

Defining Student Success

The “success” of a student can be defined from many perspectives including the student own definition of success or a definition based on his/her intent in attending college. For instance, a student’s goal could just be to take a single course, or to take a few courses and transfer to another institution, or to obtain a certificate or to graduate from a associate degree program. Other valid definitions of student success results from the expectations that the institution itself has from a student attending college. Equally valid are those definitions based on the expectation of parents, employers, legislators, etc. So, even though it may be difficult to find a “unified theory of student success”, we need to identify as many manifestations as we can in terms of inputs, agents, processes and outcomes, in order to build a plausible [simulation of student success](#).

The Office of Student Affairs of the University of Minnesota considers certain areas of achievement described in the following narratives; We found their approach pertinent to the work being done at Virtu@I CC and for that reason, we cite them here:

Student Success Outcomes

(Taken from The University of Minnesota website, Office of Student Affairs)

<http://www.osa.umn.edu/outcomes/index.html>

The successful student engages in activities which develop and demonstrate achievement in several areas.

Responsibility and Accountability

- Makes appropriate decisions regarding his/her own behavior
- Recognizes and accepts consequences of actions
- Meets agreed upon expectations
- Follows through on commitments
- Willing to accept responsibility for personal errors
- Takes responsibility for his/her own learning

Independence and Interdependence

- Appropriately determines when to act alone and when to work or consult with others
- Demonstrates ability to initiate action and effectively engage others to enhance outcomes
- Works with minimum supervision whether it be alone or within a group
- Adapts behavior as appropriate in response to team or organization needs

Goal Orientation

- Manages energy and behavior to accomplish specific outcomes
- Possesses and maintains sufficient motivation to achieve goals.
- Has an understanding about how to use his/her talents and skills to contribute to the betterment of society
- Demonstrates effective planning and purposeful behavior
- Does not allow distractions to prevent timely completion of tasks
- Pushes self, when needed, to accomplish goals

Self-Confidence/Humility

- Maintains and projects optimistic perspective
- Expects the best from self and others
- Accurately assesses and articulates (when appropriate) personal strengths and weaknesses
- Shows interest in learning about others and their accomplishments
- Demonstrates ability to help others adapt to new situations

Resilience

- Able to recover from disappointment or bad experience and continue to work successfully
- Able to learn from a bad experience and recover
- Able to work through disappointments (i.e., what caused them, what can be done to avoid them next time, and what can be done to repair them now)

Appreciation of Differences

- Works effectively with others, despite differences; can respectfully discuss differences with others
- Recognizes advantages of moving outside existing "comfort zone"
- Seeks out others with different backgrounds and/or perspectives to improve decision making
- Appreciates the importance of diversity and conveys this value to others
- Understands and respects the values and beliefs of others

Tolerance of Ambiguity

- Demonstrates intellectual and emotional ability to perform in complicated environments and the absence of standard operating procedures.
- Can work under conditions of uncertainty

We encourage you to modify the list to match the outcomes you think are most critical. The purpose of this guide is simply to provide another way to think about what you should accomplish during your time at the University.

Our office has developed a useful reference, in the form of a bookmark, which highlights the success outcomes that our students should strive toward.

(Taken from The University of Minnesota, Office of Student Affairs)
<http://www.osa.umn.edu/outcomes/index.html>