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Chalk Talk Quick Tips

from Chalk Talk with permission of author Dona Qualters,
Director of Suffolk University Center for Teaching Excellence

Don't hesitate. If a freshman student seems to be floundering, chances are he/she is floundering. Be proactive and arrange to see them individually as soon as possible.

Try a One Minute Paper. Bring 3x5 cards to class and at the end of the class ask students to anonymously tell you what questions they have about the class material. You'll have instant feedback on the learning.

When asking students whether they have questions, change your phrasing from "Are there any questions?" to "What are your questions now?"

Student Retention & Success Newsletter

Welcome to the second year of the Student Retention and Success Newsletter. All of us are looking forward to a successful year. In the upcoming months I plan to share with you the University's retention statistics as well as the new re-recruitment program which begins as soon as a student is accepted and concludes at the beginning of junior year.



VP Marguerite Dennis,
Enrollment & Intl Programs

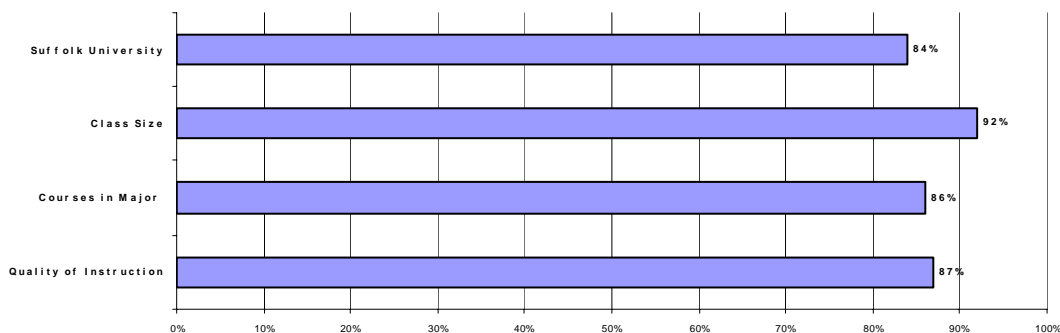
I want to thank you in advance for your assistance in helping each of our students reach their academic goals.

2008 Graduating Senior Survey

Submitted by Michael Duggan, Director of Enrollment Research and Planning

Each year, Enrollment Research and Planning with the assistance of the Office of Student Affairs conducts a survey of graduating seniors. More than 875 seniors responded to the 2008 survey. The below chart shows the percentage of respondents satisfied with selected aspects of Suffolk University and with the University overall. Copies of the survey results are available from mduggan@suffolk.edu. In addition, Enrollment Research is working on results by department that will be available in late September.

2008 Graduating Senior Survey- Satisfaction with:



Class of 2012 Mindset

Each year Beloit College publishes a mindset list of the incoming freshmen class. The majority of the incoming class was born in 1990. The list identifies some experiences and events that have occurred during the class of 2012 lifetime. It is not meant to reflect on their preparatory education. Here are just a few.

They have always been looking for Carmen Sandiego.

GPS satellite navigation systems have always been available.

Caller ID has always been available on phones.

Electronic filing of tax returns has always been an option.

Girls in head scarves have always been part of the school fashion scene.

WWW has never stood for World Wide Wrestling.

Students have always been "Rocking the Vote".

Clarence Thomas has always sat on the Supreme Court.

College grads have always been able to Teach for America.

There has always been Pearl Jam.

Lenin's name has never been on a major city in Russia.

Personal privacy has always been threatened..

Schools have always been concerned about multiculturalism.

Off shore drilling in the US has always been prohibited.

Films have never been X rated, only NC-17.

IBM never made typewriters.

First Year Experience Student Issues

September Happenings

Classes begin.

Formation of first impressions of college life will occur.

Quick judgments and friendships based upon exterior similarities.

Acting out as a way to deal with stress, uncertainty of role in new place.

Initial group formation—cliques form, typically around rooms that are close together.

Staff members receive many questions regarding location of classes, resources, and services.

Possible Issues/Concerns

Homesickness—especially for freshmen.

Roommate conflicts.

Initial adjustments to academic environment.

Feelings of inadequacy and inferiority develop due to discrepancy between high school status and grades and initial college performance.

Values exploration—students are confronted with questions of conscience over conflict areas of race and alcohol experimentation, morality, religion and social expectations.

New social life adjustments - including new freedoms.

Initial social rejections.

In-loco parentis problems -students feel depressed because of real or perceived restrictive policies.

Long distance relationships.

Financial adjustment.

International student adjustment including confusion, vulnerability, cultural and academic transition.

Adjusting to “Administrative Red Tape.”



Should Teaching “Independence” be Included in the Curriculum?

submitted by Ken Garni, Director, Counseling Center

Earlier columns addressed the lack of preparation and resultant transitional difficulties that first-year students experience as they start college. This, and future ones, will highlight ways in which universities can respond more positively to the increasingly complex needs of new students.

Garrison (1995) and Hersch (1998) reported that the most significant difference between today’s college students and those of 20 years ago is their “...profound isolation from adults and from a traditional cultural context”. Garrison added that today’s college students feel isolated from decision-making resources and experience a sense of what he identified as “lonely responsibility.” Due in large measure to the rapid and unexpected changes in their lives, many students start college with limited social skills. They often arrive in college feeling as if they are the hub around which society revolves (Hernandez and Fister, 2001). Because of such limitations and misperceptions, they tend to have blurry perceptions of boundaries in the relationships they have with faculty, staff, and administrators.

Pascarella and Terrazini (1979) found that social isolation was the single most important determinant of dropout rates, while Gerdes and Mallinckrodt (1994) found that emotional-social adjustment items were better predictors of attrition than were academic ones. Other research has determined that bonding successfully to academic institutions is the most positive antidote to attrition. In many instances, that connection must occur within the first six weeks of the initial semester. Unless it does so, many students silently withdraw from college before midterms and then merely “pass the time” until they withdraw officially between semesters.

As a consequence, faculty, staff and administrators must take a more active, -even invasive-, role in reaching out to new students and in helping to create small, targeted communities that highlight the potential for social connections and that challenge the feelings of social isolation and anomie that many students report. Hernandez and Fister (2001) reported that college students consider themselves as being independent because they have often been left to fend for themselves by distracted adults, including their parents. As they arrive in college, they lack adequate role models, either at home, school, or in the workplace. Consequently, many of them become hypersensitive to perceived or actual criticism or disparaging remarks, both inside and outside the classroom. Even in what many faculty and staff may consider protected and inclusive classroom settings, such students may internalize those interactions as a loss in their personal safety or dignity. With this in mind, faculty should examine their teaching methods for anything that might be construed as threatening to their students, and make the appropriate changes (DeLucia and Lasenza, 1995). Without doing so, faculty may continue to face the escalating disruptive classroom behaviors that are triggered by student (mis)perceptions of loss or conflict.

The new transitional challenges being faced by universities require that they focus on both the process and content parameters that are central to their institutional missions. To succeed, they must take on the daunting task of both “educating for independence” while also “teaching for content”.

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What If I Am Asked?

What should I do if a student requests accommodations due to a learning or other disability?

Student requests for classroom accommodations are reviewed and approved by the Office of Disability Services, which is located on the 7th floor of 73 Tremont Street. Students must provide the University with documentation to receive accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disability Act. Students who have been approved for classroom accommodations will provide faculty members with an approval letter describing the accommodation he/she is authorized to receive. For more information, please contact the Office of Disability Services at (617) 994-6820 for assistance.

Save a Student Award

By Susan James Leyva, Director, Office of Retention Services

Suffolk University is full of traditions, and we started a new one. The Retention and Student Success Committee implemented the "Save a Student" recognition program. This program recognizes people within the Suffolk community who truly go above and beyond to help our students. At the end of the academic year all nominees are invited to a formal luncheon to receive their certificates of appreciation.

On May 12, 2008 the first "Save a Student Appreciation Luncheon" was held. The recipients of the "Save a Student" awards who went beyond their job responsibilities to work with students and find students the services or assistance they needed were: Dr. Eric Lee, Judy Entin, Wes Savick, Gina Passmore, Scott Reedy and Linda Foley-Vinay. Congratulations to all of our award recipients!

Suffolk University is filled with people who care and provide amazing service to our students. Help us to find them and give them the recognition they deserve! We are looking for nominations for October. Tell us about someone you know or a department you work with that has done something wonderful to save a student. Please send your nominations to sleyva@suffolk.edu. We look forward to receiving your stories and being able to share them with the Suffolk community!

Navigating the Hill

by Olena Savystka

As the school year opens, I am glad to be back at Suffolk, and confident that I will succeed. During the summer, I have prepared for my role as Student Government Secretary, meeting with my fellow e-board members. I also read up on U.S. history, foreign policy, and political theory in preparation for the Government courses I will be taking. I am excited to take on the leadership role of Teaching Assistant for SU 101, to share my positive experience at Suffolk with incoming freshmen.

I think that my freshman year was a successful foundation for my college experience. I did well in my classes, and took an active part in extracurricular activities. This year, however, will bring greater challenges, and a more pressing need to excel, both in academic matters, and as a student leader. There are many projects and many challenges ahead of me, but I know that Suffolk – both my professors and my fellow students – will support me in all my undertakings.

Class Attendance and Student Absences

by Ann Coyne, Dean of Students

Faculty members establish the requirements for attendance and participation in each of their classes. The Student Affairs Office does not "excuse" student absences, but will inform faculty members when students are out of class for a documented medical or personal emergency for a week or more. Email messages will be sent to faculty members as a courtesy to students. Students, when absent from class, have the responsibility of obtaining knowledge of materials covered in classes missed, including information about announced tests, papers, or other assignments.

Faculty Involvement in Campus Life

by John Silveria, Assistant Dean of Students

As we begin the school year, we often hear from faculty about their eagerness to get involved with students outside the classroom. The first opportunity to consider is serving as a faculty advisor to a student organization. With over 75 student organizations, we are always looking for full time faculty to serve in these roles. Additionally, faculty can consider how they might work with students on programs or research. We are happy to connect students and faculty for these projects via student organizations that may share a passion related to research areas. One more thing to consider is just attend a student run event or participate alongside students in one of our various service programs, or even show off your own talent at our annual Fallfest program. If any of these are of interest, please contact me directly at jsilveri@suffolk.edu.

More Amazing People

By Susan James Leyva, Director, Office of Retention Services

Office of Retention Services wants to get the message out to students that our faculty members are amazing people too and even more importantly – they are real! I know that it is hard for students to understand that there are faculty members who love to host dinner parties at their homes, or eat lots of Mexican food, or who enjoy camping and hiking in the mountains, who love Jack Nicholson or John Cusack, who play the trumpet, or play in an orchestra, or... The interests are extensive and the idea is to highlight faculty members on campus and allow our students to connect to them, their major, and ultimately build their own network of mentors.

Each week the Office of Retention Services will highlight an academic department and host a "Meet the Faculty" luncheon. Students are invited to meet faculty members from their major and get to know them as well as what opportunities lie within those academic departments. The first luncheon highlighting the Communications Department will be held on Thursday, September 11, 2008 at 1:00 in the Munce Conference Room (Archer 110). Please pass the word on to the communication majors or even the undecided majors!

A special 'thank you' to Dr. Robert Rosenthal, Chairperson and Nina Huntemann, Assistant Professor in the Communications Department for being so enthusiastic, supportive and for making the commitment to have lunch with students. For more information, please email sleyva@suffolk.edu. Regular updates on this new initiative will follow!



For SBS It's All About Retention!

Submitted by Dean Morris McInnes



In 2007 SBS began rolling out its new BSBA curriculum. The faculty believes this curriculum positions us among the best undergraduate business programs in the country. It resulted from three years of intensive faculty effort, benchmarking the curricula of the best programs in the country and intensive introspection about our own particular geographical and student profile situation.

From a retention perspective, the principal challenge is to get a higher proportion of our freshmen through the first two years, and launch them into their junior year and their chosen major. After that, historical analysis suggests that almost all our students go on to graduate within a six year time frame from entering the BSBA program. While we might wish our students to graduate within four years of beginning their program, the fact is that quite a number of our juniors and seniors work full time and complete their studies part time. It seems to us that this is a good educational model, mixing classroom education with work experience, and of course it is practical in respect to the challenging economics of higher education.

The themes of the years are: Freshman Year – Integrate into the Suffolk and Boston communities, link with course work and anticipate career paths through subject matter introduction; Sophomore Year – Understand the dynamics of leadership, networking, and the need for successful businesses to be responsive to broad social challenges, locally and globally; Junior Year – Come to grips with a particular area of knowledge and practice, and develop teamwork and communication skills (internships are promoted at this stage of the student experience); Senior Year – Continue subject mastery, and develop career skills and an appreciation of the dynamics of lifelong learning.

Central to the freshman experience is the challenge of getting a team of our brightest and best teachers, about 20 in total, in front of our students, challenging and engaging them, and acting as early experience mentors. The mentor role is

not the same as the advising role. In fact we have greatly increased the resources devoted to early experience advising and academic monitoring, through the Undergraduate Program Office led by Lauren Mahoney. This advising is certainly a crucial aspect of our student success strategy, and it complements and works closely with the faculty mentoring role. Our required course offerings for the first semester freshman year are SU 101, MGT 101 and ISOM 120; and second semester it is our plan to make IB 101 a required course as we build the faculty to deliver the course. Our teachers of the first semester required courses are encouraged to maintain a relationship with their particular cohorts of students, through the second semester and summer, to see them successfully enrolled in their sophomore courses. Mentoring means being available to students when they need help, prodding them when they are faltering in their performance or attendance, and meeting them from time to time to catch up with how things are going for them. To illustrate, this past year I picked up on any of my SU 101 or MGT 101 students who appeared on an academic probation list, and contacted them to encourage them to get their studies back on track. And I assisted students when they were having difficulty with their academic schedules. And so on. I perhaps intervened successfully to help five students with problems, some 10% of my SU 101 and MGT 101 classes. This may not seem like much, but little things can make a difference in a student's experience of our University. And retention happens one student at a time, as well as through multi student programs.

Mentoring means being available to students when they need help, prodding them when they are faltering in their performance or attendance, and meeting them from time to time to catch up with how things are going for them.

In future articles we will report on and discuss various aspects of our curriculum and specific courses, and how they are shaped to student success and retention. At this point, while it is early to judge, the "expected back" report of freshmen registered for their sophomore classes is showing a distinct move in the desired direction.

When Students Need a Tutor

by Michael Dickinson, Director, Ballotti Learning Center

Some students and members of the campus community are surprised when they learn that the BLC isn't open for tutoring during the first two weeks of classes. What about helping students get off to a good start? What about being proactive?

The BLC will begin matching students to tutors on Monday, September 15. The first tutoring dates for Suffolk's other support centers are: Thursday, September 4th for the Math/CS Support Center; Wednesday, September 3rd for the Writing Center; and Tuesday, September 9th for Second Language Services.

Those who have heard our staff speak about our services before know that we encourage students to view us like a fitness center rather than an emergency room - we want students to come in before there is a problem.

The BLC welcomes students throughout the year - before *and* after classes begin. Our Educational Consultants are always ready to meet with students to clarify goals, answer questions, and identify resources. However, our delay in providing *tutoring* services until the second full week of classes is both a philosophical and logistical decision. We want

students to be proactive, but we also want them to understand why they are requesting a tutor. Students who seek tutoring prior to going to class or attempting work on their own know neither the course expectations nor the professor's

style. Delaying tutoring services encourages students to attend class, attempt work on their own, speak to the professor, and assess challenges. This approach reinforces the message that the student is responsible for his or her own learning

In conclusion, a student is welcome at the BLC at any time. Our educational consultants are always ready to assist students. Before seeking a tutor, however, we encourage and support students in understanding the challenges of a class on their own. When the students understand their needs, the tutors and students are ready to maximize the benefits of the tutoring relationship.

Student Retention and Success Committee Members

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Rich DeCapua, Associate Dean of Students

Walter Caffey, Assoc. Vice-President, Enrollment and Retention Mgt

John Silveria, Assistant Dean of Students

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Michael Dickinson, Director, BLC

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