

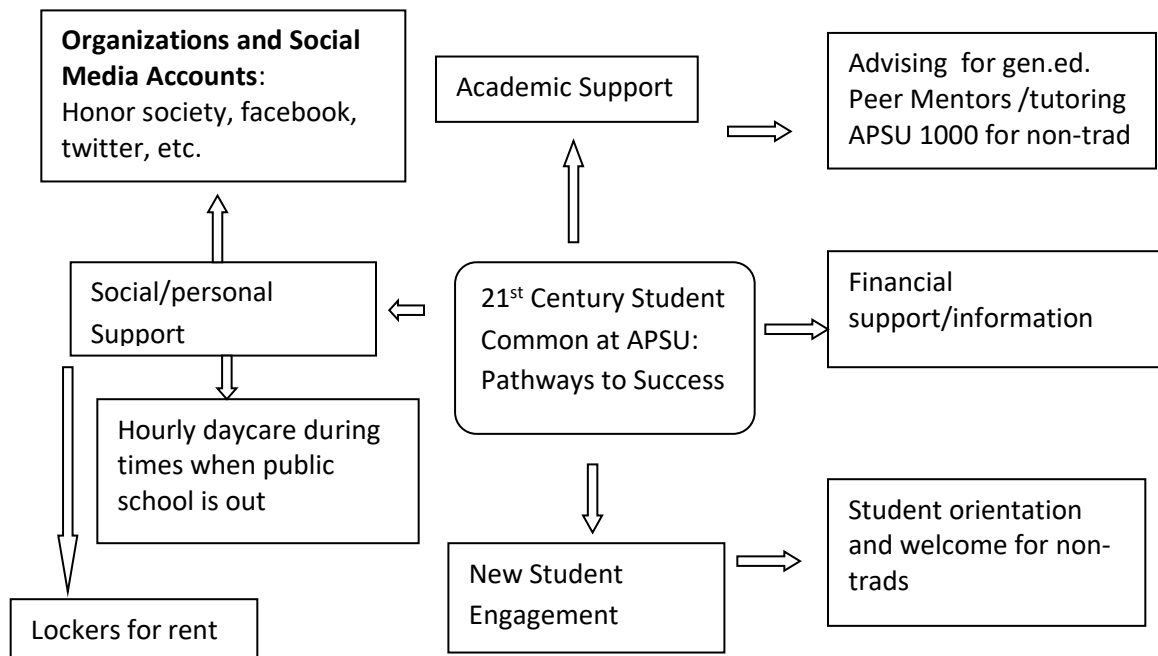
The 21st Century Student Common: Pathways to Success at APSU

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Definition of the 21st Century University Student: “Students referred to in the past as the non-traditional population [are] the largest sub-set of students in the nation. Defining or labeling this population concisely is virtually impossible, given the considerable diversity of its demographic and socioeconomic characteristics. Categorized across the dimensions of age, marital status, family size and composition, level and type of employment, and educational preparation and goals, this population [is] often referred to as 21st century or contemporary students”. If we are to help these students, or offer “Pathways to Success” as the DOE is proposing, then the definition also becomes an issue as no sub-group of 21st century, contemporary, post-traditional, non-traditional students should be left out of the proposals. To that end, education of faculty, staff and students needs to occur and facilities for these students should be visible and available *at all campuses of the university*.

Needs: Central location for coordinated services: “Pathways to Success”

Goals and objectives: Our goal is to provide academic, financial, and social support for APSU students with emphasis on the non-traditional student to promote academic success. Specific objectives are: Five years after implementing the APSU common project there will be an increase in retention and graduation rates by 10% of those students identified as non-traditional students. There will be a measurable increase yearly for five years after implementing the project in student engagement measured by media accounts, participation in services offered through the APSU Common: Pathway to Success Guild, and participant feedback.



Specifics:

Flexible hours (M-TH 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., F 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. and Sat. 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.) [Springfield campus Learning Common schedule used as a model for proposed schedule].

During hours of operation specific services should be scheduled and the schedule posted on the APSU homepage as well as on the door of the office(s) involved.

The designated area should provide computers, study areas, lockers, and separate but visible child care area. With the designated area a full-time as well as part-time personnel should be available during scheduled times.



Computers in cubicles provide private space to complete online course work, register for classes, or check e-mail. Tables provide tutoring opportunities, advising space, and group interaction.

A full-time as well as part-time personnel will be needed to assist students with their various needs. Peer tutors and mentors will be solicited from the non-traditional honor society.



Participating offices will provide workers at scheduled times to assist with advising, financial aid, child care, and other services.



Private rooms with glass doors provide opportunities for group study, advising, and separate, visual child care while parents are finding their pathways to success.



Measures of Success: Success will be measured by keeping track of students utilizing the services, retention and graduation of those students. Beginning and ending surveys (qualitative and quantitative items). Beginning of each term survey APSU students to determine if they are aware of services offered through the APSU 21st Century Student Common and how they found out about the services, if they utilized the services, and if so how (likert scale and demographic items). At the end of each semester we will survey students again to determine classification, use of services offered through the APSU 21st Century Student Common, and perceived value of each service, expected graduation date (likert scale, descriptive items). Open-ended items to invite feedback for recommendations for improvement and viability of the commons will be included on the end of semester survey. We will also determine social media involvement to determine if students are connected to peers and if that activity is correlated with perceived success.