

Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE)
Meeting Minutes
April 9th, 2026

I. Call to Order

The Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE) was called to order on April 9, 2026, at 9 am. in the Witter's Conference Room in the Booth Library.

Attendees: Dr. Amber Webb, Bobbi Kingery, Dr. Wade Smith, Dr. Ed Treadwell, Amy Odwarka, Dr. John Blue, Jessie Shuemaker, Danny Gourley Fischer, Justin Tierney, Jeremy Alexander, Dr. Michael Cornebise, Vicki Phillips, Crystal Brown, Dr. Chris Mitchell, Dr. Michael Gillespie, Mandi Starwalt, Dr. Angie Jacobs, Dr. Amy Rosenstein

II. Subcommittee Updates

• **Panthers Persist**

- Student focus groups conducted using an ecological validation model.
- Key findings:
 - Small successes build student confidence and perseverance.
 - Students identified effective strategies for overcoming challenges.
 - Increased willingness to communicate with faculty and advocate for themselves.

III. Writing Center Move

- The Writing Center is relocating to Booth Library in Fall 2026.
 - Located on the 3rd floor near Collaboration Commons.
 - New furniture is funded by library gift funds.
 - Increased accessibility and visibility for students.
 - Stronger collaboration between Writing Center staff and librarians.
- Planned collaborative programming with PACK students to increase engagement with library resources.

IV. Handshake & Federal Work Study

- Handshake will continue as the platform for Federal Work Study.
- Key concerns:

- Ensuring equitable access for incoming freshmen.
- Timeline for job postings and applications.
- Need for earlier and repeated communication (email, parent outreach).

V. Loan/Credit Volume Changes

- Upcoming federal financial aid changes (effective Fall 2026):
 - Loan reductions tied to enrollment status (below full-time).
 - Withdrawals may reduce loan eligibility retroactively (25%).
 - Grad PLUS loans are being phased out.
 - Parent PLUS loans capped at \$65,000.
- Implications:
 - Increased financial risk for students withdrawing from courses.
 - Potential rise in private loan usage.

VI. PACK 11 Progress Report

- Participation slightly lower due to shortened response window.
- Key findings:
 - Strong correlation between advisor meetings and student success.
 - Students with four or more advising interactions show higher academic achievement.
- Data analysis confirms the statistical significance of this relationship.
- PACK Advisor, Don Dawson is retiring. Last day is August 31st, 2026.

VII. Midterm Outreach

- Outreach conducted to students earning at least one “D” grade:
 - Email and text message outreach implemented.
 - Encouraged connection to campus resources.
- EIU 2919 students below a C:
 - Registration hold placed.
 - Required meetings implemented to develop academic success plans.

VIII. IBHE Success Initiative

- EIU selected to focus on **basic needs support infrastructure**.
- Key findings from student focus groups:
 - Students struggle to navigate campus resources.
 - Support is visible early in the semester but decreases over time.
- Proposed solution:
 - Develop coordinated case management using Navigate 360.
 - Improve sustained communication and resource accessibility.

IX. 2526 SEP Review & 2627 SEP Review

- Materials are distributed for review.
- Committee asked to:
 - Review and reflect prior to the next meeting.
 - Provide feedback.
- Josh Norman will be sending a follow-up email with further details about the items.

X. Residency Requirement Update

- New 2-year residency requirement in effect.
- Ongoing outreach includes:
 - Direct communication and door-to-door notifications.
- Potential financial consequences for non-compliance are under consideration.
- Approximately 230 students have not signed housing contracts.

XI. Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, May 14th at 9 am in the Witter's Conference Room in the Booth Library.

~Minutes submitted by Brandy Verdin, Recording Secretary