



NEWS RELEASE

American Public University System Selected to Participate in Pilot of Gardner Institute's Gateways to Completion and Inaugural Offering of Higher Learning Commission's Academy for Student Persistence and Completion

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CHARLES TOWN, W. Va.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 5, 2013-- Please replace the release with the following corrected version due to multiple revisions.

[American Public University System](#) (APUS) today announced that it has been selected by the John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education to be one of 12 Founding Institutions for the pilot of the Institute's Gateways to Completion™ (G2C™) process. The announcement follows the recent completion of its related self-study as part of the Institute's Foundations of Excellence Program, in which APUS was the first fully-online university to participate.

Since 1999, the Gardner Institute has worked with hundreds of postsecondary institutions within the US as well as a select number of international institutions to improve undergraduate student learning, success, retention and completion rates. [Gateways to Completion](#) is a structured course transformation process that will allow APUS faculty and staff to analyze student and institutional performance in lower division gateway courses. The Institute developed the G2C process with extensive input from the 32-member [G2C National Advisory Committee](#), including Dr. Karan Powell, APUS executive vice president and provost.

By participating in the G2C pilot, APUS has agreed to focus its analysis on at least five high-risk courses, which will be identified using evidence collected during the first year of the three-year G2C process. The analysis will inform the creation of evidenced-based course transformation plans that APUS will subsequently implement.

“Gateway courses enroll large numbers of undergraduate students,” said Gardner Institute Executive VP Drew Koch. “Research studies show that students who do not succeed in gateway courses are significantly less likely to complete their stated programs of study and they are also less likely to complete college degrees anywhere.”

“Failure rates in these courses at institutions across the nation often exceed 40% to 50%,” Koch continued. “Given the connection between the completion of a postsecondary credential and both economic and personal well-being, these high failure rates are unacceptable. The nation simply cannot realize its Completion Agenda goals and institutions cannot maintain the public’s trust if they do not take decisive action to address high failure rates in gateway courses. APUS clearly recognizes the need to improve student learning and success in gateway courses. We are pleased that it will use G2C as part of its ongoing efforts to intentionally and positively address the issue.”

APUS joins 11 other G2C Founding Institutions nationwide, including: Arkansas Tech University; Ashford University; Florida International University; Kennesaw State University; Lansing Community College; Lone Star College – North Harris; Metropolitan State University – Denver; Nevada State College; North Dakota State University; University of Houston – Downtown; and the University of Rhode Island.

“The cohort’s composition shows that this is an issue that spans all of academe,” added Institute President John Gardner. “We applaud APUS for its willingness to take action on this issue. They are a true leader and innovator in the student success movement.”

APUS faculty will play a significant role in the G2C work. The plans they generate from working with their academic and student affairs colleagues will be supported with G2C predictive analytics and dashboard tools. In addition, APUS will join the other 11 G2C participating institutions at the annual G2C Community of Practice meeting and the annual [Gateway Course Experience Conference](#).

Higher Learning Commission Academy for Student Persistence and Completion

In related news, APUS also announced that it has been chosen to participate in the inaugural offering of the Higher Learning Commission’s (HLC) Academy for Student Persistence and Completion. It is included in one of six cohorts each comprising 16-20 institutions selected from among HLC members nationwide. The Academy is a national committee focused on retention and graduation of the nation’s college students. It is designed to create a “Culture of Completion” to help participating schools develop an institutional culture and enhance institutional commitment to the issue.

The primary focus of the academy will be on identifying critical issues, potentially useful approaches, and institutional cultural and demographic concerns that have an effect on retention. The Academy will coach teams from individual colleges on how to help students stay in school and graduate. Participants will link efforts with other organizations and institutions to test and compare strategies as well as accelerate current efforts underway.

“Over the last year, we have set an increasingly high bar for teaching excellence and curriculum quality,” said Dr. Powell. “The unifying element between these mission-critical goals is the student experience, both with the university and in the classroom. We’re honored to be selected to work with both the Gardner Institute and our fellow HLC member institutions in the Persistence and Completion Academy to better understand and improve the experience, learning and retention of our students.”

About American Public University System

American Public University System, winner of the Sloan Consortium's Ralph E. Gomory Award for Quality Online Education and two-time recipient of Sloan's Effective Practices Award, offers more than 90 online degree programs through American Public University and American Military University. APUS's relevant curriculum, affordability and flexibility help more than 100,000 working adults worldwide pursue degrees in a diverse variety of subjects. For further information, visit www.apus.edu.

Source: American Public University System (APUS)

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