Background

In July 2013, the UNC-Chapel Hill 21st Century Vision Committee on Access and Completion recommended “a focused, University-wide effort to foster a culture of success and completion for all students.” The committee also recommended that the University... establish—and within ten years achieve—the goal of leading all AAU public universities in four- and six-year graduation rates for undergraduate students by enhancing coordinated support services and by eliminating disparities in retention and graduation rates for students of all races, ethnicities, incomes, abilities, and educational backgrounds.

In January 2014, in an announcement that coincided with the White House Summit on College Access and Success, Chancellor Folt committed the University to such a campus-wide effort.

In March 2014, Provost Dean convened a working group of retention leaders from various University departments and charged them with quickly developing rough options for implementing the commitment of Chancellor Folt and the recommendations of the 21st Century Vision Committee.

Achievements in 2014-2015

- Secured funding in October 2014 for top priorities identified in March 2014.
- Offered eight additional sections of transition courses in Spring 2015.
- Created and filled four full-time student-success positions:
  - Coordinator for transition courses;
  - Coordinator for support program for first-generation-college students;
  - Learning specialist to provide academic coaching and develop training;
  - Math specialist for newly created STEM Hub in Learning Center.
- Convened a faculty group to develop training for faculty and staff in encouraging the success of all students, with the first training scheduled for Spring 2016.
- Agreed on the central principles of a call for proposals for projects that encourage schools, divisions, and departments to collaborate across administrative boundaries to strengthen student success.
- Drafted a plan to improve student-success tools and analytics over the next twelve months.
- Drafted and shared a proposed University-wide definition of student success.
• Awarded first grant to faculty member to develop new transition course that incorporates highly structured, active-learning techniques.

• Sought advice from UNC Communications and Public Affairs about a possible timeline for public messages about the initiative.

• Secured a private gift of $25,000 to fund communications with students and faculty.

Plans for 2015-2016

• Offer 26 sections of transition courses total in Fall 2015 and Spring 2016 semesters.

• Initiate project to improve student-success tools and analytics, drawing mainly on funds carried forward from 2014-2015 (September 2015).

• Develop communications plan for students and faculty (September 2015).

• Deploy improved notifications—timelier, more accurate, and more actionable—for students who are on probation or academically ineligible (December 2015).

• Finalize definition of student success (December 2015).

• Announce initiative (January 2016).

• Issue call for proposals for projects that encourage collaboration across administrative boundaries (January 2016).

• Launch faculty and staff training in student success (February 2016).

• Implement improvements in academic progress reports, making them easier for students to access and act upon and easier for faculty and advisors to use (February 2016).

• Convene staff, faculty, and students for student-success workshop (February 2016).

• Award first student-success collaboration grants (March 2016).

• Complete first phrase of student-success data analytics and reporting (May 2016).