Executive Summary

The 2014 Recruitment and Retention Monitoring Report shows that the College continues in a downward enrollment trend since its peak in FY10 and FY11. Data presented in the report provides information about some of the factors contributing to this trend including declining high school enrollment, lower retention rates, declining enrollment of students with WIA funding, and impacts of new financial aid regulations.

Positive indicators include continued strong enrollments in dual credit offerings and continued upward trends in online and hybrid credit hour generation. New efforts to connect with the high schools and new developments, such as the CollegeNOW program, are also contributing to strong dual credit and high school enrollments.

The Recruitment and Retention Monitoring Report has been modified from previous report versions to include information about the number of students utilizing workforce investment (WIA) funding to pay tuition and fees, the impact of new financial aid regulations and to include data on our recruitment of students from the areas affected by the agreements with Southwest Wisconsin Technical College and Blackhawk Technical College (south central and south western Wisconsin).

In an effort to benchmark the outcome of our high school recruitment efforts against other community colleges, a survey question was submitted to northern Illinois community colleges. The colleges responding to the question reported from 26% to 33% of the high schools students (or graduates) were enrolling at their college. An average of 30% of the high school seniors starting the senior year in the HCC district (not graduates) enroll at Highland Community College (excluding dual credit students).

Recent efforts to recruit and retain students in targeted groups appear to be channeled in appropriate directions given the evidence presented. These efforts include:

- Relationship development work with WIA-funding agencies. An advisor from both agencies will be located on campus one day per week beginning in January 2015.
- Continued efforts by faculty and student services to partner through the Early Alert program to identify and intervene when a student may be struggling.
- Recent call campaigns to provide outreach to students with a financial aid termination status as an attempt to re-connect these students with advising services and retain them when possible and beneficial.
- Implementation of mandatory advising will change from being required only for first-time, full-time students to all degree and certificate seeking students beginning with the summer semester.
- Launch of a Thrive initiative that is intended to help students begin the semester with a focus on orientation and retention by providing a variety of opportunities for students to engage early with staff and faculty.
- Efforts to research, identify, and secure funding for a CRM database that will help us track and communicate with prospective students.