

**Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

**I. Call to Order**

The Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE) was called to order on October 16, 2025, at 9 am. in the Witter's Conference Room in the Booth Library.

**Attendees:**

Amber Webb, Jessie Shuemaker, John Blue, Danny Gourley Fischer, Crystal Brown. Michael Gillespie, Justin Tierney, Wade Smith, Ed Treadwell, Jeremy Alexander, Tanya Willard, Bobbi Kingery, Angela Jacobs, Cassondra Strawser, Chris Mitchell, Josh Norman, Julie Dietz, Amy Rosenstein

**II. P.A.C.K Week 5 Progress Reports:**

- Week 5 progress reports show a 68.3% faculty response rate, indicating strong engagement.
- 59.3% of grades reported were passing, with 19 students earning three or more A'S.
- EIU 1111 remains a challenge due to attendance and engagement issues rather than course rigor.
  - For EIU 1111, 92 student grades reported; 46 of those students are non-passing.
- Data seems promising compared to past semesters.
- 31 students (19.7%) have 3 or more non passing grades
  - Outreach includes email, texting, and outreach through housing to students who have multiple non-passing grades.

**III. Future of UG Academic Advising at EIU**

- Discussions are ongoing about the realignment of academic advising.
- Goal to develop a coordinated, baseline advising model while allowing flexibility across departments.
  - Emphasis on training and creating shared standards for all advising units.
- Discussion on the importance of relational advising versus purely transactional advising.
- Potentially creating an advisor notification system for students who drop critical courses.

**IV. Retention Symposium Break-Out Discussions**

- A summary of data collected from the Retention Symposium breakout groups was presented.
- 10 themes were identified from campus-wide input to inform future retention initiatives.
- Feedback from the symposium was highly positive with strong engagement across campus.
- Plans to share compiled results with VPs and campus stakeholders.
- Key discussion questions explore barriers, collaboration, best practices, desired date, and retention recommendations.

## **V. ASC Updates**

- Outreach expanded: peer educators trained through NASPA Certified Peer Educator program and Solutions-Focused Training.
- Contact made with all registered student organizations, Greek life, and residence halls to host presentations and study tables.
- 15 organizations participated; 18 students attended study tables.
- 106 student surveys collected to understand student definitions of success—responses highlighted belonging, well-roundedness, and personal growth.
- Plans to continue outreach after midterm grades.

## **VI. CORE Priorities for AY 25/26**

- Reviewed and confirmed three existing work groups:
  - Panthers Persist — Holistic student support model inspired by life-coaching programs at OU and Texas.
  - Advising Models for Retention — Exploring advising approaches that foster stronger relationships and proactive engagement.
  - Survey of EIU Retention Practices — Inventory of departmental retention efforts to identify scalable best practices.
- Added Veterans Connection as a fourth initiative, led by Josh Norman.

## **VII. CORE Subcommittees**

- **Panther Persist** - proposed by Amber Webb
  - Bobbi Kingery
  - Amber Webb
  - Dr. Julie Dietz

- Crystal Brown
- Dr. Chris Mitchell
- Dr. Cassandra Strawser
- Dr. Tanya Willard
- **Advising Models for Retention** - proposed by Dr. Julie Dietz
  - Dr. Julie Dietz
  - Danny Gourley Fischer
  - Dr. Amy Rosenstein
- **Survey of EIU Retention Practice** - proposed by Amy Odwarka
  - Amy Odwarka
  - Dr. Angela Jacobs
- **Veterans Connection**-Proposed by Josh Norman
  - Josh Norman
  - Dr. Julie Dietz
  - Jessie Shuemaker
  - Wade Smith
- Vicki Phillips and Justin Tierney will provide data for any group if needed.

#### **VIII. Veterans Connection**

- • Presentation of a new Student Veteran Connection initiative, part of the George W. Bush Institute Stand-To Veteran Leadership Program project.
- Within the last 3 years, EIU's student veteran retention is 6% below the average, and graduation rate is 3% below the average.
- Surveys sent out showed that over 90% of student veterans express interest in a mentorship and support program.
- Launch on-campus pilot Fall 2026 and online component Fall 2027 in partnership with Circle or similar platform.
- 14 students (who are veterans from different branches) are interested in becoming mentors.

#### **IX. Next Meeting**

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 9 am in the Witter's Conference Room in the Booth Library.

*~Minutes submitted by Brandy Verdin, Recording Secretary*