



## Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE)

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## Minority Affairs' Attention to Retention

Since its inception in 1990, the office of Minority Affairs has endeavored to pursue, promote, and maintain programs that will heighten the awareness, presence, and success of minorities and other under-represented groups on our campus. Retention of under-represented students is one of the primary goals of Minority Affairs.

The programmatic thrust is centered on integrated learning and making sure our students are empowered and engaged, both in the classroom and through out-of-classroom experiences. We have implemented some successful programs to aid in the retention of our students of color. Listed below are programs in which we hope you are encouraging your students to get involved.

**TRiO-Student Support Services (SSS)** is a comprehensive, federally funded program that offers academic assistance to 175 undergraduate students at Eastern Illinois University. The goal of **TRiO** is to increase retention and graduation rates of eligible students and to foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of low-income and first-

generation college students and/or college students with disabilities.

This program continues to increase each year our annual report is submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. The table below indicates the freshman-to-sophomore retention, 6-year graduation, and good standing of students in the TRiO program each fall.

Cohort	Retention	Earned Graduation	Good Standing
FA10	79%	56%	80%
FA11	91%	57%	92%

In addition to TRiO, Minority Affairs has also developed a program aimed at retention and success of minority males, the "Successful Teaching Relative to Overcoming Negative Generalities" (S.T.R.O.N.G.) Minority Male Mentoring program is designed to work with the minority males on coping on a predominantly white campus, personal development skills, graduate education, and academic advising.

Since the first year of the program,

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## CORE Corner:

In the fall 2013 edition of this newsletter, we explained the Noel-Levitz Retention Predictor Model, which has given us new information related to student retention at Eastern. This model was completed early in the FA14 semester, so plans to use the information were quickly developed and data are still being analyzed, but we wanted to share what we know so far.

Advisors were asked to talk to students who had 3

or more risk factors (there were 8 factors in the model) and give those students extra attention. The advisors in the Academic Advising Center (AAC) devised a set of 11 intervention strategies and talking points to use with their advisees. The advisors paid particular attention to students who were undeclared, whose major put them at-risk of attrition, or whose academic skills did not match their major

ambitions. A total of 1,822 interventions were given for 473 students advised in the AAC. Interventions included resources for financial concerns, tutoring, and academic help; discussing major requirements and academic rigor, how to get involved on campus, and social adjustment.

University Foundations instructors were also provided a list of their students with their risk factors and asked to pay

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## Spotlight On . . . EIU4

### Did you know?

Students who attend their EIU Reads reading circle are more likely to persist than students who do not; there is an 8% gap between Reads attendees and Reads non-participants.

In FA13, the average gpa for new freshmen who attended EIU Reads was 2.7 compared to 2.26 for those who did not attend.

FA13 EIU Reads participants earned an average of 12.83 credits while non-participants earned 11.55 credits.

Students who attended EIU Reads discussion circles in FA13 were on average in the 75% quartile of the predictor (.51 average), while those who did not attend fell into the 50% quartile (.38 average). The predictor established student risk by quartile with the bottom 25% at most risk and the top 25% at least risk.

Since its start in 2002, EIU4 has been working with students, faculty, and campus resources to help students reach their goal of graduation in four years. The program is simple: if a student completes the student responsibilities, Eastern guarantees they will complete their degree in 4 years.

The program assists students by sending out helpful reminders, getting them in touch with the necessary resources on campus, assisting in securing seats in closed classes if applicable, monitoring their progress toward the degree, and notification of problems.

EIU4 also offers a scholarship opportunity for the first year and access to EIU4 website, which includes 4-year degree plans for all eligible majors.

Each year the program is re-evaluated to see what additional services could be offered to our students to aid them in reducing time to degree and helping them reach their academic goals.

This past fall we launched EIU2—our two-year transfer graduation guarantee program. This program works similar to the EIU4 program, but students must be

first-time transfer students who have completed an Associate's Degree and are entering a related major.

Students asked to participate in the EIU2 program are given the same benefits as students in the EIU4 program. In addition, students in EIU2 have a one-on-one meeting during the first semester to discuss the program, ask any questions, and be directed to important on-campus resources.

EIU4 was also included in a recent publication by Hanover Research (published January 2014), *Four Year Graduation Guarantee Programs*. This study focused on the effectiveness of graduation guarantee programs. Out of the schools that were involved, EIU was the only 4-year public institution mentioned.

EIU4 tracks first to second year retention as well as 4-year and 6-year graduation rates. In 2008, EIU4 moved to enrolling all eligible students in the program, which accounts for the increase in student numbers in the table on the opposite page; this table provides the graduation and retention rates for the program to date.

## CORE Corner cont.

particular attention to students with many risk factors.

UF instructors provided 1,323 total interventions for 395 students with multiple risk factors in their courses. Interventions included bringing in speakers on topics related to the risk factors, such as financial concerns, choosing a major, or building academic skills; individual consultation with the instructors; referrals to additional support services; completing progress reports from Gateway, Athletics, and SIHL; class discussions on topics related to the model; and sending students' emails about these topics.

In addition, Financial Aid reached out to students who were still in the verification process to encourage them to

complete this part of the financial aid process. The Bursar's Office contacted students who had a large financial gap (more than \$9000) to discuss their options.

Housing focused on improving the experience of hispanic/latino students. The department conducted a focus group to identify ways in which they could provide additional support.

The predictor also indicated that undecided students are at-risk of not staying to graduation. To help provide additional support to this population, Housing will be establishing a learning community for undecided students in fall 2014.

CORE continues to work with the data provided from the model.

## Spotlight On EIU4 cont . . .

EIU4 Retention and Graduation Rates Compared to University Rates							
Cohort	EIU4 # Students	EIU4 Retention	University Retention	EIU4 4-Year Graduation	Univ. 4-Year Graduation	EIU4 6-Year Graduation	Univ. 6-Year Graduation
2002	98	85%	78%	51%	29%	72%	56%
2003	203	79%	78%	38%	30%	60%	58%
2004	156	82%	80%	44%	34%	74%	62%
2005	57	88%	79%	44%	32%	72%	59%
2006	123	87%	82%	48%	33%	73%	60%
2007	189	85%	81%	41%	34%	71%	60%
2008	934	79%	79%	25%			
2009	793	80%	79%	26%			

## Minority Affairs cont.

the student participation increased from 10 men to 51 in two years. The S.T.R.O.N.G. MENtoring Program has been on the campus of Eastern Illinois University since fall 2011 and has now touched approximately 500 African American men through the different programming that has been offered on campus by this group.

While many of Minority Affairs programs are designed for current students, the ACCESS Granted program was developed to introduce the university setting to students of color who have been admitted to the University but who have not yet matriculated. This program began as a recruitment program but soon became a retention program. High school seniors are brought to campus each March. Approximately 40-50 students participate each year.

The yield rate for students in the program exceeds the university yield

rate for all incoming freshmen. The first ACCESS Granted class was students fall 2006, and this group of students have exceeded the rates for retention and graduation for all students of color. Retention after 3 semesters is 91%; the average GPA for 2006 is 2.66; and the graduation rate for the class of 2006 is 65%. Since its inception, each class has been unique in retention:

- 85% of the students who attended the 2007 ACCESS Granted enrolled at EIU that fall.
- 2008 ACCESS Granted students average GPA is 2.9 compared to the overall GPA for 2008 minority students which was 2.66.
- After 2 years, 100% of the 2009 cohort were still enrolled.
- After 3 years, 2010 ACCESS

Granted students average GPA is 2.90.

- 72% of the 2011 ACCESS Granted students were still enrolled after SP13.
- 2012 ACCESS Granted students had an average 3.0 H.S. GPA.
- 30% of the 2013 ACCESS Granted students received the Commitment to Excellence Award.

As you can see from the data above, this program helps students succeed, which leads to retention and eventually graduation.

Along with special programs for certain populations of minority students, Minority Affairs provides events, lectures, and celebrations throughout the year to recognize the heritage of minority students and to focus on issues of interest to this population.

Grade Point Averages for African American Males at EIU Fall 2012-Spring 2013						
	Fall 2012 Semester GPA			Spring 2013 Semester GPA		
	All African American Males	STRONG Participants	Difference	All African American Males	STRONG Participants	Difference
Freshmen	2.25	2.25	0	2.37	2.04	-.33
Sophomores	2.42	2.67	+.25	2.31	2.52	+.21
Juniors	2.47	2.56	+.09	2.43	2.82	+.39
Seniors	2.65	2.70	+.05	2.60	2.72	+.12
Cumulative GPA	2.47	2.50	+.03	2.43	2.49	+.06

## Classroom Instructors' Retention Best Practices

Retaining students in a university environment is not simply an administrative responsibility, but a campus-wide challenge that requires faculty participation. In fact, there are many ways that faculty can aid with student retention.

Strategies for student retention in the classroom environment typically fall under two broad categories: (1) showing students that they are valued, and (2) creating a sense of community.

### ***Showing students they are valued***

One of the easiest ways to let students know they are valued is to quickly learn and use their preferred names in the classroom. This simple strategy gives the student a sense of identity and lets them know that you value them as a person and not simply as another student on the roster.

Similarly, letting students know they were missed after being absent from class shows a high level of caring and commitment. This message can also be conveyed through the Early Alert System, which notifies campus support groups that a student is underperforming and is in danger of not meeting academic expectations.

Discussing the Early Alert System

in the course syllabus is a great way to let students know from the outset that you expect a high level of performance, and that you will step in if necessary to provide them with campus resources (see the box below).

In addition, simply making time for students during and beyond regular office hours is a great way to let students know they are important to you and the University. When meeting with students, try to go beyond the course content and make an effort to learn about their academic and career goals. This helps the student realize you care about their progress, and in turn, helps you convey the course material in a context that is meaningful to them. Also, some students need to be invited or encouraged to attend office hours.

### ***Creating a sense of community***

The importance of feeling like you belong as a student cannot be overstated. If a student feels like their absence will go unnoticed, they are more likely to be absent. As an instructor, you can create a sense of community by encouraging student-student interactions through group activities within and outside of the classroom.

You can also use your learning management system (*i.e.* Desire2Learn) to create student-led discussions and forums. This gives the students a virtual community to express ideas and share opinions with each other.

The faculty-student interaction is also extremely important for creating a sense of community for the student. For instance, it is worthwhile to 'work the room' and get involved in one-on-one and group discussions with students during classroom activities and during lectures when appropriate. These interactions help strengthen the relationship between the faculty member and students, which will help open an easy channel of communication between both parties.

In addition, attending extracurricular events, such as those hosted by registered student organizations (RSOs), shows students you are involved in the greater campus community and are available outside the classroom setting. Furthermore, letting the students know about the University support available to them on campus (*e.g.* The Writing Center, SSC, etc.), creates a greater sense of community within the entire campus (*i.e.* "we are all working together as a team").

## Early Alert Syllabus Notice

For faculty who wish to use the Early Alert System connected to the course roster, you may want to include a notice on your syllabus that you will be using the system. This helps students understand what the Early Alert System is and why you are using it. Focusing on the fact that you are using it to help them, not as a punishment, can let them know you want them to succeed and the EAS is a resource to help them with their academic success.

### **Syllabus notice:**

Eastern maintains an Early Alert System (EAS) to help students know when they are not performing up to academic standards. Alerts may be given for poor attendance, not turning work in on time, or doing poorly on an assignment or test. EAS staff will contact you to help you find resources to help you be a successful student. Resources may include time management, study skills, test-taking, finding tutors, or other resources related to academic issues. I will use the EAS if I believe you could benefit from talking to a success coach about these issues.