

Suffolk University
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Issue 14

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Editor-Mary Lally

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Information from the BLC
regarding Early Alerts will be
in your mailbox shortly. EA's
are due by October 13.

Chalk Talk Quick Tips

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

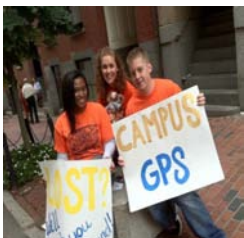
Don't hesitate. If a freshman student seems to be floundering, chances are s/he is floundering. Be proactive and arrange to see them individually as soon as possible.

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?"

Retention Scholars help

new students
navigate
campus
during first
week of
classes.



Student Retention & Success Newsletter

Fall 2010 Enrollment Update

submitted by Vice President Marguerite Dennis



As we begin another school year, the retention of students is more important than ever. As you know the landscape for higher education has changed over the past year. The worldwide and U.S. economic difficulties have had an impact on colleges and universities around the globe. All schools have been affected. U.S. community colleges and state schools have enrolled students in record numbers. For private colleges the situation is different. Many schools met their target enrollment of new students by significantly increasing institutional financial aid. Other schools, fearing a large summer "melt", accepted hundreds of students from their waitlists.

At Suffolk, we enrolled a **larger** freshman class than last year. However our retention and graduation rates continue to be problematic. Our goal this year, as it has been in the past, is to reduce attrition by 2%. Thank you in advance for helping Suffolk to achieve this goal.

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.

What grade will I get if I drop this course now? As of October 6 students will receive a grade of W on their transcript. Last day to drop a course without a failing grade is November 4. Students are not allowed to drop a class after the deadline. The Registrar's Office will send students reminders as these deadline dates approach.

DID YOU KNOW?

72% of traditional new freshmen live on campus. The total on-campus beds increased to 1250 with the 10 West Street expansion.

Late Course Withdrawal

After a review of the University's academic and administrative processes concerning late course withdrawals, it has been determined that petitions for late course withdrawals will no longer be considered or approved. This policy change reflects the University's commitment to administrative best practices and the academic integrity of courses. Please remind students that if they wish to withdraw from a course, they must withdraw through MySuffolk by the published deadline of November 4, 2010. After that date, requests for late withdrawals will not be considered. For more information, contact the Student Affairs Office at studentaffairs@suffolk.edu

First Year Experience Student Issues

September/October Happenings

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.

Long distance relationships.

Financial adjustment.

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

Academic stress from midterms builds with the great demand for studying and preparation.

Midterm workload pressures are followed by feelings of failure and loss of self-esteem.

Values exploration continues, especially in the area of sexuality.

Dating/non-dating/friendship anxieties extremely high. Non-dating students feel a sense of loss of esteem because so much value is placed upon dating.

Students decide to withdraw from school because they either realize that college is not the place for them, they return home for personal reasons, or they transfer to another school.

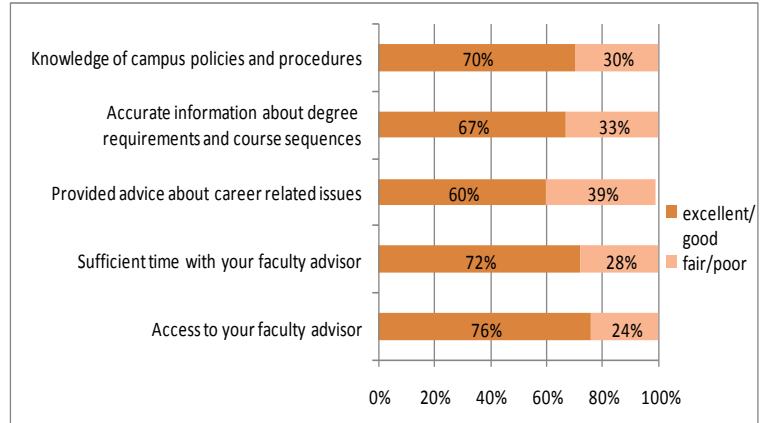
Grief from not being part of a group develops because of inadequate skills for finding a group, or from not being selected.

Financial strain sets in from lack of budgeting experience.

Spring 2010 Graduating Senior Survey

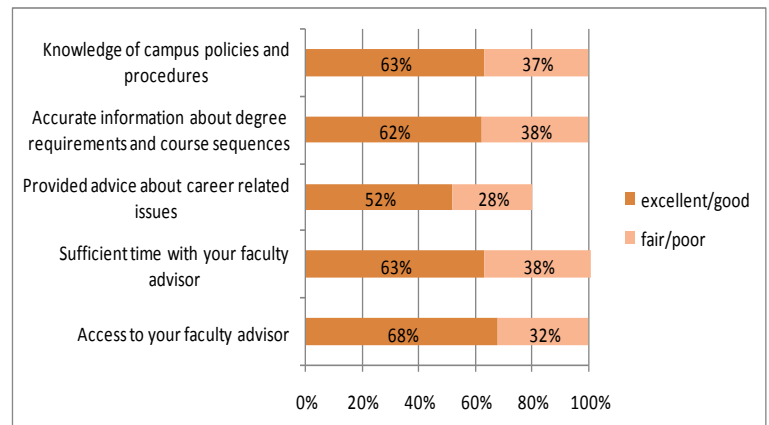
CAS Respondents

Please evaluate the following about your faculty advisor: (Only those respondents who found the question applicable)



This survey was conducted by Enrollment Research & Planning prior to graduation. There were a total of 379 SBS respondents and 554 CAS respondents to the survey. The complete results to the survey are available at: <http://www.suffolk.edu/offices/4360.html>

SBS Respondents:



Move in Day

submitted by Rod Waters, Director of Residence Life and Summer Programs



10 West Street is now the largest residence hall on campus with 470 beds.

DID YOU KNOW? New for Residence Life & Summer Programs this fall are five academic living-learning communities – Global Business; Government; Communication & Journalism; Entrepreneurship; and Honors Residential Scholars. Students applied to live on the same floor with academically like-minded students where they could exchange ideas and connect outside the classroom. Each living-learning community is paired with a faculty member from each represented department.

What are they thinking?

Below are some thoughts of various members of the Suffolk University community as the semester begins.

New Freshman: A newly admitted freshman came well prepared for his orientation/ registration program this August. Unfortunately he left behind at the registration table a set of index cards with carefully thought out questions he was prepared to ask at orientation: Why is a syllabus important? · Do professors take attendance? · Textbooks are expensive.. Do I have to buy them all? · Why would I need to contact my instructor outside of class? ·How much homework do students get? · How much study time per week should I expect for each class? · Is extra help available? · What role do parents have in their student's academics?



Veteran faculty member's first thoughts as he stood before his class: Who dresses these people? · I wonder which one will be the high maintenance one? · I am seeing a lot more Macs in the classroom. · They are so young! · If she doesn't stop messing with her phone I am going have to say something. · She looks scared. Am I being scary? · That candy bar looks good. · Is he asleep already? · I hope I live up to their expectations. · I can't wait until next class... this is fun!!!



Dean of Students: I am excited about the new incoming class when I hear that students are up early - they've showered and eaten breakfast and are off to class having read the material and are prepared to participate in class discussions and take notes.

I'm excited when they go to events – especially when they are shy – and then ask about what's happening next. It's even better when they take a risk and go to a planning meeting and start to become more involved in programs and activities.

I'm bummed when I hear students are struggling or unhappy and don't want to talk with anyone about it. Those feelings are common for new students. I hope we've made it clear to new students at Orientation and through the resident assistants that there are so many resources available to help students get off to a good start and all they have to do is ask for help.



Early Alert – Making a Difference

Submitted by Jason Knowles, Associate Director, BLC

As the new academic year begins, we inevitably scan the calendar for dates that will play pivotal roles in our students' challenges and successes. The Early Alert Project is one of those crucial times. As a community, we are steadily progressing in our submission and use of Early Alert data. It's time that we share and celebrate our successes.

Faculty indicated over one thousand alerts in the fall of 2009. The Ballotti Learning Center shared key information with the appropriate departments to facilitate timely outreach. By identifying students in danger at an early stage, the Suffolk community ensured that 83% of those with alerts persisted to the spring semester. We should take pride in this amazing accomplishment.

As we become more familiar with the project, we're becoming even more purposeful and successful in our efforts. Faculty-issued Early Alerts enable students to receive the appropriate personalized support that makes their experiences at Suffolk University academically vigorous within an environment that empowers and motivates the individual.

Faculty will be contacted in week four with regard to the Early Alert Project for this semester. We thank you in advance for your participation this semester. As more faculty participate in this valuable project, we hope to continue to increase our students' level of success.

Early Alert Statistics Fall 2009

	Total	Persisted	%
Fall 2009	1006	839	83%
International	134	105	78%
Math/CompSc	178	152	85%
Lost	33	13	39%
SL Alert	41	38	93%
ENG	59	52	88%

First Year Experience Student Issues

November / December Happenings

Academic Stress from midterms builds with the great demand for studying and preparation.

Midterm workload pressures are followed by feelings of failure and loss of self-esteem.

Students decide to withdraw from school because they either realize that college is not the place for them, they return home for personal reasons, or transfer to another school.

Grief from not being part of a group develops because of inadequate skills for finding a group or from not being selected by one.

Values exploration continues, especially in the area of sexuality.

Time conflicts between academic and social expectation emerges.

Signing up for classes involves starting to think about the following semester.

Adjusting to new study habits includes not just being able to study the way they did in high school. More time and greater workload needs to be incorporated into their schedule for studying.

Final exam pressures including anxiety, fear and guilt increase as exams approach and papers become due. Increased use of alcohol and drugs is related.

Extracurricular time strains-seasonal parties, concerts, and social service project and religious activities drain student energies.

Financial worries occur with the thought of Christmas/holiday gifts and travel costs.

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

Pre-holiday blues emerge especially for those who have concerns for family.

Friendship tensions become high with the onset of final exams.

Success Boston submitted by Associate Dean Sebastian Royo, CAS



Success Boston is a citywide initiative to significantly increase the number of Boston Public School (BPS) graduates who complete college degrees, launched by Mayor Thomas Menino and co-chaired by J. Keith Motley, chancellor of UMass Boston, Carol Johnson, Boston's superintendent of schools, and Paul Grogan, president of the Boston Foundation.

The initiative focuses on three areas – preparing for college in the high schools, getting into college, and getting through college. Suffolk is working on the latter area: helping BPS graduates complete college by increasing student engagement and developing strategies for addressing on-campus and off-campus issues that affect student persistence.

Objectives: Create a committee to collect and examine data on the experiences of BPS graduates currently attending Suffolk, communicate to the campus the process and seek input of interested staff and students, have committee members attend June 30, 2010 meeting at University Massachusetts Boston with representatives from other institutions to share their plans and explore opportunities for collaboration, and finally, complete a final written plan by July 1, 2010. Ultimately, the Success Boston Getting Through initiative will help Suffolk share best practices with its peer institutions, which will ideally lead to collaborative opportunities. Internally, it should provide the committee with leverage to start and fund new initiatives to support the retention and graduation rates of BPS students.

Tasks: Suffolk's first task was to complete an inventory of retention and support services. The inventory was provided by Ms. Ann Coles, College Access Senior Fellow and liaison for Suffolk. Initial research highlighted the fact that individual academic support services track students differently and that most do not specifically track BPS students. Therefore, the team determined that all support services should adopt a cohesive tracking system, the best option being the student management software, TutorTrac, which is currently being piloted by select offices.

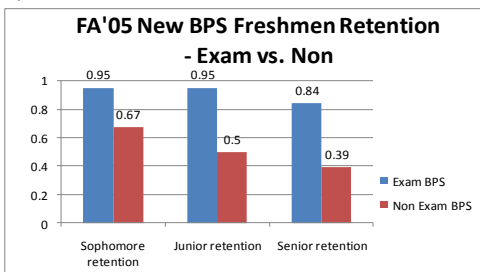
In the future, the team would like to examine if performance-based scholarships with an incentive component encourage academic success and persistence. Often time students cite financial difficulties as a detriment to persistence and a reason for leaving their studies; future research should address in order to increase the retention and graduation rates of BPS students, the team developed an institutional plan that outlines specific initiatives on how Suffolk can work to improve the college completion rates of BPS graduates.

Proposed Actions: One promising initiative is the Local Heroes Program. By engaging BPS graduates enrolled at Suffolk in meaningful service work and leadership opportunities, this scholarship program aims to increase retention and graduation rates among these students, develop local leaders engaged in their communities, and serve local populations. S.O.U.L.S. will work with BPS graduates enrolled at Suffolk to identify projects and organizations to partner with. Four scholarships will be available. In addition, the Office of Retention Services will continue its targeted outreach to BPS students and a specialized invitation will be sent to BPS students encouraging them to participate in the College of Arts and Sciences Peer Mentoring Program.

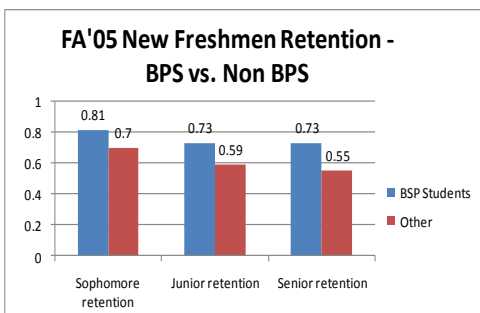
A BPS Retention/Graduation Panel Study, coordinated by Associate Dean Sebastián Royo, is the plan's fundamental component. The analysis of available data shows that Suffolk needs further qualitative information to understand the factors that contribute to BPS students' retention and graduation. The committee has developed a longitudinal study to gather quantitative and qualitative information on BPS students. A cohort of 30-35 students will be identified in the fall 2010 semester, administered brief quantitative career-oriented assessments, and be interviewed each semester about the academic, social, and co-curricular experiences and challenges they face each year from orientation to graduation. The interviews will then be transcribed and analyzed, which will allow for thematic issues to arise and specific instances to be noted. The goal is to identify systemic and emerging challenges that diminish students' Suffolk experience or create barriers. A report with supporting data (quotes) will be provided to key Suffolk offices and individuals with the goal of developing actionable plans. Reflection on this initiative has also sparked discussion about dual enrollment. The committee will meet this fall to further discuss the possibility of allowing BPS junior and senior students to enroll in our undergraduate classes.

The fourth and final element of new programming is the creation of a Suffolk University Bridge Program. The SU Bridge Program curriculum is designed to engage students and improve their likelihood of graduation by grounding their coursework in career interests and goals and strengthening their academic skills, specifically in mathematics and English. Students will receive targeted academic and career advising and participate in college and career success seminars that will help them build necessary academic survival skills and allow them ample career exploration opportunities. Program funding will be provided by the Boston Youth Fund/PIC and Suffolk University.

DID YOU KNOW?
The Academic Resource Center (ARC) is a pilot program at 10 West that will allow students from 150 Tremont and 10 West to receive tutoring from the BLC, the Math & Computer Science Support Center and the Writing Center in the residence halls. The ARC is open from 5-9 Sunday – Wednesday.



These charts represent the retention rate of BPS cohorts and suggest that BPS students are retained and graduated at higher rates than non-BPS students as well as BPS students who attend exam schools are retained at a higher rate than non-exam BPS.



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