



Office of Academic Affairs

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UNC Charlotte Launches Graduation Initiative

The Office of Academic Affairs announces its Graduation Initiative; a multi-step effort designed to clarify degree requirements, reduce barriers to student progression, and aid in students' ability to successfully navigate their curriculum.

At the 2014 University Convocation on August 19th, Provost Joan Lorden outlined the four components UNC Charlotte has focused on to move the needle of student retention and graduation: 1) students, 2) faculty, 3) tools, and 4) curriculum. Provost Lorden noted that over the last several years the institution has focused on providing support to students and faculty both in and out of the classroom as well as improving the tools needed by advisors, faculty, and students to track student success and degree progress. This work has resulted in the highest undergraduate retention rates in 15 years.

The final of the four components to the institution's student success efforts is a completion of upgrades to tools necessary as well as an analysis of the curriculum. The principles of the Graduation Initiative are: to guide students into the right major, to monitor student progress toward their degree completion, and to mitigate barriers to student persistence and graduation.

Components of the Graduation Initiative effort include: improved Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs and a paperless course and curriculum approval process called *Acalog* and *Curriculog*, an analysis of bottlenecks and barriers within degree programs, degree maps to notify students of the important milestones within their major, and the *Student Success Collaborative* (graduation analytics) and *Starfish* (early alert, advising appointments and record-keeping) – tools that will make it easier for advisors and students to track progress.

The Graduation Initiative will help to connect the components of students' academic experiences, streamlining information about student progress in their courses, advising appointments, and academic support across campus.

While current graduation and retention rates put us ahead of many peers, according to Provost Lorden, "...what we would really like to see is that more reach the finish line and graduate. What's more, we'd like to see them graduate in a timely manner."