



The “4Ps of Student Retention” framework is an integrated approach to improving rates of student retention and graduation at DePaul University. The framework includes:

- shaping the **profile** of new freshmen and transfers with a goal of improved degree completion;
- ensuring students’ initial and continuous academic **progress** toward degree completion;
- improving and integrating all **processes** and services related to student enrollment; and
- ensuring that all students’ experiences are consistent with the **promise** of DePaul’s mission, purposes and brand.

Profile

*Elevate the academic **profile** of entering student classes while keeping a mission-balanced financial and demographic mix.*

An institution’s retention and graduation rates are largely correlated to the institutional and student **profile**—as much a function of what the institution is as what it does. A comprehensive strategy recognizes that the strongest driver of retention is the student profile (academic, financial and demographic characteristics). That student profile can be reshaped in a variety of ways that are consistent with both the institution’s mission and position in the higher education marketplace.

Illustrations of **profile** strategies:

- Create new curricula (e.g., health sciences majors) to increase demand and strengthen student and market profile.
- Pilot “test-optional admission” for freshmen to focus on more retention-relevant admission criteria.
- Partner with Chicago Public Schools’ International Baccalaureate programs to increase the population of first-generation college students with particularly high retention likelihood.
- Create DePaul Admission Partnership Program (DAPP) as an alternative pathway for students lacking the academic or financial profile for direct admission.

Progress

*Ensure students’ initial academic success and continuous academic **progress** toward a DePaul degree.*

Improved retention requires a greater emphasis on cultivating, supporting and measuring student **progress** to degree completion. A comprehensive strategy addresses the curricular structures, advising practices, tuition pricing and financial aid policies that are not adequately focused on patterns and programs leading to timely degree completion. Clarifying and reinforcing optimum course scheduling and implementing a more coordinated approach to academic and financial planning also help ensure a more “future-directed” undergraduate experience focused on progress and degree completion.

Illustrations of **progress** strategies:

- Create a First-Year Academic Success program offering pre-requisite math and writing courses during the summer for no tuition or credit.
- Redesign specified “gateway” courses in math, chemistry and accounting to reduce D-F-W rates.
- Create online Academic Progress Report and increase expectations for faculty to give early feedback on students’ progress in the first quarter.
- Create degree audit systems and online Degree Progress Report for students, advisors and faculty to better map and manage students’ academic progress toward degree.



Process

*Improve and integrate all **processes** and services related to students' enrollment at DePaul.*

While there are student characteristics that are related to greater or lesser likelihood of degree completion, a comprehensive strategy addresses **processes** and policies that either help or hinder students' continuous enrollment. This strategy adopts a more systemic perspective which focuses attention on high-risk processes more than at-risk persons. Such an approach is likely to lead to improved experiences for all students, and to that extent, will have a greater impact on institution-wide retention rates.

Illustrations of **process** strategies:

- Create DePaul Central, a one-stop service center for Student Records, Financial Aid and Student Accounts transactions, including walk-in, online and phone service integration.
- Create the Office for Academic Advising Support to guide students who have not yet declared a major or are exploring new academic options.
- Create Financial Fitness, a program to assist students in the process of managing their personal financial resources while enrolled in college.
- Launch comprehensive classroom and course scheduling system to improve the capacity to offer the right courses, at the right time, in the right place to meet student demand and optimize classroom use.

Promise

*Ensure all students' expectations and experiences are consistent with the **promise** of DePaul's mission and brand.*

Students enroll at colleges and universities with expectations and aspirations that the institution will live up to its brand **promise**. The key to strategic institutional improvement is ensuring that brand promise becomes reality for each student's educational experience in and out of the classroom. This commitment elevates the need to ensure that *all* students benefit fully and equally from that brand promise, and that some populations of students—due to race, financial resources or background—are not disadvantaged in experience or outcomes. In addition, this commitment extends and connects the retention strategy more directly with institutional marketing.

Illustrations of **promise** strategies:

- Expand and enhance the Chicago Quarter program to engage freshmen in a Chicago-immersion course in the first quarter.
- Create the Junior Year Experiential Learning requirement within the general education program where all undergraduates must participate in internships, study abroad, service learning courses or independent research projects.
- Increase academic rigor and quality instruction through expanded faculty development programs and initiatives, such as the DePaul Online Teaching Series.
- Expand programs for students of color, including the STARS Program and Men of Color Initiative, to ensure all students engage fully in the academic and multicultural opportunities at DePaul.