer tutors who are assigned to each Bulldog Academy class. Feedback from the participants revealed that the tutors were knowledgeable and very helpful during the tutoring sessions.

Prior to summer 2013, enrollment in Bulldog ranged between 8 and 35 students. In FY 2014, the University received Enhancement Funds to expand the BDA program.   Enhancement Funds were used to hire more faculty, peer mentors and other personnel to support summer 2013 BDA students, to off-set costs related to housing, and to partially fund scholarships.

Of the 122 summer 2013 BDA students, 42 percent placed into developmental English (N=51) and 84 percent placed into developmental math (N=103). Of those in developmental courses, 61 percent passed developmental English (N=31) and 60 percent passed developmental math (N=62). Of those placing into credit level classes, 61 percent passed English (43 of 71) and 95 percent passed credit math (18 of 19).

All of the BDA students enrolled for the fall 2013 semester. The BDA summer 2013 cohort represented 20 percent of the fall 2013 freshmen class. At the end of AY 2013-2014, 76 percent (91 out of 120) of these students had a cumulative GPA of 2.0 or higher. Seventy three percent were retrained to the fall 2014 semester. Generally, BDA students earn more credits their first year than all freshmen, have comparable end of first-year GPA and are retained at similar rates as all first-time freshmen.

Beginning with BDA 2013, the University included an institutional scholarship for the following academic year as an additional incentive for students to enroll and successfully complete BDA coursework. If a BDA student successfully passed both their English and mathematics course, they were awarded a $1,250 institutional scholarship. Eighty four of the 120 BDA 2013 student enrolled in the fall 2013 term were awarded these scholarships.

Academic Advising Center: The Bowie State University Academic Advising Center (AAC) provides advising services to first and second year students with the exceptions of the following majors: Nursing, Social Work, Computer Science and English. These departments provide all academic advising services to their majors. The AAC is committed to assisting students in identifying and completing their educational goals.

The AAC set goals for FY 2014 that are aligned with the University's Strategic Plan. Steps taken to maintain a high quality advising program included advisor training on university graduation requirements and policies, new student publications explaining graduation requirements, maintain current information on academic support services, integrating iCAN (Starfish) scheduling, progress plans and early alert capabilities into standard advising sessions and student training on iCAN to monitor progress and schedule appointments with AAC. The unit continues to refine its processes for advising new students with a mix of group and individual advising and registration sessions. Collaborative activities are ongoing with enrollment management, testing services, academic departments, retention coordinators, career development center and student support services.

AAC also incorporated various institutional assessment activities into the freshmen seminar course (FRSE 101) including the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement, iSkills and Proficiency Profile. Several FRSE 101 sections piloted an internally developed information literacy and technology learning module designed to give students an early introduction to these concepts. Freshmen and sophomore milestones and a general education check list are now standard tools during advising. AAC and the Office of Planning, Analysis and Accountability have established several student monitoring reports to identify students at risk upon entry to the University, at midterm and at the end of the semester. These reports have enabled AAC to provide targeted student interventions described below.

A culture of continuous improvement is now in place within AAC. Student satisfaction with advising activities are collected during peak advising times and changes are made to the advising process based upon this feedback. Reports from iCAN give real-time information to the AAC Director who can make adjustments to staffing and workload. Student usage of iCAN increased in areas of scheduling appointments and in monitoring milestones.

Emerging Learners Program: The Emerging Learners Program (ELP) was initially developed in FY 2013 by the AAC. This program focused on second semester freshmen who fell below 2.0 GPA after one semester at BSU. ELP identified students are sent a letter strongly encouraging their participation in a two-part program. After evaluating the initial program structure, the Emerging Learners Program evolved into a contract program format, where students contract to

participate. Participants agree to attend meetings, attend a mandatory workshop presented by the Library staff on dissecting and understanding a course syllabus, and agree to attend three online workshops on Student Lingo.

Academic Recovery Program - The AAC revised the KEEP (Knowledge Enriched through Educational Performance) program, into the Academic Recovery Program (ARP). ARP serves students who fall below 2.0 GPA after two semesters at BSU. The program works closely with Financial Aid and Residential Life to insure continuance of housing and financial aid for the following year after probation. To participate in ARP students must sign a partnership agreement, which mandates they go to tutoring, attend a specified number of workshops and visit with an Academic Advisor three times during the semester they are in recovery. The program is designed to provide a full-service support system for students on academic probation. It is anticipated that the positive results from the KEEP program will continue in ARP. ARP is similar to the Rebound Program sponsored by upper division retention coordinators.

Disability Support Services: Disability Support Services (DSS) continues to expand the number of students served. DSS is comprised of 2 full-time staff professionals and a part-time tutor. DSS had 135 students registered with the office to receive accommodations in FY 2014. DSS is supporting students with documented learning disabilities (33%), ADD or ADHD (16%) and other needs (51%).

Retention Coordinators: During FY 2014, the Retention Coordinators (Academic Affairs) and the Transition and Retention Specialist (Student Affairs) worked collaboratively to shift the focus from retaining "at-risk" students to promoting student success both academically and socially. This resulted in the development of the Virtual Office of Student Success. The Office of Student Success (OSS) offers support services designed to increase persistence to graduation for undergraduate students. The team created the OSS webpage as the primary resource hub. This webpage provides an overview of services offered, a student referral process, access to student leadership opportunities, and lists term related Deans' List recipients and honor society inductees.

The Office of Student Success developed and implemented strategies for improving student outcomes such as the Assist program to help students with a minimum 2.0 GPA increase to a 3.0 or above. The Assist program supported 12 students fall 2013 and 15 students spring 2014. Ninety percent achieved a semester GPA of 3.0 or better during the 2013-2014 academic year. The OSS continued the Rebound program which assists upper division undergraduate students on academic warning or probation to improve their academic achievement. The Rebound program supported 21 students fall 2013 and 19 students spring 2014. Eighty percent of fall 2013 and 88 percent of spring 2014 participants transitioned to good academic status after this intervention. In addition, the number of Rebound eligible academic warning and probation students has decreased from 219 for the 2012-2013 academic year to 180 for the 2013-2014 academic year.

The OSS conducted over 900 student appointments during the 2013-2014 academic year. Students met with OSS members for academic advising/planning, academic warning and

probation, academic support, career development, change of major, counseling, employment, financial aid, general assistance, housing, personal development, re-admittance, scholarships, and transfer evaluations. The Office also assisted 80 students to successfully have their appeals granted to regain federal student aid for the 2013-2014 academic year.

In addition to outreach, the OSS hosted programs and events to enhance the academic and social progress of students. This includes an Interview Clinic for graduating seniors, Career Days and Graduate School Fairs for Business, Child and Adolescent Studies, Criminal Justice, Education, Psychology, and Social Work majors, and the Student Success Workshop Series. The OSS also assisted with the University Major and Minor Fair in collaboration with the Academic Advisement Center and the Career Development Center. The OSS provided services to over 800 students through these programs and events held during the 2013-2014 academic year.

The team initiated the College Ambassadors Program (CAP) during FY 2014. CAP is a highly selective program for undergraduate students who exemplify academic success in their majors to represent their college at various programs including New Student Orientation and Open Houses. OSST has recruited 19 students to represent the four undergraduate colleges as Student Ambassadors for the 2014-2015 academic year. These students have participated in the summer 2014 orientation sessions for incoming freshmen to help acclimate these students to college life and to become successful students.

Increasing Need Based and Academic Scholarships: Institutional funding for need-based and academic scholarships increased 36 percent between FY 2012 and FY 2014. Trends in institutional aid are below.

	Fiscal Year					
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Institutional Need-based Aid	1,849,309	1,776,563	1,866,953	1,928,794	2,081,501	3,079,128
Other Institutional Scholarships	1,480,668	2,349,502	2,153,239	2,095,034	2,389,284	2,409,954

Tutoring Services: The University maintains three tutoring centers as well as online tutoring to support student success. Bowie State University's English/Writing and Mathematics laboratories are focused primarily on students taking developmental mathematics, English and reading courses but also assist others in college-level classes. The Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction Program offers both individual and group tutoring sessions in the following content areas: biology, chemistry, computer science and technology, English, French, mathematics, physics, physical sciences and Spanish. SMARTHINKING is available 24/7/365 providing assistance in English, writing, mathematics and STEM disciplines.

During FY 2014, the Mathematic Lab collaborated with several departments which offer statistics courses to increase communication and to understand course expectations. This dialog has enabled tutors to better prepare for the questions and obstacles that students experience in class. Additional tutor training was provided to meet the growing demand for academic support in statistics and calculus I & II. This training enabled tutors to offer statistics and calculus group

tutoring sessions two to three times a week, and periodically on weekends.

The Smith Vidal Literacy and Language Center (Writing Center) functions as a support service for students enrolled in writing intensive courses. Although the Writing Center primarily offers one-on-one tutoring, the center increasingly accommodates requests for group tutorials, in-class orientations, in-class writing workshops, and assignment development consultations.

The Writing Center had 12,177 student visits in FY 2014, a 33% increase over FY 2013. The majority of the students tutored were underclassmen (43% freshman and 20% sophomores). The work of the Center increased this year by supporting 65 non-native speakers and 18 graduate students. Students most frequently sought help for courses offered by the College of Arts and Sciences. English 102 was the most frequently supported course. In total, the Center supported 85 different courses across all departments with the exception of Mathematics.

The Writing Center hosted and/or collaborated on a total of 41 workshops. The Center lead 14 workshops with a total of 131 students and University employees in attendance. Staff members also visited 27 classrooms or events to advertise services and provide workshops. Smith Vidal collaborated with the History department, the Composition Committee, Golden Key, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning, Human Resources, and English faculty members on our workshops.

Building on the accomplishments of the previous year, the Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction Program (TuSIP) concentrated its efforts on the provision of academic support to STEM students through group study sessions while remaining committed to supporting all BSU students. Experienced tutors were hired in order to preserve the quality of the tutoring services. Like FY 2013, TuSIP strived to increase the use of its services. To that end, more than 20 tutors were hired and conducted over 3600 tutoring sessions. A total of 911 students received assistance in many of the courses offered at BSU. Of these, 389 were STEM students. The overall result of the impact of tutoring on students' performance has been highly positive, particularly on the DFW courses. For example, 66% of those who received help in ENGL 101 passed the class. So did 77% of those who received assistance in ENGL 102 and 92% of those who sought and received help in ENGL 100. Similar results were also recorded in MATH 099, where students saw their grade jump by two letters, in some cases.

Online tutoring through SMARTHINKING is also available on 24/7 basis. For the FY 2014, a total of 3,100 sessions were conducted through SMARTHINKING equivalent to 2,210 hours of student practice. While most of the assignments were for ENGL100 and ENGL101, faculty in history and government, computer science, nursing, psychology, sociology and criminal justice encouraged students to utilize SMARTHINKING before submitting written assignments. The area where students requested the most assistance was content development, followed by grammar and mechanics, introduction and conclusion, and main idea. All students can use this support service.
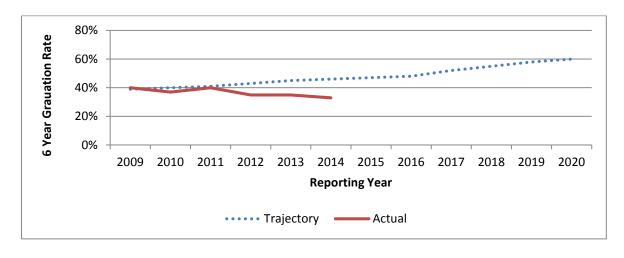
IV.   Target Group Trajectory

Six-Year Graduation Rates:
Gap Student Group vs. Student Group Comparator

	Fall											
	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
African-American First-Time, Full-Time, Degree-Seeking Students												
Cohort size	325	379	302	337	560	517	711	577	858	717	762	64
6-Year Graduation Rate	38%	38%	39%	36%	36%	41%	40%	37%	40%	35%	35%	33% *
All USM First-Time, Full-Time, Degree-Seeking Students												
Cohort size	10,040	10,589	10,521	10,766	11,796	11,421	11,518	11,736	12,379	12,479	12,893	12,945
6-Year Graduation Rate	61%	62%	61%	60%	61%	62%	62%	62%	62%	60%	62%	62% *
The Gap	23%	24%	22%	24%	25%	21%	22%	25%	22%	22%	27%	29%

*Preliminary

Note: Graduation Rates are for institution of first-time entry.

Source: IPEDS DataCenter, BSU GRS reports and USM Retention and Graduation Reports

Trends in Retention and Graduation Rates for Selected Subgroups

Bowie State University	Six-year Graduation and Retention Rates at Institutions of First-Entry													
	Fall Cohort First-Time Full Time	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
USM	6-Year Graduation Rate	62	62	62	59	60	62							
Institution's Total	6-Year Graduation Rate	40	40	38	41	35	35	33*						
	2nd Year Retention	70	73	77	71	71	69	69	71	75	71	70	74*	
	3rd Year Retention	60	60	60	56	54	57	54	59	57	57	62*		
	4th Year Retention	55	51	53	45	49	47	47	53	49	53*			
	5th Year Retention	34	35	47	30	36	34	34	40	36*				
Institution's African American	6-Year Graduation Rate	41	40	37	40	35	35	33*						
	The Gap	21	22	25	19	25	27							
	2nd Year Retention	71	74	78	72	72	70	70	71	75	72	71	75*	
	3rd Year Retention	61	62	61	56	54	57	54	59	58	58	59*		
	4th Year Retention	56	52	53	45	49	47	48	53	50	52*			
	5th Year Retention	35	36	39	32	36	34	34	43	37*				
Institution's Hispanic	6-Year Graduation Rate	NA (N<5)	23 (N=13)	33 (N=9)	36 (N=14)	25 (N=16)	36 (N=14)	22* (N=18)	(N=19)	(N=15)	(N=17)	(N=19)	(N=21)	
	2nd Year Retention		46	67	57	63	71	78	74	67	76	68	76*	
	3rd Year Retention		38	56	64	50	36	50	68	47	59	63*		
	4th Year Retention		31	56	36	50	50	39	58	27	53*			
	5th Year Retention		31	44	21	25	36	30	47	33*				
Institution's Low-income (Pell)	6-Year Graduation Rate	39	47	36	40	35	42	29*						
	2nd Year Retention	70	77	79	72	72	69	65	75	75	65	71	71*	
	3rd Year Retention	63	66	63	57	53	56	49	57	57	57	60*		
	4th Year Retention	62	56	53	45	49	46	45	51	47	52*			
	5th Year Retention	42	43	41	28	37	34	29	37	35*				

* Preliminary