II. Achieve Student Success by Increasing Matriculation, Retention and Graduation

By putting student support, engagement and success at the heart of the institution, the University will steadily and substantially improve student retention rates and four- and six-year graduation rates to reach the top tier of its peer institutions. By 2022, the University will increase enrollment significantly by improving the retention of all students, selectively growing undergraduate enrollment and doubling graduate enrollment. The University will undertake the following specific initiatives to meet these goals:

A. Create a powerful student-recruitment strategy that lays the groundwork for academic success and the professional and personal growth of its diverse students.

The University is committed to implementing a sophisticated admissions recruitment strategy to increase undergraduate and graduate student matriculation and the likelihood of retention through graduation. Such a strategy will include the following components:

- Identification of the academic and personal characteristics of those students the University can most effectively attract, retain and graduate;
- Consistent improvement of first-year undergraduate student recruitment as measured by high school grade point average and SAT scores;
- Development of a robust transfer enrollment strategy that recognizes the expectations and needs of transfer students and uses national metrics to measure their success;
- Implementation of specific enrollment recruitment efforts for graduate programs; and
- Creation of a financial aid model that includes scholarships, campus employment, assistantships and tuition remission to support the University’s enrollment and retention strategies.

B. Increase the engagement of all students at the University.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) is the leading, nationally-used instrument for measuring undergraduate student engagement. The University will use these nationally accepted metrics to better understand the factors that most affect undergraduate student satisfaction and craft initiatives to improve retention and graduation rates. The University will also develop means to reliably measure graduate student engagement and undertake appropriate initiatives to improve it on the basis of trustworthy, objective metrics. In particular, it will:

- Enhance the critical link between faculty and students and provide mechanisms to enhance educational experiences to develop students’ intellectual curiosity and talents;
- Carefully select and analyze pertinent key metrics of student-faculty engagement, including but not limited to NSSE data, from similar institutions across the country and ensure that the University takes appropriate steps to
improve its performance against these metrics;

☐ Clarify institutional student services policies and improve front-line and back-office processes to reduce bureaucratic obstacles, increase efficiency and flexibility and thereby improve student satisfaction and degree completion; and

☐ Develop feedback mechanisms to strengthen undergraduate and graduate student progress, improve retention and increase graduation rates, and systematically institute improvements.

C. Increase the availability and variety of academic support, advisement and career guidance.

The University is dedicated to ensuring all students have a full array of support services throughout their collegiate and post-baccalaureate life. Accordingly, the University will:

☐ Create an enhanced, integrated partnership among the academic units, the Career Development and Gloria S. Williams Advisement Center and Alumni Relations to develop practical internship experiences, on-campus employment experiences and networking programs;

☐ Improve the quality of advising and provide all advisors with easy access to improved information by which to track student progress and continually enhance technological support for advising; and

☐ Expand tutoring support to a broader number of students, make it more easily accessible to more students, and expand first-year learning communities.

D. Enhance student academic and intellectual engagement with faculty, student-support staff and fellow students in the classroom and through co-curricular experiences.

Engagement with other members of the university community is highly correlated with academic persistence and success. In addition, the ability to work collaboratively is critical to success in the globalized world of the 21st century. Accordingly, the University will:

☐ Ensure that students are challenged to think and act creatively about critical issues by providing guest lectures, workshops and seminars from diverse perspectives;

☐ Provide more opportunities for student group-based, collaborative coursework and develop learning communities that engage students with similar interests in an environment that fosters their academic and personal growth;

☐ Explore new ways of involving undergraduate and graduate students in faculty research and explore ways in which it can gain a strategic advantage in research;

☐ Connect students with similar academic and extra-curricular interests through
the technologies of which they make the greatest use; and

☐ Ensure that the David and Lorraine Cheng Library will be the academic information center of the University, providing a state-of-the-art “knowledge commons” with full-text electronic resources and online services.