March 2025 Reaffirmation of Accreditation Open Forum Breakout Group Responses 3/21/25

<mark>This summary is sorted by question. See the other version for the summary sorted by breakout group topic.</mark>

1. **What is something UAA has done in this area that you are proud of?**

- **Core Competencies & Persistence, Retention, Graduation**
    - First time college student numbers are coming back. The only Core Competency that isn't pretty strong - Intercultural Fluency - is trending upward significantly.
    - Proud to utilize all four competencies, seems like we've made positive progress in general, even through challenges such as COVID.
    - Adding OEC to graduation.

- **Achievement Gaps: First Generation vs Non-First Generation**
    - Consistent effort to write (and obtain) TRIO grant funding. We have ETS, Upward Bound, SSS and McNair. Note: There are 7 total TRIO grant programs that can be applied for.
    TRIO has done a great job informing students about support services at UAA, such as the Learning Commons and tutoring services, library research support, and other services.
    - Persistence from first fall to second fall - this gap has been narrowed.
    Alignment in lower course division pass rates.
    Slight increase over time in lower division pass rates, headed in right direction; post COVID first gen are catching up in this area.

- **Achievement Gaps: Pell Recipient vs Non-Pell Recipient**
    - Pell and non-Pell students are tracking similarly and sometimes Pell students exceed non-Pell recipients.
    We are good at making sure Pell eligible students qualify for other resources available.
    AK ED Grant, supplemental ed, programs, find ways to get students support they need.
    - Reduce loan debt and work with students to find resources they won't need to pay back.

- **Achievement Gaps: BIPOC vs Non-BIPOC**
    - Improvement in 1st year counseling.
    - First year experience is very intentional to ensure a smooth handoff from admission to connected to advisor (orientation, advising, enrolled into classes, connections to learning commons).

2. **What do these data tell you?** *(Note: The worksheet and survey form listed this question. The program asked, "Looking at the data, what areas of success do you see?" which some groups responded to.)*

- **Core Competencies & Persistence, Retention, Graduation**
    - With the exception of first-time, full-time persistence the data is steady. It would be better if it was trending upward, but it's not erratic.
    Nationally, one website is reporting that for four-year public institutions there is an 84.9% persistence rate. We are significantly above that and have consistently been above that.
    One thing I felt has been done well is the Student Affairs departments- Student Engagement has opportunities with leadership, career services as well as the hard work of Dean of Students office with

Care team (and much much more) which I believe is reflected in personal, professional, and community responsibility.

- o Possible major difference between associates and bachelors. Positive graduation rates. Seems like positive progress. Curious about how our dual mission identity interacts with this data, would be valuable to explore this concept more. Curious about how we compare to national rates. Intercultural fluency went up the most, but also started the lowest. Perhaps students don't know what intercultural fluency means. Curious about whether the data imply that a bachelors is a much higher commitment than an associates.
- o Nothing. There is no data. We need data around OEC programs.

- **Achievement Gaps: First Generation vs Non-First Generation**
  - o Course pass rates seem fairly similar.
    Persistence and retention does not have consistent gaps.
  - o COVID had an impact, first gen students were impacted more greatly.
    Associates degree seeking students' graduation rates are lower than bacc, rates- do these students stop out to work more than bacc.? Our assoc degree students are less able to take on the identity of a student.

- **Achievement Gaps: Pell Recipient vs Non-Pell Recipient**
  - o Lose about 10% of our Bac students in the first semester. 20% of Assoc in the first semester. 20% graduation for associates in 4 years. Superior 1 year and 1 semester persistence but graduation rate drops.
  - o Pell students persist / retention shows outperforming the non Pell recipients.
    We need more specific data that really shows program breakdowns, if students fluctuate in funding do they change full time to part time?

- **Achievement Gaps: BIPOC vs Non-BIPOC**
  - o We still have a lot of room to improve. Trends seem to be similar for BIPOC and non-BIPOC seem to go in the same direction.
  - o Persistence: AD seeking BIPOC students have a higher persistence rate than AD seeking non-BIPOC students. BD seeking BIPOC students have a lower persistence rate than BD seeking non-BIPOC students.
    Retention: AD seeking BIPOC students have had higher retention rates than AD seeking non-BIPOC students post-COVID (AY 20-21). These rates are currently converging. BD seeking BIPOC students have had higher retention rates than BD seeking non-BIPOC students post-COVID. BD seeking students remain trending higher post-COVID than among the data reported for AD seeking BIPOC students.
    Graduation: AD seeking BIPOC students have consistently lower graduation rates than AD seeking non-BIPOC students. BD seeking BIPOC students have consistently lower graduation rates than BD seeking non-BIPOC students since AY 19-20.
    Course Pass Rates Lower Division: BIPOC students consistently have lower course pass rates compared to their non-BIPOC counterparts since AY 19-20.
    Other Thoughts:
    Limitation being that no course rates for Associate DS

Persistence and retention rates are slightly closer than completion/graduation rates. We think that after the first year, our work is not as intentional.

Group comparison size might also be a limitation in these analyses.

3. **What might be some areas for improvement?**

- **Core Competencies & Persistence, Retention, Graduation**
    - o Graduation rates. How is retention and persistence so high, but graduation is so low? Is that something we need to address? Why is it?
    The transition group from year one into and through to juniors and seniors - there needs to be a focus on keeping students.
    - o Improve intercultural fluency more, seems like it would be an important one to focus on. Is there better language to use, such as cultural responsiveness or cultural interaction? Perhaps we need shared and mutually agreed upon terminology. Determine what role language plays in our understanding of what we're doing. Determine what the faculty and staff think about how they're doing in the core competencies in terms of their service to students as well as their own experience in the workplace, and how the institution is doing as a whole. We need to figure out a way to discuss this in a safe way with respect to current issues.
    - o More recognition around OEC as meeting workforce needs but also graduate level certificate programs.

- **Achievement Gaps: First Generation vs Non-First Generation**
    - o Put in grants for all TRIO funded program
    More connections between programs, departments, grants and college advising.
    Look at levels of achievement by first generation status. Does the university collect first generation status accurately and track it regularly?
    Faculty and staff training regarding bias toward first generation status, such as students from blue collar families.
    Tracking first generation student status better
    No statistical analysis about these differences
    Graduation rates are declining for all students, but especially for first generation students
    - o Supporting 1st gen associate degree seeking and part—time students with persistence

- **Achievement Gaps: Pell Recipient vs Non-Pell Recipient**
    - o Discrepancy between lower division pass rates and graduate rates.
    - o We need data according to course load, 12 credits full time? Is 15 credits? We would like more data point, information about groups, tracking students through their educational career. We need to support students better academically to get through SAP, subsistence, and provide consistent meaningful support that is individualized to each student.

- **Achievement Gaps: BIPOC vs Non-BIPOC**
    - o Graduation rates are too low. Can we replicate some of the 1st year programs and apply them to 2nd through 4th.
    - o Discuss and investigate work in 2nd year experience
    Full wrap around service especially for students past 30 credit hours

Track all students, not just FTFT - while full time is determined by credit number, the full time workload is different for different majors, and course load above full time could be different.

4. **What ideas do you have for steps the university can take to address areas in need of improvement?**

- **Core Competencies & Persistence, Retention, Graduation**
  - A problem I have noticed in my classes is that non-degree seeking students do not have advisors. There is not an advisor I can ask for help with reaching out to these students when they are struggling. Have a career component to help students understand how the breadth of their education is important. Have a one credit class that helps student connect all the elements of their classes and GERs to be able to discuss the value of their comments.
  - Hold future forums for discussing intercultural fluency. Focus groups with students about the growth in intercultural fluency and what it means to them (and what the growth says to them). Working with the student government and student clubs to help gather more information. Perhaps creative ideas of gathering data, like interactive bulletin boards, that could meet students where they are at and tease out more information.
  - Data and encourage programs to build OEC to AAS to BS and beyond.

- **Achievement Gaps: First Generation vs Non-First Generation**
  - Establish intervention team to provide wrap-around academic services for at-risk students
    Address larger problem of graduation rates… increase for all students (30% isn't great). Then, address first generation students graduation.
    Create a first generation college student advisory board or student group. (Harvard University has a group called "First Class")
    Provide a list to all students of support services and steps to access them or contact information for those areas so individuals know they can reach out to that person if they don't feel confident in the process of pursuing help. (i.e. tutoring services, library research support, etc.) - this may exist.
    Establish more accurate way to collect first generation status
    Improve data collection & analysis around first generation students - including disaggregation in different programs, disaggregation in different student characteristics, accurate student-level data, and the identification of first-generation students, statistical testing with effect size metrics - This needs to be a collaborative effort between multiple offices (including IR, admission, TRiO).
  - Childcare, paying financial holds to encourage registration in next semester, laptop loan program, technology support, more funding for laptop loan program especially in the fall semester, later start classes for students who are practicing subsistence, flexible class times such as evening, weekend, flex working schedules so office stay open later to support students in later class times, not everyone likes online courses- hybrid courses.

- **Achievement Gaps: Pell Recipient vs Non-Pell Recipient**
  - Increase dialogue amongst those teaching upper and lower division classes.
  - Provide more data, drill down to program level, students over time, what was the overall eligibility for Pell over this period of time? This time period rolls directly through COVID, what was enrollment at that time? Did it increase?

Actionable ideas were considering opportunities for SAP more specific to programs because SAP is a reason we lose students. When we don't have good relationships with students it's easy for them to fall off due to SAP.

Pull together all these initiative groups to collaborate instead of each group coming up with their own version of the wheel. We need to come together and bring the best of us forward, and collaboration and time for reflection is an important part of that process.

- **Achievement Gaps: BIPOC vs Non-BIPOC**
  - o Improved advising for 2, 3, and 4th-year students.
    Professional development for faculty and staff related to cross cultural teaching and support.
  - o Look for ways to track cohorts beyond Persistence and Retention (continuation into Jr and Sr. years)
    Look for ways to integrate behavioral/activity from other systems into one place.