

Student Retention & Success Newsletter

Summertime Connections

submitted by David Gallant, Director, CAS Advising Center

How should we stay in touch with our advisees over the summer months? This is a question that many faculty advisors may not have thought to ponder. With the advent of many user-friendly electronic communication modes, it's a fairly easy process to engage. But that also begs the question of why would we want to outreach to students during the summer in the first place. Without fail, our students who persist will say that their professors care about them and that communicative gestures, large and small, play a part in making them feel connected to the university as a whole. Most faculty have just recently met with their advisees to help them finalize course selections for summer and fall, so they should have a good sense of their advisee rosters.



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So, what can you do?

If you are on-campus teaching this summer and have advisees taking courses, send an e-mail to the student(s) and have them check in to see you. Derne Street Deli makes a great iced coffee.

You may have students studying abroad in summer and you could find out how they are enjoying Madrid, Prague, Dakar, Vichy, or wherever; reminding them that they promised to bring back a trinket from abroad when you wrote a letter of reference for their study abroad application. Contact the Office of the Registrar if you are unsure if any of your advisees are engaging in summer study abroad.

You may be a member of a department that is undergoing significant change; a new chairperson is coming on board or your department is physically relocating to another building on campus. Students would appreciate being "in the know" about such changes before coming back to campus in the fall.

If you have taught a Seminar for Freshmen, your class (hence advisees all at least for this first year) is easily reached through the Blackboard site for the class, which remains active (especially for group e-mails). You might send out a message concerning something in the news, etc. that related to the seminar topic. Not only is it a way to reconnect to students, it reinforces much of what we teach about learning, that it endures, that the course content they learned or discovered with you really persists beyond the structured meetings of the course. Obviously, one can employ the same Blackboard functions for other courses taught as well.

Courtney Ellis, Registrar's Assistant, can assist you with email addresses of your advisees. You can contact her in the Registrar's Office at cellis@suffolk.edu.

First Year Experience Student Issues April Happenings

Possible Issues/Concerns

Increasing thoughts /deliberations about suicide occur from an inability to cope with the pressures of academic and social expectations.

Academic pressures increase with the end of the semester approaching. Paper and hours exams approach.

Summer job pressures continue.

Financial strain from spring break affects social life.

Many students are forced to select a major and are not sure what field they would like to enter.

Social life pressures increase during this time period—formal dances, parties, concerts.

Everyone wants to fall in love. Many students go through rejection or the fear of rejection or envy towards their friends who have successfully found a significant other.

Frustration from being ill because weather changes so dramatically.

Students tend to become disenfranchised with many normal services and food service is the primary target. They tend to get tired of eating “the same old institutional food”.

Late Course Withdrawal

submitted by Ann Coyne, Dean of Students

If students talk to you about a late course withdrawal, you should first have a discussion with students about their grades and determine if there are any possibilities to salvage this course. At the instructor's discretion, if the student has completed more than 50% of the course work satisfactorily and there is a reasonable expectation that all the course requirements can be completed in one academic year, you may choose to issue the student an incomplete grade.

As of April 13, a student may request a late withdrawal, but will also need faculty approval. In addition to the late course withdrawal form, the Dean of Students Office will

give the student a late course withdrawal petition. The student must bring this petition to the faculty member for his/her approval. Please be sure to check either the “I approve” or “I do not approve” box and sign the form. The faculty member may give the form back to the student who will deliver it to the Office of Student Affairs. Please note: There is a space on the late course withdrawal petition for the department chair to sign, but the chair's signature is not required.

If approved, the Office of Student Affairs will forward the late course withdrawal form and petition to the Registrar's Office and the student will be issued a grade of “W.” No petitions for late course withdrawals can be filed once the student has taken the final exam.

End of Semester Math/CS

Support Center Help Submitted by MSC staff

The Math/CS Support Center will offer special help for math and computer science courses starting on reading day (April 24th) and going through finals week. Extra help workshops in Math 104, 130, 134 and a limited amount of drop-in help in math and computer science will be available. Copies of schedules detailing this information are available from the Math/CS Support Center (Fenton 636) or on our websites. For math schedules go to: <http://www.suffolk.edu/college/4189.html>. For computer science schedules go to: <http://www.suffolk.edu/college/4187.htm>.

Survey Says....

The Division of Enrollment Management is conducting a survey of all students who have not preregistered for the Fall 2009 term. Information being gathered includes: is the student withdrawing from the University, transferring to another school, taking a leave of absence, if financial problems are preventing them from preregistering, etc. Information received will be shared with appropriate administrative and academic departments so that where possible we may provide support or resources to help the student return in the Fall term.

Impact of Late Grades on Student Retention and Success

Submitted by Mary Lally, Registrar



It is 11:59 am on Wednesday, May 6. Spring 2009 final grades are due by noon. Everyone in the Registrar's office is anxiously waiting to see whose final grade rosters have not been submitted. Who will be on the "late list" this term? Same culprits? Who has called and frantically asked for a few more hours? Who has called to complain they cannot possibly submit their grades by the impossible deadline and will submit their grades next week? Who has more excuses for not submitting grades on time than students have for not turning in a paper on time? Who do we track down who states they had no idea grades were due and is on vacation in Switzerland for the month of May?

Beyond the fact that students are anxiously awaiting their final grades because they have no idea how they performed in the class (huh?), many academic and administrative offices are dependent on final grades being submitted by the due date. Who are these people and why are they trying to make faculty lives miserable? Let me share with you just some of the people:

Academic Dean: Each school has an academic standing meeting where the records of all students who are not making satisfactory academic progress are reviewed. Each student record is painstakingly reviewed and decisions are made regarding services and support the University can offer the student. It takes several days of preparation to provide these lists to the appropriate university personnel who need this information to compile materials for the meeting to help the committee develop strategies that will help the student succeed.

Registrar's Office reviews the spring grades of all students who took a course that is a prerequisite for a course in the Fall semester. In the case where students do not satisfactorily complete the prerequisites course, we drop students from the course and notify them that they need to choose another course for the Fall semester. This process ensures that students are not enrolled in a course for which they are not adequately prepared. It is a timely process and must be done prior to new student registration so that our returning students maintain their course selection priority.

Graduating Students who await the message from the Registrar regarding their graduation status and final academic honors. "Congratulations you are all set for graduation" is music to their ears.

Public Affairs waits patiently for the list of students whose dedication to their studies and course work have made them eligible to receive academic honors such as the Dean's List. Public Affairs notifies the student's home town paper of this honor for publication in their next issue.

Without going into further detail, other departments who frantically call us asking if all the grades are processed include: Study Abroad, BLC, Student Affairs, Housing, Center for International Studies, etc. Please be mindful of the deadline to submit your grades by **noon on Wednesday, May 6**. We will all appreciate your cooperation!

Save a Student Award

Assoc. Dean Rich DeCapua writes: As the dean of students, **Dr. Ann Coyne**, uses every minute of her day to help Suffolk students become academically and socially successful at Suffolk. As an alumna of Suffolk herself, Dean Coyne believes in the mission of the institution and uses her position to help students in multiple ways. This could be in the form of a grade grievance, a judicial matter, or simply working with students who are having a hard time adjusting to university life. Dean Coyne coordinates all institutional policies and procedures for students through our Community Standards system, as well as working with the various departments at the institution to expand and revise academic policies that will help and support our students. She also coordinates the Student of Concern program, which is a way for members of the institution to identify members of our community who need extra support and care. However, what defines Dean Coyne the best is that if you look at her daily schedule she is booked all-day, everyday meeting with students and has been doing that all of her career.



The College of Arts and Sciences to Launch Student Peer Mentoring Program for Fall 2009

submitted by Carrie Baldasari, CAS Dean's Office

This fall, the College of Arts and Sciences will introduce a Peer Mentoring Program to provide support to incoming undergraduate freshmen. This new Program aims to build strong relationships between upperclassmen Mentors and their Mentees, motivating them to succeed and integrate into the Suffolk University community. The Study Group on the Conditions of Excellence in American Higher Education posits that learning, academic performance, and retention are positively associated with academic involvement, involvement with faculty, and involvement with student peer groups. In addition, literature and empirical evidence related to Peer Mentoring Programs emphasize the importance of enhancing students' first year experience by encouraging engagement inside and outside of the classroom. Mentees, specifically commuter students who may not spend as much time on Campus, will have additional guidance from their Mentor on ways to transition to Suffolk University, reach out to faculty and become an integral part of the myriad of academic and social events. The pilot program is designed to not only enhance students' first-year experience and to retain them but to provide a mutually beneficial relationship fostering the overall development of supportive Mentor-Mentee groups.

In addition to gaining valuable leadership experience, Mentors create and become part of a student community that builds partnerships among faculty, staff and students to increase interaction, involvement, and learning both inside and outside the classroom.

Mentors encourage new students to be better prepared, to become good decision makers, and ultimately, to graduate from Suffolk University.

The estimated time commitment of a College of Arts and Sciences Peer Mentor is up to six hours per week. These are paid positions and responsibilities include staffing drop-in office hours, activity planning, administrative work and reports on their Mentee's participation in the program. In addition, student Mentors will participate in monthly training sessions aimed at developing leadership skills and fostering a supportive mentoring environment.

The College of Arts & Sciences Dean's Office is currently accepting Peer Mentor applications for the 2009-2010 academic year. Faculty recommendations for Peer Mentor candidates are encouraged. If you know of students, who are team players and able to approach topics through a variety of lenses, please contact us. Students must be in good academic standing with a minimum GPA of 2.5 and familiar with the various resources, activities and organizations Suffolk University has to offer.

For additional information please contact Carrie Baldassari, Office of the Dean, College of Arts and Sciences at 617-573-8570 or cbaldassari@suffolk.edu.

Fall to Spring Retention - Boston Campus

