

**University Senate Academic Policy and Procedure Committee**  
**Report on the KU Academic Accelerator Program (KUAAP)**  
March 15, 2018

The following document provides a report on Specific Charge 2: *Continue to monitor and report on the Academic Accelerator Program and its partnership with Shorelight. Update data reported last year.* It was prepared by AP&P Chair Karen Moeller with assistance from committee members Lea Currie, Monica Simonsen, Nancy Jo Kepple, Mohamed El-Hodiri, Joo Ok Kim, Joe Walden, Martin Nedbal, Matt Deakyne, Furqan Mohammed (Vice Chair), Sarah Jean Coughlan, Jason O'Connor (ex-Officio) and Karen Ledom (ex officio). Following the AP&P report, please find the report that includes updated AAP data (see attached) prepared by Dr. Amy Neufeld, Managing Director, and Dr. Roberta Pokphanh, Academic Director, KU Academic Accelerator Program (KUAAP)

Members of the AP&P committee met with Drs. Neufeld, Dr. Pokphanh, John Dahlstrand (AAP Student Services Advisor), Dr. Stuart Day (Senior Vice Provost, Academic Affairs) and Dr. Charles Bankart (Associate Vice Provost, International Programs) on December 5, 2017 (see AP&P minutes for 12/5/18 meeting).

The report prepared by AAP reviews the program's development over the last three years and charts enrollment trends, retention rates and overall academic performance of students in the AAP program. It further discusses in detail programs provided by Student Services to assure student success. The report concludes with a brief overview of the AAP financial contributions to KU.

Dr. Neufeld noted that AAP and Shorelight strive for the common goal of student success and that the AAP supports the Mission of the University to increase international education and awareness across campus. Dr. Day contributed the success of the AAP due to the collaboration of Roberta Pokphanh with faculty and departments along with Student Services for the First Year Experiences, International Student Services, and International Programs.

Currently, the AAP is in its fourth year and formally has become a unit within the International Programs at KU in 2017. In the first two years of program development, there were two curricular tracks for undergraduate international students: a three-term accelerator program (AAP3) and intensive English leading to the AAP3 (Pre-AAP). In the past year (AY16-17), the AAP initiated a two-semester accelerator program (AAP2) and an integrated accelerator program (IAP). Metrics for the AAP2 and IAP is limited to one year of data with overall retention rates of 81.8% and 92.3%, respectively. The AP&P committee recommends a continued review of the AAP2 and IAP curricular tracks in comparison to AAP3 and Pre-AAP. Metrics should include enrollment trends, retention rates at each subsequent enrollment year, comparison GPA, and surveys of students' attitudes of a specific program.

In Spring 2017, AAP launched the Master's Accelerator Program (MAP), with similar services to the undergraduate program. Due to the short existence of this program, the AAP report does not include enrollment numbers or additional data. The AP&P committee recommends reporting on future goals for student enrollment into this program and assessing interest from the various

schools and colleges at KU. If limited enrollment continues, AAP should access continuation of the program.

A significant achievement of the AAP is its high retention rates (AAP3 1-year retention rate range from 86.2% to 92.9% and 2-year retention rates of 79.3 to 82.1%). Please refer to chart on page 3 of AAP report. Additionally, the AAP is excited to have a small number of students graduate from KU this spring. As students pass through this program, yearly graduation data should be reported.

A benefit of the AAP for international students is the additional services provided by Student Services Advisors (SSA) in academics, social, and acculturation supports. Currently, there is a 60:1 student to advisor ratio. SSA meets with AAP students five times during their first year (twice during the fall and spring semester and once in the summer semester for a wellness check). AAP students on academic probation meet every other week with their SSA. Additionally, AAP students enroll in a UNIV first-year orientation course instructed by SSA providing supplemental contact and support during their first year. One concern from the AP&P committee was potential disparities that may exist between undergraduate international students not enrolled in the AAP compared to students enrolled in the AAP (approximately 30% of the international population). Students recruited through Shorelight and enrolled in the AAP adhere to the same admission requirements as any international students. The main difference is that AAP students take classes with other students who have English as a second language in their first year compared to non-AAP students who are immersed with their peers during the first year. Dr. Day acknowledges that some students are receiving additional support or services through the AAP and they are working on offering more services to all international students. Dr. Pokphanh also noted that data for international first-year students is limited and they are working on obtaining more detailed data. Comparison between these two groups should continually be evaluated.

Overall enrollment in the AAP peaked in its second year of infancy with 238 students enrolled in AY15-16. Since then there has been a steady decline with 159 students enrolled in AY16-17 and approximately 80 students enrolled in Fall 2017 (this does not include new students enrolled in Spring 2018). This declining trend is a significant concern for the AP&P committee. The current United States national climate, global factors and competing recruitment for international students are potential reasons for the decline. Dr. Neufeld stated they are working with marketing at KU and have increased their presence in different recruitment areas to help increase enrollment. They expect next year's enrollment numbers to remain steady or increase. The current report does not include regional data except that 27 different countries are represented in the AAP. The AP&P committee recommends individual country assessments for additional reasons for the decline in enrollment. Additionally, the AP&P recommends setting yearly goals for enrollment.

Financial contributions of the AAP to KU is reported on page 10 and 11 of the AAP report. According to the report, "since fall 2015, when the first cohort of students progressed out of the AAP, KU has received \$9,549,578.20 in incremental tuition." Financial transparency of KU and its partnership with Shorelight was a concern for some members of the AP&P committee. Dr.

Day assured the committee that transactions between KU and Shorelight are visible and are open to audit.

In summary, the AP&P committee recommends the following:

- Assess declining enrollment to determine root cause. Evaluate regional data and marketing needs.
- Explore disparities between international students enrolled in AAP compared to international students not enrolled in AAP.
- Obtain individual metrics of all curricular tracks (AAP2, AAP3, IAP, Pre-AAP and MAP) - enrollment trends, retention rates, comparison GPA, graduation rates.
- Assess individual student success/outcomes.
- Determine overall financial impact.

**Academic Accelerator Program  
AY 2016-17 Report,  
University of Kansas  
November 17, 2017**

***Introduction***

The Academic Accelerator Program (AAP) has completed its third year of serving international students at the University of Kansas (KU). During these years the AAP has experienced growth in the number of program options provided to students, increased diversity in the students who enroll in the AAP, and deepened connections and collaboration with units across campus. This year the AAP became formally aligned as a unit within International Programs at KU. This report provides an overview of program development during this three-year period, including academic performance, outcomes, provision of holistic student support programs, and financial contributions to KU.

***Program development***

In the first two years of the AAP there were two curricular tracks in which undergraduate international students could enroll: a three-term accelerator program (AAP3) and intensive English leading to the AAP3 (Pre-AAP). During that time, the partnership realized that there was an opportunity to add options to support students with more advanced English levels. As such, a two-semester accelerator program (AAP2) and an integrated accelerator program (IAP) were created and launched. This suite of options allows undergraduate students to apply to the accelerator program at any English-level as summarized below:

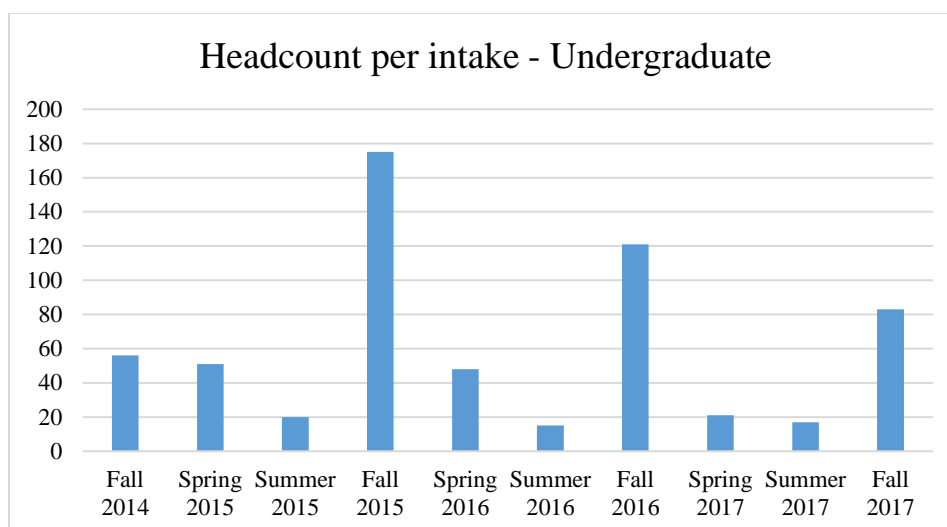
	Semesters	Equivalent AEC level for admission	Incorporates EAP courses	Minimum GPA for admission
Pre-accelerator program (pre-AAP)	Varies	1-3	No, AEC courses	2.5
Academic Accelerator Program – 3 semesters (AAP3)	3	4	Yes	2.5
Academic Accelerator Program – 2 semesters (AAP2)	2	5	Yes	2.5
Integrated Accelerator Program (IAP)	2	N/A	No, students are proficient	2.5

In many ways, these tracks are like learning communities that have shared courses and out-of-class experiences that seek to enhance student engagement and success.

Additionally, the AAP worked with a handful of graduate departments to develop a Master's Accelerator Program (MAP). MAP is similar to the undergraduate accelerator options in that it seeks to provide academic, social, and acculturation support to students through a curriculum that ties to students' English language levels. The first cohort of MAP students began in Spring 2017. To date, enrollment in MAP has been small. Due to enrollment size and the longevity of MAP, the following report sections do not include MAP.

### ***Undergraduate enrollment trends, retention rates, and student continuation at KU***

Through the first three years, the AAP has enrolled the following number of new undergraduate students: 127 students in 2014-15, 238 students in 2015-2016, and 159 students in 2016-17. The AAP typically has its largest cohort of students in the fall semester, as outlined in the table below. Twenty-seven different countries are represented in these cohorts.



Retention rates for all three undergraduate programs are on par, or slightly higher, than average KU freshman retention rates. (The one-year retention rate for first-time, full-time freshman at KU is historically between 78 and 83%; and the two-year rate between 69 and 73%.)

*AAP3 retention; one year retention from start of program\**

Initial Term	Initial cohort	Enrolled one year later, FA or SP	Percent	Enrolled two years later, FA or SP	Percent
Fall 2014	29	25	86.2%	23	79.3%
Spring 2015	42	39	92.9%	33	78.6%
Summer/Fall 2015	106	93	87.7%	87	82.1%
Spring 2016	44	39	88.6%		
Summer/Fall 2016	108	92	85.2%		
Total	329	288	87.5%	143	80.8%

\*Spring to spring retention is not normally calculated, but the same formula is applied as would be for fall to fall terms

*AAP2 retention*

Initial Term	Initial cohort	Enrolled one year later, FA or SP	Percent
Fall 2016	22	18	81.8%
Total	22	18	81.8%

*IAP retention*

<u>Initial Term</u>	<u>Initial cohort</u>	<u>Enrolled one year later, FA or SP</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Fall 2016	13	12	92.3%
Total	13	12	92.3%

The number of students who have completed any program and remain enrolled at KU is 298. Undergraduate students who have completed the program have gone on to declare majors in a wide variety of fields. Out of these, 211 have declared majors and/or been accepted to professional schools. One student has been accepted to Allied Health, and two have declared pre-Allied Health majors; 14 have been accepted to Architecture, and one has declared pre-Architecture; four have been accepted to the School of the Arts; nine have been accepted to Business, and nine have declared pre-Business majors; 67 have declared majors across the College disciplines; three have been admitted to Journalism; four have been admitted to Music; 63 have been admitted to Engineering, and two have declared pre-Engineering; three have declared pre-Education; and, two have declared pre-Pharmacy.

In addition, students are participating in study abroad experiences (three), the honors program (three), and 38 students have applied for one or more undergraduate certificate programs: 10 for arts engagement; one for entrepreneurship; 18 for global awareness; 13 for leadership; four for research experience; six for service learning; and one for sustainability.

*Academic performance*

In March 2017, an in-depth review was done of performance of students at two common language entrance levels to answer the question of whether the admission and placement of students into the programs were properly calibrated. The performance of students in AAP3 (the largest grouping of students) was then analyzed by comparing the performance of students who

entered the program directly (level 4) versus students who spent one term at level 3 full-time language study in the Applied English Center.

#### *Entrance Status by AEC Level*

Since the inception of the partnership programs at KU in fall of 2014 through the spring term of 2017, 260 students entered levels 1, 2, or 3 of the Applied English Center (AEC). Of these, 52, or 20% were level 1; 120, or 46%, were level 2; and 88, or 34% were at level 3. In comparison, 202 entered the AAP3 program at level 4.

Students who enter the AEC at level 1 have the lowest rates of progression into the accelerator program. The total progression rate is 63%, with only 30% progressing with three terms or fewer of intensive English coursework. Students who enter at level 2 fare better, with an overall progression rate into the program of 77%, and a 55% progression rate with 2 terms or less of coursework. Students who enter at level 3 perform better again, with an 89% progression rate, and a 73% rate following one term of coursework. This indicates that 73% of students currently entering at level 3 are able to progress to level 4 with one term of full-time intensive English study.<sup>1</sup>

#### *Performance of Students during and after the AAP3 program*

From fall 2014 through spring 2017, students entered the AAP3 program both directly upon arrival, and through successful completion of level 3 of the AEC. To date, 45% of all participants entered by taking AEC coursework prior to the AAP3, and 55% entered directly. On time progression rates for eligible cohorts average 86%. However, there is a slight, but consistent, difference in the on-time progression rates of those who begin in the AEC and those that enter directly. The average on-time progression rate for students who start in the AEC is 94%, while for those who enter directly it is 84%.

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<sup>1</sup> Only 3 students entered at level 3 in summer terms; all 3 progressed at the end of summer 2015.



Students who begin with one term of level 3 intensive English study at KU also experience a slight boost in their average GPA during the program. Comparisons were made of students in two groups: one group that began the program following one term at level 3 of the AEC and one group that entered the program directly. Of the 36 students who began the program following one term of level 3 intensive English, the average term 1 GPA was 3.13 (range 2.03-4.00). For the group of 171 students who entered directly into the AAP3 at level 4, the average GPA was 2.83 (range 0.00-4.00). The gap narrows by the completion of the program with students who began with one term of level 3 (n=29) earning an average GPA of 3.04 and direct entry students at 2.97.

The following tables reflect GPA measures of AAP3 students by those who studied one term in level 3 of the AEC and those who started directly in AAP3.

*Level 3, One Term Entrants*

	# students	Mean GPA	GPA Range
Term 1 of AAP3	36 students	3.13	2.03-4.00
End of AAP3, Cum	29 students	3.04	2.28-3.71
Term 1 of Year 2	16 students	2.89	1.54-3.86

*Level 4, Direct Entrants*

	# students	Mean GPA	GPA Range
Term 1 of AAP3	171 students	2.83	0.00-4.00
End of AAP3, Cum	158 Students	2.97	0.93-4.00
Term 1 of Year 2	128 Students	2.48	0.00-4.00

The difference in mean GPA may be in part resultant from a preliminary weeding out of less prepared students during their study in the AEC (note the difference in the GPA ranges, with no 0.00 GPAs amongst the group that began study in the AEC). Additional possible causes include greater acclimation to the KU environment, improved academic skills, and improved English skills following a term of study at KU.

Additional, smaller samples were taken of performance of these two cohorts in the two common academic courses completed during semester one of the AAP3 – HUM 175 and the student’s first mathematics course.<sup>2</sup> The sample size for students entering at level 3 was small (n=17), but the results were consistent with the overall GPA results. The measure used was percentage of students with A, B, or C grades versus the percentage of students with D, F, and W following completion of the term. For each group of students, performance in mathematics and humanities overall were highly similar in group. The students who entered the program following one term of level 3 AEC study had ABC/DFW rates of 88% / 12% in mathematics courses, and identical rates in the humanities course. The students who entered the program directly (n=101) had ABC/DFW rates of 74% / 26% fail in mathematics, and 73% / 27% in humanities course. Again, differences in these rates may come from a variety of factors, including small sample size, weeding out of students during AEC study, time to acclimate at KU, and improved academic English skills.

#### **Performance in term 1 math and HUM 175 measured by ABC/DFW rates**

*Level 3, One Term Entrants*

	# students	ABC rate	DFW rate
Math	17	88%	12%
HUM 175	17	88%	12%

*Level 4, Direct Entrants*

	# students	ABC rate	DFW rate
Math	101	74%	26%
HUM 175	101	73%	27%

One final sample, academic performance in a course frequently taken by freshmen/sophomores, was also evaluated. As ENGL 101 is held in common for many students,

<sup>2</sup> Data was compiled for students with a direct entry into the AAP3 from the fall 2015 and fall 2016 cohorts, with an n of 101. Due to the small size of the fall 2015 and 2016 cohorts of students who entered the AAP3 following one term of level 3 study (zero in the fall 2016 cohort), fall 2015 and spring 2016 cohorts were utilized, with an n of 17.

ABC/DFW rates were calculated for members of the sample who have completed the course following completion of the program. Fifty students in the sample who entered the accelerator program directly completed ENGL 101 with an ABC rate of 94% and a DFW rate of 6%. Only 5 students in the level 3 entry sample have completed ENGL 101 following completion of the AAP3; but, their ABC/DFW rate matches the other group exactly with 94% ABC and 6% DFW. This measure indicates that both cohorts are well-prepared for the demands of this common course.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Student support programs***

The Student Services team connects and engages with the first-year international students in the AAP in several ways to provide academic, social, and acculturation support. Student Service Advisors (SSAs) meet with students twice in the fall and spring semester and once in the summer semester for a wellness check, and every other week with students on academic probation. During these required check-ins with students SSAs discuss the student's overall health and wellness, current grades, and living conditions, and help students to utilize resources on campus. If students are on probation, SSAs meet with students more often to help them overcome challenges to raise their GPA.

All Student Service Advisors also teach a UNIV course as part of the first-year orientation course series. SSAs interact with their class once a week for either one or two hours. This provides an additional opportunity to support students during their first year at KU and it gives students more opportunities to ask questions and build trust with the AAP staff.

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the AAP had hundreds of hours of interaction with students in the classroom and during advising appointments. That said, the AAP only started

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<sup>3</sup> In contrast, performance in a comparison of freshman level Humanities courses demonstrates that AAP3 direct entry students perform lower than other freshman in their first humanities course; but students who entered at level 3 perform on par.

collecting data in a systematic manner in Spring 2017. During that time, AAP advisors had 173 hours of classroom instruction time and 568 hours of advising, including walk-ins and appointments. A total of 849 individual walk-in advising appointments were conducted along with 330 wellness check appointments and 144 probation meetings. (Note that these are total number of meetings, not individual students.)

Students value this support. The following statement is from an Indonesian AAP student, “...the advisors have been a big help to me throughout my first year here in KU. They would simplify answers to any questions that I have, even researching it on their own if they don’t know the answers. They would also give useful information, and aside from that, are comfortable to have a chat to as well.”

Beyond these support structures the program offers a robust and holistic programmatic curriculum for students. As part of the orientation course series, also referred to as UNIV, the AAP creates eight to ten signature events in the fall and spring semesters and a minimum of five signature events in the summer term to introduce students to KU traditions, the Lawrence community, and U.S. culture.

The following represents the list of signature events during the Spring 2017 semester with number of attendees: UCC Career Fair (20); Rebirth Brass Band – Lied Center (38); KU Theatre “Company” (28); Sporting KC Game (43); KU Powwow & Indigenous Festival (23); International Jayhawk Festival (100); Flint Hills Museum (53); Don Giovanni – Lied Center (25); Stunt Dog Experience – Lied Center (52). The average student attendance was 40.

A Nigerian student who has completed the AAP reflects on those programs as follows, “My experience at KU has been great, the events should not be missed, especially the basketball games. I have made good friends with some AAP students, roommates and classmates. I am currently not in a student organization but I am looking into joining some medical organizations

because it will help me build a connection with experts in that field and also make more friends I can bond with.”

AAP support also includes student ambassadors (SA) to greet students at our office, work as new student orientation leaders, and find ways for new students to be connected to student life on campus. One way in which the SAs support students is through creating and leading events and activities that foster a sense of belonging on campus. The student ambassador-led events for the spring 2017 semester were: “Breakout of the Clubhouse” (30); Oak Park Mall Shopping Trip (40); AAP Cultural Food Exchange (20); AAP Sports Tournament (20); and The Big Event (20). The average student attendance was 26.

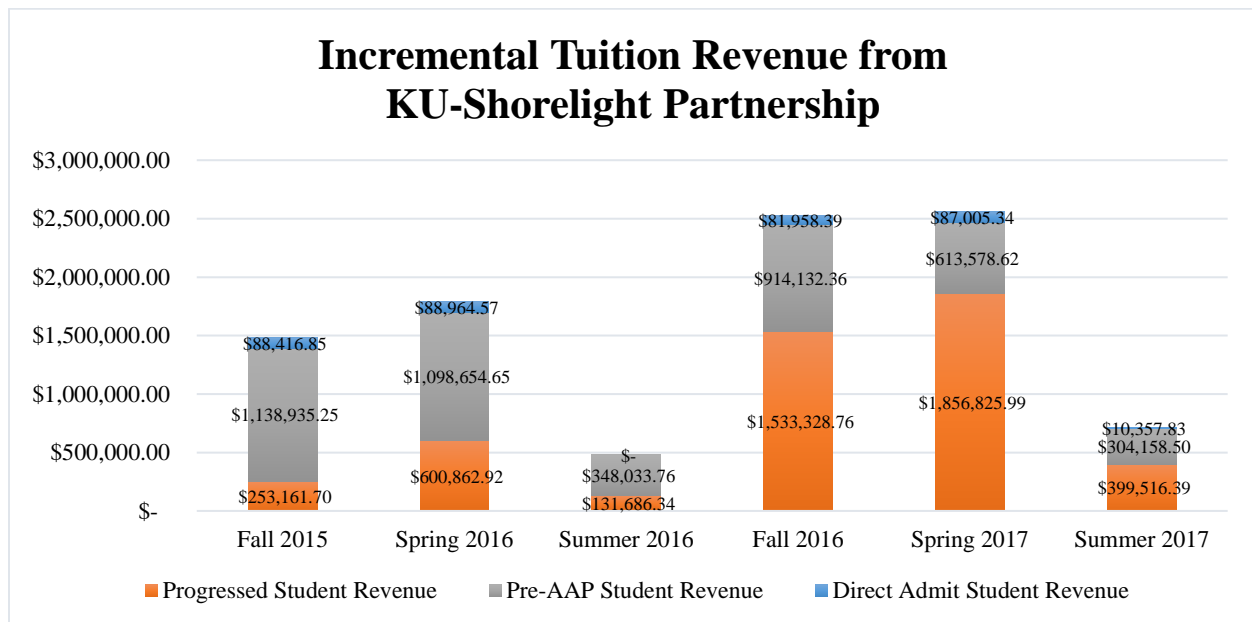
One of the SAs from Iraq says, “working as a Student Ambassador in the AAP makes me a better person in many ways. Giving me a responsibility at work reminds me of all the other responsibilities I have, such as taking care of my education, my friendships, as well as my family relations. Working in the AAP boosts my abilities in speaking English, as it is the number one language I use to communicate with the advisors and students. On a personal level, I gain confidence and leadership skills when performing duties, and it almost feels like a habit more than doing a job. I also enjoy helping others, and by being an ambassador I gain the opportunity to do it.”

Across a number of different measures student satisfaction is assessed through the students’ time in the program. According to student surveys, the AAP scored 8.0/10.0 in overall program satisfaction during the 2016-2017 academic year. The highest scores received were staff friendliness (8.8), staff support (8.7), and health services (8.7).

### ***Financial contributions to KU***

In addition to providing high touch, intensive support services that foster student success, the AAP also seeks to bring students to KU who may not have otherwise chosen KU. The

following chart outlines the incremental tuition revenue by student type during the past two academic years. Progressed student revenue reflects the tuition to KU from students who have progressed out of the AAP and into the wider KU community (orange below), Pre-AAP student revenue is from those students who start by taking intensive English with the AEC (gray below), and tuition revenue that is listed as direct admit (blue below) is from students who applied directly to a non-AAP program through Shorelight. Since fall 2015, when the first cohort of students progressed out of the AAP, KU has received \$9,549,578.20 in incremental tuition revenue.



### ***Conclusion***

This report describes the key components of the program to date. As a relatively new unit, the AAP has evolved to meet the needs of students, most notably through program expansion. Enrollment has varied by term, both in size and geographical representation of the new cohorts. First- and second-year retention rates of AAP average at or above the wider student body and course-level data in areas such as Math, HUM 175, and ENGL 101 indicate the students are prepared for further study at KU. High touch services help students feel welcomed

to KU and foster a sense of belonging. Additionally, the AAP contributes to KU through student potential and incremental tuition revenue. In the year to come the AAP will continue assessing areas described above and add in components such as MAP.

In closing, the following statement from a Chinese student who is currently a junior demonstrates the sense of belonging in the KU community that students can achieve, “I appreciated that the AAP helped connect me to the faculty and domestic students on campus. I remember when I was in the AAP, I had the flexibility to choose which math class I took. The AAP helped me to improve my English, and I could earn credits with the classes I was taking so I didn’t get behind. I cultivated friendships with my cohort because I had classes with them for two or three semesters compared to other students, who you could have in class for one semester and never see them again. I have a good bond with my friends. I meet with my friends from the AAP still, and even now, I just ran into my two friends from the AAP. We run into each other on campus and spend time together at events.”