

Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE)
Meeting Minutes
April 7, 2025

I. Call to Order

The Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE) was called to order on April 7, 2025, at 3 pm. in the Witter's Conference Room in the Booth Library.

Attendees:

Amy Odwarka, Amber Webb, Josh Norman, Michael Gillespie, Justin Tierney, Ed Treadwell, Michael Cornebise, Jody Stone, Danny Gourley Fischer, Jill Bowers, Bob Chestnut, Crystal Brown, Julie Dietz, Tanya Willard, Jessie Shuemaker.

II. Approval of Previous Minutes

Danny Gourley Fischer asked committee members if they had read the previous minutes and requested any amendments.

III. Subcommittee Reports:

- **Transfer Retention Subcommittee:** Amber Webb recently interacted with a transfer student who was very confused and overwhelmed. The student took an orientation course but was still unsure about many different things, like navigating D2L and not emailing a professor correctly. Amber proposes starting a subcommittee to improve transfer student retention. Tanya Willard and Julie Dietz volunteer to be a part of the subcommittee.
- **“Top Ten Things” Subcommittee:** Amber Webb was assigned the SEP 62, which was finding the top ten things students wish they knew before coming to EIU. The subcommittee sent out a survey to 898 students who identified as second-year students. Students had a week to complete the survey and were sent reminders. 90 students replied to the survey. Respondents were predominantly female, from rural areas, white, and first-generation college students. Ages ranged from 19 to 63 years old. Themes that were identified were time management, independence, networking, resources, scholarships, social life, academic expectations, living arrangements, mental health, and financial management. Josh Norman plans to take the information to the Marketing and Communications department and get something posted on campus.

IV. The First Hub Proposal

Michael Gillespie handed out to the committee members their “The First Hub” proposal. This hub would be focusing on first-generation students, students who are coming back after an extended absence. This hub would not only provide resources but also opportunities for students to learn more about what the campus has to offer, as well as

what it is like to be a student on campus. This proposal has been approved by the Provost and the President and has also been presented to University Advancement. Michael shares this proposal with the committee in the hopes that partnerships between different departments and the First Hub can be created. The First Hub will be located in McAfee Gym, room 2611. There will also be potential collaborations with the Counseling Center, Career Services, ITS, Academic Support Center, Center for Student Innovations, Student Success Center, Financial Aid, Academic Advising, HERC, Booth Library, NSFP, and FDIC.

V. Updates on ASC

Amber Webb announces that a center will be created for the Academic Support Center. It will be located in McAfee 1611. The center will be staffed with tutors, supplemental instructors, and graduate assistants. Amber also hopes to have peer mentors as well. The furniture in the Gregg Technology Center will also be moved to the new center, as will be more adjustable and accessible desks. The Academic Coaches will still be located on the lower level of McAfee between academic advising and the dance studio.

VI. Gateway Week 10 Progress Report

Danny Gourley Fischer discusses the week 10 progress reports. They have a 72.9% response rate. They also created a list of the highest non-passing courses and reported that the overall non-passing percentage was 29%. Danny also reminded everyone that the gateway is going through several changes. Gateway is getting rebranded as PACK (Pathways to Achievement, Confidence, and Knowledge). Don Dawson and Juanita Cross have agreed to be the dedicated advisors for PACK. Each advisor will have about 75-80 students and will be meeting with students biweekly. They are also removing the restriction that students can not join any Greek organization on campus. Don and Juanita have also met with Amber Webb about collaborating and creating study spaces for the PACK students, as well as having them utilize the tutors and coaches that will be in the Academic Support Center. Progress and Midterm reports will still be conducted.

VII. New Panther Advising

Danny Gourley Fischer talks about the survey that was sent out last summer to the incoming class regarding advising. The response rate was not great. It was sent out to over 800 students and only got 150 replies. The purpose of the survey was to see when students preferred to get advised. 77% of the students preferred to meet in person. The majority of students who preferred remote mentioned that distance from campus and getting a schedule sooner than waiting till orientation were the reasons why. The goal of New Panther Advising is to get a majority of students advised before orientation. Due to short staffing, they are also trying to encourage students to meet with their advisors earlier, either in person or virtually. Danny mentions that although staffing is short, they are getting tremendous help from other campus advisors and departments.

VIII. Student Success SEP Review

Josh Norman updates everyone on the strategic enrollment plan. A total of 81 plans have been submitted, new and plans that were not accomplished in the past cycle. Josh brought in the Student Success plan to the committee. There are 34 for Enrollment/Recruitment, 10 for Brand/Awareness, 27 for Student Success, and 11 for Technology and Efficiency. Although it may seem overwhelming, Josh is optimistic about where we are at in regard to progress. Josh is happy to discuss with anyone additional plans or any problems with the current 27 that are listed. Josh also presented the committee with a handout of all 27 actions plans for Student Success and whether they are new or from the previous cycle.

IX. Next Meeting

TBD.

~Minutes submitted by Brandy Verdin, Recording Secretary