Missouri State University’s Response to
Best Practices for Serving First-Generation Students

Based on Justin Doubleday article “10 ‘Best Practices’ for Serving First-Generation Students.”
as reported in Chronicle of Higher Education.
Oct. 24, 2013

1. Identify, actively recruit, and continually track first-generation students.

Springfield
- Access programs such as Wyman, Kauffman, College Bound, Student Transition
  Education Program (STEP) conference, and Youth Empowerment Conference.
- Partnerships with a number of two-year institutions which historically have higher
  percentages of first-generation students: MSU-West Plains, Ozarks Technical
  Community College and Crowder College.

West Plains
- Work with high school A+ Program coordinators to provide financial aid information.
- Promote the benefits of the TRiO program.

2. Bring them to the campus early.

Springfield
- Jump START (Summer Transition and Academic Readiness Training) is for students
  who are graduating from high school in the spring and do not meet traditional freshman
  admission criteria based on GPA, class rank, or test scores, to begin their college
  experience at MSU

West Plains
- Promote annual Red Carpet Days throughout the service area, as well as during recruiter
  visits outside the service area, targeting first-generation students with particular points of
  information.
3. **Focus on the distinctive features of first-generation students.**

**Springfield**
- Have plans for training for GEP 101, First-Year Foundations, and faculty and academic advisors on first-generation issues.

**West Plains**
- Continue First-Year Experience programming and monitoring through the existing Title III grant initiative, using the IDS 110 Student Success course as a key portal for identifying FG students and channeling them to campus services.

4. **Develop a variety of programs that meet students’ continuing needs.**

**Springfield**
- TRiO program
- Real LIFE default prevention program aid targets first-generation students to broaden their understanding of personal finances and how the decisions they are making now will impact their futures.

**West Plains**
- TRiO program

5. **Use mentors.**

**Springfield**
- SOAR Leaders and GEP 101 Peer Leaders serve as mentors to all students, but are being trained to identify first-generation students for additional attention.
- The College of Business has started a Corporate Mentor Program to help first-generation students and also minority students acquire and develop their “soft skills” (e.g., interpersonal skills, professionalism, etc.). The mentors are high-level business executives in their fields of interest who have volunteered to mentor a student.

**West Plains**
- STAR Leaders and IDS 110 Peer Leaders are trained for addressing students’ specific advising and campus engagement needs.
6. **Institutionalize a commitment to first-generation students.**

**Springfield**
- TRiO, Jump Start and other programming
- One of the annual Student Talent and Recognition (STAR) awards is specifically for a first-generation student.
- “Access and success for first-generation students” was a topic for discussion at the 2013 Public Affairs Conference

**West Plains**
- TRiO

7. **Build community, promote engagement, and make it fun.**

**Springfield**
- Co-curricular activities are promoted to all first-year students at SOAR, Welcome Weekend, and in GEP 101.

**West Plains**
- Maintain goal of engaging each student during the first three weeks of his or her first semester at college. Continue programming and individualized service focus in addressing the at-risk characteristics of all students coming to an open admission campus.

8. **Involve families (but keep expectations realistic).**

**Springfield**
- Partners in Education (PIE) helps address the needs of students in their freshman year by creating a partnership of students, their families, and Student Development and Public Affairs staff.
- Parent/Family Association
- Family Weekend

**West Plains**
- STAR for Parents, letters to parents/guardians of all A+ eligible students in the service area
9. **Acknowledge, and ease when possible, financial pressures.**

**Springfield**
- A key discussion/decision point.
- The Graduate College offers the Graduate Scholarship for Enhancing Diversity ([http://www.missouristate.edu/FinancialAid/scholarships/Graduate.htm](http://www.missouristate.edu/FinancialAid/scholarships/Graduate.htm)). One of the ways that students can qualify is through first-generation status.
- Three Missouri State Foundation scholarships target or give preference to first-generation students

**West Plains**
- Financial literacy curricula in IDS 110 Student Success and IDS 297 Capstone courses
- Assist students with negotiating the financial aid processes, especially the A+ Program

10. **Keep track of your successes and failures: What works and what doesn’t?**

**Springfield**
- Academic Advising
- Bear CLAW (Center for Learning and Writing) Tutoring
- First-Year Seminar (GEP 101)
- Learning Communities (Curricular and Living Learning)
- PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) – MSU’s supplemented instruction
- Service-Learning through CASL (Citizenship and Service-Learning)
- Student Orientation, Advisement, and Orientation (SOAR)
- Study Away
- TRiO
- TRANSFERmation

**West Plains**
- MapWorks™ intrusive advising
- STAR
- First-Year Experience (IDS 110 Student Success course)
- Grizzly Tutoring Lab
- Academic Advising and Coaching Center for Expanding Student Success (AACCESS)
- William and Virginia Darr Honors Program
- Online Course training for students and faculty, online course development and revision
- Ongoing learning assessment in courses, departments/divisions, and degree programs