2024-27 Strategic Plan
Year One Summary

Goal Theme 2:
Student Success
Create opportunities for all students and empower them to identify, evaluate, and achieve their goals while becoming engaged global citizens.

Introduction

Goal Theme 2 of the Fort Hays State University's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan establishes an ambitious vision for student success: to create opportunities for all students and empower them to identify, evaluate, and achieve their goals while becoming engaged global citizens. Our desired outcome of improving equitable access for all students by reducing achievement gaps between different types of students while improving overall persistence by 3% represents a fundamental commitment to educational equity and excellence.

Year One implementation of Goal 2 builds upon critical insights from two comprehensive institutional studies: the NISS Diagnostic and Playbook (commissioned by KBOR through Georgia State's National Institute for Student Success) and FHSU's Digital Master Plan (developed through collaboration with the Anthology Educational Consulting Group). These studies identified key challenges including insufficient access to student success data and an underserved online student population, while providing clear pathways for institutional improvement.

Our three-strategy approach directly addresses these findings:

- **Strategy 2.1: Actionable Data for Equitable Online Learning** implements comprehensive data systems to track and analyze disaggregated student success metrics, addressing the fundamental need for evidence-based decision making.
- **Strategy 2.2: Student Support** provides data-informed strategies to improve the online learning experience and enhance advising support, directly targeting our underserved online student population.
- **Strategy 2.3: Innovation in Course Design and Delivery** enhances student engagement across all modalities through consistent course structures and emerging technologies, benefiting learners in online, hybrid, and face-to-face environments.

The establishment of our Achievement Gap Index, benchmarked on AY '24 data using aggregate data by modality, provides the systematic framework necessary to measure progress toward our equity goals. This comprehensive approach ensures that our efforts to improve persistence rates directly correlate with reducing disparities in course completion rates, assessment outcomes, course practices, and student supports across different student populations.

The following report details our Year One achievements across these strategic priorities, demonstrating how coordinated implementation has positioned FHSU to meaningfully advance toward our 2027 goals of 62% persistence and measurable achievement gap reduction.

Strategy 2.1:

Actionable Data for Equitable Online Learning implements comprehensive data systems to track and analyze disaggregated student success metrics, addressing the fundamental need for evidence-based decision making.

Success Benchmark 1: Enhanced Data Collection and Analysis

ACHIEVED: Successfully integrated five data sources into a unified measurement framework:

- **Institutional Effectiveness:** Created dashboards comparing online vs. face-to-face student performance (Index 1)
- **Blackboard Illuminate:** Deployed course practice analytics and student engagement tracking (Index 3)
- **EAB Navigate:** Actively utilizing progress surveys and alerts for student concerns and positioned for student support service utilization monitoring (Index 4)
- **NSSE Engagement Indicators:** Tracking student-faculty interaction and collaboration metrics (Index 4)
- **AEFIS Assessment Data:** Measuring General Education assessment outcomes with >5% gap analysis (Index 2)

Success Benchmark 2: Address NISS Identified Challenges

ACHIEVED: The four indices directly address NISS-identified challenges:

DFW Rates & Success by Modality:
- Index 1 tracks course completion disparities between online and face-to-face students
- Index 2 uses AEFIS data to measure assessment outcome gaps (>5% threshold)

Bottleneck Courses (in progress):
- Systematic identification through high-enrollment and gateway course analysis
- Course practice standards that reveal structural barriers

Specific Improvements Identified:
- Course maintenance protocols (outdated content, dead links)
- Faculty presence standards and grading timelines
- Course design optimization and student engagement enhancement

Success Benchmark 3: Impact of Good Data Management

ACHIEVED: Developed sophisticated four-index framework demonstrating:

Strategic Impact Recognition:
- Moved beyond traditional retention metrics to actionable intervention points
- Created accountability systems faculty and staff can directly influence
- Established predictive indicators rather than just outcome measures

Comprehensive Coverage:
- **Index 1:** Course completion and academic performance (IE data)
- **Index 2:** Learning outcome achievement (AEFIS assessment data)
- **Index 3:** Course quality and student engagement (Blackboard Illuminate)
- **Index 4:** Support service utilization (EAB Navigate, NSSE indicators)

Advanced Data Utilization:
- Cross-platform data synthesis from five distinct sources
- Faculty behavior monitoring and student interaction tracking
- Assessment outcome analysis with systematic gap identification

Bottom Line: Student Success Goal Team 2 has built a comprehensive, actionable data system integrating five key sources that moves beyond measurement to systematic improvement, directly addressing the achievement gap between online and face-to-face students while creating sustainable pathways for enhanced student success.

Strategy 2.2: Student Support

provides data-informed strategies to improve the online learning experience and enhance advising support, directly targeting our underserved online student population.

Success Benchmark 1: Implementation of "Online Student Success" learning experience

ACHIEVED: Enhanced online orientation and online student support.

- Completed the "online student success" workshop. Promoted the workshop for online orientation. 580 online students logged in and 328 students completed. (Index 4) The completers were 15% of the Fall 2024 first time entering freshmen and transfer online students.
- 99% of students marked "Online orientation was valuable to me as a new student"
- 24/7 Blackboard Support was implemented
- Tiger-To-Tiger saw an average of 1484 members utilizing the platform monthly. Conversations increased to 13,355 for 2024-2025 with peak conversations in August and September.

Success Benchmark 2: Integration of EAB Navigate

ACHIEVED: Phase 1 integration.

- Navigate was integrated for academic advisors and undergraduate faculty.
- Faculty were invited to complete a week four and week ten progress survey to give feedback on students registered in their courses.
- On-campus academic tutoring appointment scheduling.
- Tracking online tutoring appointments, online success coaching appointments, and student absences.
- Index 4 tracking includes: orientation, writing center, tutoring, success coaching and monitoring of NSSE Engagement Indicators.   Achievement Gap between on-campus and online index 4: Orientation 72%, Tutoring 4%, Writing Lab 6%.

Success Benchmark 3: EAB's Navigate AI functionality is being used by advisor

ACHIEVED: 80% of FHSU academic advisors utilizing EAB Navigate

- FHSU professional undergraduate academic advisors have been trained to utilize EAB Navigate.
- Throughout the year there was additional training on AI utilization with report writing and communication enhancement.
- Of FHSU's 23 undergraduate academic advisors 96% have utilized EAB Navigate in 2024-2025.

Full utilization of EAB Navigate is dependent on completing two projects: the course merge issue in Blackboard and the Huron data edits. If the timelines for both projects stay on track, we plan to integrate EAB Navigate and Blackboard in Spring 2026.   After the initial phase of Huron edits, we plan to integrate FHSU graduate students and historical and predictive analytics.

Strategy 2.3:

 Innovation in Course Design and Delivery enhances student engagement across all modalities through consistent course structures and emerging technologies, benefiting learners in online, hybrid, and face-to-face environments.

Success Benchmark 1: Progress Toward 20% Increase in Student Engagement

ACHIEVED: Multiple initiatives demonstrate measurable progress in student engagement:

Blackboard Ultra Adoption at 75%: See Benchmark 2 for Details

Enhanced Student-to-Student and Student-to-Instructor Interactions:

- **PackBack AI Implementation:** Deployed AI-assisted discussion and writing lab tools that facilitate meaningful academic dialogue

- **BoodleBox Platform Success:** Achieved 85% activation rate with 295 users, generating 4,417 prompts and 1.9M words
- **Learning Object Repositories:** Established centralized, self-updating course content system ensuring consistent student experience

Success Benchmark 2: Progress Toward 100% Ultra Adoption

ACHIEVED: Strong momentum toward Fall 2025 target:

- **75% completion** on U.S. based Blackboard instance as of Spring 2025
- **Strategic transition support:** Open office hours, 1-on-1 consultations, dedicated website, comprehensive tutorials
- **External catalyst:** Blackboard's announcement of Original platform "end of life" reinforcing urgency

Success Benchmark 3: Initial AI-Assisted Feedback and AI Literacy Implementation

ACHIEVED: Comprehensive AI integration across multiple platforms and populations:

AI-Assisted Feedback Tools:

- **PackBack Discussions:** Instructional AI providing instant feedback on discussions and essays while keeping instructors in control
- **FeedbackFruits ACAI:** AI-powered assessment intelligence for peer review and group evaluation
- **Yellowdig AI:** Enhanced social learning with AI-driven engagement analysis and personalized recommendations

AI Literacy Program Implementation:

- **Student Training:** UNIV 101 AI module for online orientation, UNIV 199 for international students, workshops for Online Student Government Association "Tiger Talks", KAMS/AMS juniors and seniors, and the Global Affairs Student Ambassadors. 1000 Grammarly licenses for students in English Composition courses.
- **Faculty/Staff Development:** 300 FHSU personnel using Grammarly licenses, 2025 AI Institute with hybrid sessions, Fall, Spring, and Cross-border Faculty PDD sessions, workshop for administrative assistants.
- **Policy Framework:** Transitioned AI guidelines from draft to finalized version through collaborative feedback process.

Participation Evidence:

- **BoodleBox:** 60% sustained monthly usage, students averaging 48 prompts per user
- **Grammarly:** 300 faculty/staff active users demonstrating increased AI comfort and efficiency with over 82% of writing sessions improved and 7.94 million addressed suggestions
- **AI Institute:** a hybrid event with 42 faculty, 31 staff, 20 students/graduates, 3 community members participating

Boodlebox establishes a foundation for expanded AI tool integration across the university community

The Boodlebox pilot program successfully demonstrated that AI tools can enhance rather than replace human instruction across our diverse university community. With 295 users actively engaging with the platform, the pilot revealed consistent patterns of meaningful use that support our strategic goals for technology integration.

- **Building Community Confidence:** Faculty from disciplines ranging from nursing to teacher education found practical applications for AI tools, while students discovered valuable learning support through brainstorming and writing assistance. This cross-disciplinary adoption validates that AI tools can serve diverse academic needs without compromising educational quality.
- **Strategic Foundation for Expansion:** The pilot's success across faculty, staff, and students provides the institutional foundation necessary for broader AI literacy initiatives. With universal support for continued AI tool access and strong preference for institutional solutions, Boodlebox has proven that coordinated AI integration can maintain our commitment to human-centered education while enhancing learning and operational efficiency.

This validated approach to AI integration aligns with our Digital Master Plan objectives while supporting the Strategic Plan's emphasis on innovation that serves equity and student success.

Accepted to Participate in AAC&U Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum:

- This online institute is designed to help departments, programs, colleges, and universities respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities artificial intelligence (AI) presents for courses, curricula, and higher education in general. Throughout the 2025-26 academic year, the institute will engage participating teams via virtual events, mentorship, and interactions as they develop and implement AI action plans for their classrooms, curricula, and campuses.
- This competitive selection validates our comprehensive approach to AI literacy development and demonstrates external recognition of our strategic implementation across faculty, staff, and student populations.

Conclusion

Year One of the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan Goal 2 implementation has successfully established the comprehensive infrastructure necessary to achieve our three-year objectives of 62% persistence and measurable achievement gap reduction. Through systematic data integration, enhanced student support services, and innovative course design practices, FHSU has created the foundation for sustained progress toward our vision of empowering all students to become engaged global citizens.

Foundation for Equity:

Our Achievement Gap Index framework, integrating five key data sources, moves beyond traditional retention metrics to create actionable intervention points that directly address disparities between student populations. The successful deployment of cross-platform data synthesis—from Institutional Effectiveness dashboards to Blackboard Illuminate analytics—provides the evidence-based foundation essential for targeted improvements.

Comprehensive Student Support:

The 99% student satisfaction rate with our enhanced online orientation and 96% advisor utilization of EAB Navigate demonstrate institutional commitment to serving our diverse student body. These achievements directly address the NISS-identified challenge of underserved online students while creating scalable support systems that benefit all learners.

Innovation Serving Equity:

Our strategic integration of AI-enhanced learning tools—achieving 85% BoodleBox activation rates and 75% Blackboard Ultra adoption—exemplifies how emerging technologies can reduce rather than widen achievement gaps. By maintaining faculty control while providing intelligent assistance, we ensure that innovation serves our equity goals rather than creating new barriers.

Trajectory Toward 2027:

Year One achievements position FHSU to meet our ambitious three-year targets. Our established data infrastructure enables continuous monitoring of progress toward 62% persistence, while our comprehensive support systems and enhanced course design practices provide the interventions necessary to reduce achievement gaps across all measured indices.

Sustainable Excellence:

The coordinated success across all three strategies validates our comprehensive approach and establishes sustainable pathways for continued enhancement. As we advance into Year Two, our integrated framework of data-informed decision making, enhanced student support, and

innovative course design ensures that Fort Hays State University remains positioned to fulfill its mission of providing accessible quality education while empowering all students to achieve their goals as engaged global citizens.

This foundational year demonstrates that strategic, equity-focused implementation can simultaneously improve outcomes for all students while specifically addressing the needs of underserved populations—positioning FHSU for continued success in the evolving landscape of higher education.