

# **RETENTION AND STUDENT SUCCESS TASK FORCE STATUS REPORT JUNE 2014**

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

With the changing demographic landscape in higher education, retention and student success have garnered significant national attention in recent years. More locally, the trended data show a dramatic decline in New York State high school graduates through 2019. In addition to a diminished traditional recruitment pool, Nazareth has experienced a declining freshman retention rate in recent years (86% in 2008 to 78.6% in 2012).

Given these factors, retention plays a critical role in achieving the enrollment goals laid out in the College's 2020 Strategic Plan (3100 to 3200 FTE). As such, the Administrative Program Review Committee (APRC) identified the need for a position at the college responsible for retention. To address this need, the Assistant Vice President for Student Services and Retention position was created. One of the first orders of business for this position was to convene a representative task force to develop a plan to address student attrition.

Informed by institutional data and national research, the Retention and Student Success task force approached its charge with the understanding that there is no single cause of student attrition and no single solution to improving retention and student success. Rather, it takes a sustained campus-wide commitment, balanced with targeted data driven intervention strategies.

To be sustainable, a commitment to student success must be firmly ingrained in the campus culture. As a first step towards that end, a shared definition of student success was created:

*"The true measure of student success is how well students are prepared to accomplish their current and future academic, personal and professional goals through the development of knowledge, a sense of responsibility and self-reliance, and a connection to the college and wider community."*

Plans were then developed to communicate the student success definition to students, faculty and staff to engender a consistent and broad understanding of what student success is and how the college supports it.

- All new employees will receive information on the culture of student success through new employee orientation.
- To help staff articulate their impact, all administrative units will be asked to identify and assess at least one unit goal focusing on student success.
- For students, the definition is built into new student orientation, Academic and College Success (ACS\*101), Summer Start, First Year Experience (FYE) programming, peer tutoring, Success Coaching, Starfish, and a pilot mentoring program.

In addition to promoting a culture of student success, the student focused efforts are also designed to create a more cohesive and consistent student experience, which has been identified as a best practice to diminish incongruence and improve student success.

Beyond the steps described above to develop a culture of student success, the mentoring program in particular represents a targeted data driven intervention strategy that is the other key element to improving retention and student success. Students will be selected for the pilot using the new student success model that identifies "at risk" students based on academic and

engagement/motivation factors. The selection process also provides the ability to better assess the impact of the program.

While many of the strategies noted above and outlined in the report focus on first year students, other strategies have been designed to impact all students. Further, the task force will continue its work in the 2014-15 academic year to monitor work in progress, advance existing plans, and solidify a long term plan and structure that facilitates the same systematic approach used to develop strategies for first year students to be applied to transfer students, upperclassmen, and graduate students. If you are interested in getting involved with retention and student success work going forward, please contact Andy Morris at 2113 or [amorris@naz.edu](mailto:amorris@naz.edu).

Finally, the task force owes a debt of gratitude to all those who have served on past student success teams at the College. That work established a foundation and guided the direction for this task force. This report is intended to build upon that work and make key advances the task force has deemed necessary to make significant improvement to retention and student success at Nazareth in the years to come.

## **HISTORY, CHARGE and METHODOLOGY**

The Retention and Student Success task force, convened in November 2013, was charged with:

1. Reviewing readily available data, findings and recommendations regarding retention and student success.
2. Establishing strategies to address factors known to impact attrition (for undergraduate and graduate students, in and outside the classroom).
3. Identifying key performance indicators and agreed upon measurement milestones to monitor retention.
4. Developing a clear and consistent process for planning and assessing strategies to support student success and retention
5. Soliciting feedback on, and finalizing, a definition of student success to be used as an assessment tool in promoting a culture of student success in all areas of the college

To accomplish its five-fold charge, the task force began by viewing a webinar hosted by Joe Cuseo, a noted scholar in the student success arena, entitled “Identifying Causes of Student Attrition: How to Build a Comprehensive Retention Plan” (see attachment A for webinar PowerPoint). In the webinar, Cuseo outlines seven attrition factors that formed the framework for organizing the task force’s strategies to impact attrition.

To better understand attrition factors at Nazareth, the task force compiled and categorized over 90 student success related reports and documents on Active Collab. The student success team reports from 2009-2012 were especially useful in understanding recent data analysis and strategies employed to improve student success.

A subgroup of the task force reviewed the predictive student success model that was built in 2009-2010 and created a more robust linear regression model (see attachment B for details). An interactive retention dashboard was also built to enable filtering retention rates on one or a combination of variables. In addition, ITS is developing reports to monitor registration and immediate leaves of absence and withdrawals.

The past student success team reports were also useful in that they contained a definition of student success created in 2009 based on the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ (AACU’s) essential learning outcomes. This definition was incorporated into a definition created by Joe Cuseo that was shared with faculty for their input at the January Faculty Assembly Day that focused on student success. The same was done at a staff assembly on student success in March, which in turn was followed by a follow up meeting with the Administrative Directors group (see attachment C and D for faculty and staff assembly notes).

The assemblies helped to define and promote a culture of student success at the college. At the staff assembly and subsequent Directors meeting, the use of administrative assessment was introduced as a means to further embed a culture of student success. Developing a plan for administrative assessment focused on student success was spearheaded by a separate group made up of representatives from each division and lead by Associate to the President, Pat Genthner. A task force liaison served on this administrative assessment group and the group consulted regularly with the task force as plans developed.

## **FINDINGS AND OUTCOMES**

Below are the summary findings and outcomes from each element of the task force charge. Details on strategies and program development are provided in the next section of the report.

1. *Review readily available data, findings and recommendations regarding retention and student success.*

A review of available student success data and documents shows Nazareth's long standing commitment to student success and also reveals opportunities for progress. These opportunities include a more systematic approach to using data to develop and assess programs, the establishment of lasting structures to monitor progress on inter-divisional initiatives, and broad "culture bending" efforts to more firmly root student success into the fabric of the institution. The task force attempted to strike a balance between developing specific programming to promote students success and broader systematic efforts to build a culture of student success.

2. *Establish strategies to address factors known to impact attrition (for undergraduate and graduate students, in and outside the classroom).*

Strategies to target specific attrition factors are outlined in the next section of the report. Details on establishing a culture of student success are included under charge #5 below.

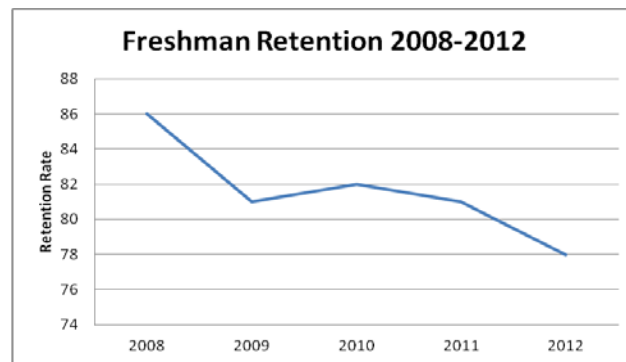
3. *Identify key performance indicators and agreed upon measurement milestones to monitor retention.*

As noted above, a central theme in reviewing past student success work was the need to take a more systematic approach to student success data. This starts with making a clear distinction between using data to develop and assess programs and using data to monitor returning student enrollment. The former is addressed under charge #4 below. To address the latter, ITS is developing two reports to assist in tracking unregistered students. The first is designed to replace the manual data scrubbing that is currently necessary to summarize unregistered students data, which is expected to save 1-2 person hours each week from the start of registration through the start of classes. The second report will tally immediate leaves of absence and withdrawals during the fall and spring semesters, providing mid-cycle indicators of potential returning student numbers.

To bridge the gap between data used for program planning and data used for monitoring enrollment, Nick Lamendola in Institutional Research has created an interactive retention dashboard that the AVP for Student Services and Retention can utilize to call up retention rates for single or multiple years based on one or a combination of student variables. This tool provides on demand access to a wealth of retention data that can be mined to identify significant trends that can inform strategic planning and program development.

4. *Develop a clear and consistent process for planning and assessing strategies to support student success and retention.*

The new student success model provides the ability to set first year retention goals based on granular analysis of student profiles and to get more reliable assessment results by establishing sound experimental design in assigning interventions to students. Using this approach, we have set a goal of increasing the freshman retention rate for students in the identified “at risk” categories by 10% through mentoring and coaching programs. While the 2013 freshman retention rate is currently trending towards an improvement over the last few years, the table below shows the decrease in the retention rate from 2008 to 2012.



Given this trend, the retention rate goal for the 2014 freshman cohort has been set at 83%. As outlined in the chart below, increasingly stronger retention rate goals have been set for each year through 2020.

| FRESHMAN RETENTION RATE GOALS |          |          |          |
|-------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| 204-2019                      |          |          |          |
| Fall Freshman Cohort          | 2nd Year | 3rd Year | 4th Year |
| 2014                          | 83       | 76       | 73       |
| 2015                          | 84       | 77       | 74       |
| 2016                          | 85       | 79       | 77       |
| 2017                          | 85       | 79       | 77       |
| 2018                          | 86       | 80       | 78       |
| 2019                          | 87       | 81       | 79       |
| 2020                          | 87       | 81       | 79       |

These are ambitious goals based on a comparison of retention rates at similar institutions but deemed feasible based on the predicted impact of current and planned retention initiatives. These goals should be revisited each year based on the profile of the incoming class as defined by the student success model. Ideally, the model would help inform future admissions decisions in order to bring in a class with optimal retention potential. It should also be noted that despite the best efforts, it is difficult to predict retention rates year to year. The retention goals set forth may also be viewed as targeting an average of 85% from 2014-2020.

The new student success model was also used to analyze the profile of the incoming 2014 freshman class to determine four and six year graduation rate goals. Through this analysis, we would predict a 61% four year and a 71% six year graduation rate for the 2014 cohort if no improvements were made to the retention rates for these students over past years' averages. With the planned retention strategies, we have set goals of a 63% four year and a 73% six year graduation rate for the 2014 cohort.

To maintain focus on these long range goals, it is important that lasting structures are established. The task force will continue its work in 2014-15 to monitor work in progress, solidify long range plans, and enhance coordination between the RSS Task Force and other student success related bodies (Transfer Advocacy Group, the Learning support Advisory Council, the Starfish Implementation team, and the Student Support Services leadership team). In addition, the task force will review campus-wide administrative student success goals to identify what is working well and where further development is needed and make recommendations for senior leadership to inform strategic planning and resource allocation.

5. *Solicit feedback on, and finalizing, a definition of student success to be used as an assessment tool in promoting a culture of student success in all areas of the college.*

After incorporating feedback from faculty and staff, a definition of student success has been finalized (see attachment E). As outlined in the next section of the report, plans are already in place to promote the definition among students. In addition, the definition will be shared through new employee orientation, with a separate session on student success planned for new faculty in fall 2014. Finally, all administrative units will use the definition to help guide at least one student success annual goals for 2014-15. Training will be provided over the summer to help Directors develop these goals and assessment plans for them.

In addition to the definition, a staff - new student mentoring program was proposed by the task force and will be piloted in 2014-15 (see attachment F). Based on a similar model at Sienna College that had a significant impact on retention, the program is designed to create a connection to the college and a sense of personal validation for selected “at risk” students identified through the new student success model. The program is also intended to further embed the culture of student success at the college by giving staff from all areas of the college the opportunity to form meaningful relationships with students and learn about student success initiatives and resources.



## **STRATEGIES: WORK IN PROGRESS/PLANNED**

The following is a summary of work carried out or planned by the task force, its subgroups, or individual members working with other campus constituencies to address the attrition factors identified by Cuseo (see attachment A for Cuseo webinar). Strategies and initiatives are based on review of past student success team recommendations, existing student success data and findings, feedback from faculty and staff assemblies, and discussions at task force meetings.

This is intended to be a living document, to be updated as the task force monitors and updates work in progress and planned initiatives.

### **1. Incongruence/Poor Fit**

- One of the tools the task force reviewed was the student success model created in 2009-2010. In this model, the range of variables taken into account to assign a score predicting students' likelihood of success made it difficult to design targeted interventions. A new Student Success Model has been created using linear regression modeling to provide more granular analysis of student risk factors, providing the ability to develop and assess more targeted proactive interventions (see Attachment B).
  - Planned: Develop a student success model for transfer students, upperclassmen, and graduate students to inform development of intervention strategies. Explore methods to incorporate financial factors into the model(s).
- In reviewing attrition factors, the task force noted that students in the Excel program have significantly higher than average attrition rates. Members of the task force are involved in ongoing work to examine and amend the purpose of the program, the types of students admitted, financial aid awards for Excel students, and communication with students regarding their financial commitments.
- A well-coordinated and consistent first year experience can help minimize incongruence by allowing the college to better articulate expectations for students' first year at Nazareth. Members of the task force continue to work together and with others on campus to build a first year experience that emphasizes student success.
  - This messaging begins in Orientation. Specific strategies developed for fall 2014 include:
    - Training Orientation Leaders on the definition of student success and support programs available to students.
    - Using the ACS\*101 class meeting during orientation to introduce the student success definition that serves as the framework for the revised ACS\*101 curriculum.
    - Revisiting the definition with students during Orientation weekend in the context of the new Core curriculum.
    - Hosting a Student Support Services open house so students can learn about services, meet staff, and dispel misconceptions.
    - The focus for Orientation is to send a consistent message regarding student success and present it in thought provoking and engaging ways.

- At faculty and staff assemblies (see Attachments C and D), questions were raised regarding analysis of why students stay, as opposed to why they leave. The use of Net Promoter Score is being explored as possible student satisfaction measure.
  - Planned: Develop proposal and implementation plan (timing, delivery method, use of results, etc.).
- To help manage the range of services, events, and programs that support student success, a co-curricular map should be developed to help articulate the "Naz experience" outlining major events and programs supporting student success for first year students, upperclassmen, transfer students and graduate students.
- In analyzing attrition data, several financial factors were identified that correlate to lower retention rates, especially for sophomore to junior rates. A financial education resource, SALT, is currently being utilized to improve students' financial literacy.
  - Planned: Explore strategies to address financial indicators that correlate with lower retention rates.

## **2. Academic Under-preparedness**

- One of the strategies that resulted from previous student success team work was the implementation of a success coaching program for "at risk" students. The challenges with the previous student success model noted above, as well as the small number of students participating in the coaching program have made it difficult to assess the effectiveness of the program. Student selection for fall 2014 will be guided by the new success model and is being developed in consideration of other outreach programs in order to maintain a more valid experimental design that will provide reliable assessment results. In addition, training and qualitative assessment for coaching are being developed that incorporate the student success definition, once again reinforcing a consistent message to students.
- To further reinforce consistent messaging and student experience, the student success definition is being utilized in the development of campus-wide tutor training and outcomes assessment, as well as in the development of the Summer Start program activities and outcomes assessment.
- Another strategy that resulted from previous student success team work is the implementation of Starfish Early Alert software. The Starfish implementation team continues to meet weekly to manage the implementation, assessment, and refinement of the program. Outcomes from the student success definition are being built into the Starfish communication and assessment plans.
- In reviewing recommendations from past student success team work, several recommendations involved examining courses with high D, F, and W grade rates to develop learning support strategies to improve success in these courses. This work is ongoing. The Learning Support Advisory group, which was formed in part to address these challenges, met this spring to refocus its purpose. Specific action items to be addressed in 2014-15 are being developed this summer.

## **3. Motivation**

- Cuseo has shown that engaging teaching pedagogies are linked with increased academic success, especially for first year students. Instructors who have proven records of engaging their students have been and should continue to be sought out to teach FYS.

- Feedback from faculty assembly (see Attachment C) identified the need for a centralized learning support website. The Center for Student Success website is in development to serve as a clearinghouse for internal and external learning support programs, services, resources, and tools.
- Building on course evaluations and instructor input, as well as task force work and discussions on student success, significant changes have been made to the Academic and College Success (ACS\*101) course to specifically address student motivation:
  - A course outline was developed that articulates in plain language and in student learning outcomes, the purpose of each topic in the curriculum so all instructors, especially those who are new to the course, have a clear and shared understanding of learning objectives.
  - The outline also links each course topic to one or more themes from the student success definition in order to demonstrate the relevance of the topic and allowing instructors to relate all topics to a common denominator, student success.
  - Lesson plan ideas and other resources are also listed on the outline and discussion sessions are scheduled throughout the summer to build a robust tool kit for instructors to present topics in engaging ways.
  - The course outline and purpose of the course were reviewed with instructors at a full day training and planning session. Training also covered the new Core curriculum to expose instructors to the intellectual curiosity that is emphasized in the Core. This was followed by a presentation by Mary Anne Bush, Professor and Chairperson in Psychology, on positive reframing to help instructors understand how they can model an inquisitive and “playful” approach to learning, which has been proven to correlate with successful college adjustment.
  - Small working groups of First Year Seminar (FYS) and ACS instructors are planned for the fall in order to keep communication open about what is being covered in their respective classes and what teaching strategies are proving successful.
  - To promote self reliance, goal setting was added to the curriculum, along with assignments at the beginning and end of the semester that enable students to reflect on their personal growth in the first semester of college.

#### **4. Lack of Social Integration**

- A mentoring program is being planned for incoming freshmen for fall 2014 (see attachment F)
- Learning communities have been identified as a High Impact Practice that can have a positive impact on student success. While select sections of ACS\*101 have been designed as First Year Experience (FYE) sections, in which, students from the same residence hall floor are registered for the same ACS\*101 section, several enhancements are in progress for fall 2014:
  - Two sections of ACS specifically for commuter students are being offered for the first time in fall 2014.
  - A planning session with FYE-ACS instructors is scheduled for June to identify and systematize ad hoc strategies that have been successful in the past.
- In addition to ACS\_FYE. Several new FYE options are planned for fall 2014:

- FYE for undeclared majors: students will have unique opportunities to explore their interests with Resident Assistants, faculty, staff and upperclassmen mentors. This option is located in the West Wing of Kearney and the 2nd floor of Lourdes .
- FYE for global experience: American and International students live together in an intentional community which promotes intercultural understanding. Resident Assistants, faculty, staff and the Center for International Education collaborate to provide programming. This option is located in Medaille.
- FYE by major: students in some majors will have an opportunity to live together with extra programming support from faculty and upperclassmen mentors. This option is located in Lourdes and O'Connor 1.
- FYE unplugged: for those who prefer to meet students from a variety of majors, interests and experiences. This option is located in Kearney and Lourdes.

## **5. Emotional or Psychosocial Factors**

- Eight questions were added to the new student advisement survey designed to gauge students' maturity level & independence. Retention rates for the fall 2014 freshman cohort will be reviewed to determine if survey responses have any correlation to retention. Correlations may inform development of new targeted support strategies.

## **6. Low initial Commitment**

- Noting the lower retention rates for Undeclared students who are not associated with an Education major, the Guided Exploration of Major (GEM) program has been established for Undeclared students. Highlights of the program include:
  - A one-credit course called Exploring Self, Majors, and Careers, taught by our Office of Academic Advisement staff
  - An online career guidance program that assesses student interests, personality, skills, and values, and suggests career options
  - Testing such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and the Campbell Interest and Skills Survey to measure student strengths, what energizes them, and how they make decisions
  - Connecting students with alumni in various fields
  - Guidance from faculty, counselors in academic advisement, and in career services who have a special interest in serving undeclared majors
  - Internships and other forms of experiential learning
  - The Center for Entrepreneurship, which can help students create their own work

## **7. Competing Concurrent Commitments**

- Although included in Cuseo's seven factors, data is not available to show this is a significant attrition factor at Nazareth. However, on campus student employment of over 60 hours per semester (4 or more hours per week) has been shown to correlate with improved retention rates.
  - Planned: Explore possibilities to promote on campus student employment.

## Identifying Causes Of Student Attrition: How To Build A Comprehensive Retention Plan

**Joe Cuseo**

Professor Emeritus of Psychology  
Marymount College (California)



# Background Knowledge Question

What do you think is the primary cause or source of student attrition on your campus?



# **Root Causes of Student Attrition: Overview of 7 Recurrent Themes**

1. Incongruence (a.k.a. Incompatibility or “Poor Fit”)
2. Academic Underpreparedness
3. Lack of Academic Motivation (Disinterest and/or Boredom)
4. Low Initial Commitment
5. Competing Concurrent Commitments
6. Lack of Social Integration
7. Emotional or Psychosocial Adjustment Difficulties

# Defining & Describing the Recurrent Themes

## 1. **Incongruence** (a.k.a. *Incompatibility* or “*Poor Fit*”)

**Attrition attributable to poor institutional or departmental “fit”, stemming from a mismatch between the student’s expectations, interests, or values and those of the prevailing college community.**



# Defining & Describing the Recurrent Themes

## 2. Academic Underpreparedness

**Attrition related to students being inadequately prepared to accommodate the *academic demands* and meet the minimal *academic standards* of the college/university or academic department—i.e., attrition due to academic *failure or dismissal*.**

# Defining & Describing the Recurrent Themes

## 3. Lack of Academic Motivation (*Disinterest and/or Boredom*)

**Attrition stemming from lack of student *interest* in or *perceived irrelevance* of the subject matter of college courses, and/or the manner in which courses are delivered (pedagogy).**

# Defining & Describing the Recurrent Themes

## 4. Low Initial Commitment

Attrition resulting from *weak initial intent* to graduate from college in general, from the particular college at which the student is enrolled, or from the particular field of study in which the student is currently enrolled.

# Defining & Describing the Recurrent Themes

## 5. Competing Concurrent Commitments

**Attrition fostered by simultaneous *commitments or obligations* to communities outside of college (e.g., family/employers) that “pull away” students’ time and energy away from the college experience.**

# Defining & Describing the Recurrent Themes

## 6. *Lack of Social Integration*

*Attrition caused by an absence of personal and meaningful social contact with other members of the college community, resulting in feelings of isolation, marginalization, or disenfranchisement.*

# Defining & Describing the Recurrent Themes

## 7. Emotional or Psychosocial Adjustment Difficulties

**Attrition related to difficulty coping with unfamiliar *demands* and *stressors* associated with transitioning to the culture of higher education and/or mental health issues arising during the college experience.**

# Reflection Question

Is there a major source/cause of student attrition on your campus that is not effectively captured by one of the seven categories just discussed?



# **Redressing the Roots of Attrition:**

## **Action Strategies for Promoting Student Persistence**





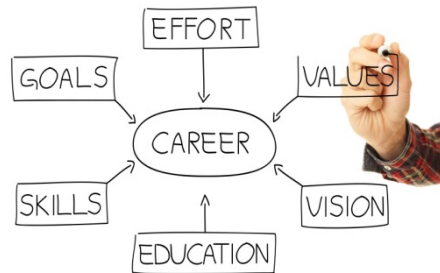
# 1. *Academic Success Strategies*

- a) Equipping students with basic (*foundational*) *academic skills* in an integrated and accelerated manner
- b) Empowering students with *effective learning strategies*
- c) Using *engaging pedagogy* to increase student involvement and academic relevance



## 2. *Motivational Strategies*

- a) Intentionally articulating the economic and non-economic benefits of a *college education*
- b) Intentionally articulating the distinctive benefits of *your college*
- c) Helping students see connections between their *current* college experience and their *future* goals



### ***3. Social & Emotional Strategies***

- a) Connecting students with faculty, staff, peers, and alumni
- b) Connecting students' family to the campus
- c) Providing students with “non-academic” (i.e., holistic) support



## 4. *Fiscal Strategies*

- a) Maximizing on-campus student employment opportunities
- b) Assisting students with money management (e.g., fiscal literacy, loan management, and long-range financial planning)
- c) Strategic distribution of financial aid to promote not only access, but success (persistence to graduation)



# ***5. Organizational/Administrative Strategies***

- a) Delivering information to students in a timely and sensitive manner
- b) Minimizing/streamlining institutional bureaucracy, “red tape,” and “run around”
- c) Involving students in organizational decision-making and policy development



# Closure Question

Was there any element or component of a student retention plan that you hoped would be discussed in this webinar, but wasn't? Or, was there any idea or strategy briefly touched upon in this webinar that you hoped would be discussed in greater detail?



# Innovative Educators

Supporting Academic & Professional Growth In Higher Ed



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### **Method for selecting students for intervention strategies**

The goal of the current statistical model was to identify which incoming freshmen would be optimal candidates for an academic intervention program and/or a new staff mentoring pilot program. Lack of academic success and an inability for students to “connect” with an institution are two general factors that lead to first-year attrition, according to Cuseo (1997). In the previous model, developed at Nazareth, students were assigned a single score, between 1 and 100 that was a combination of all factors entered into the model (academic, biographical, financial, etc). This single score could be used to identify at-risk students, but it provided no indication of why the student was at risk. The current model is more of an evolutionary next step from the former model rather than a complete re-design. The basic premise is, once again, that students will receive an aggregated “score” made up of weighted variables that are known to affect first-year retention and those scores would be grouped into “LOW”, “MEDIUM”, and “HIGH” along that dimension.

The first dimension identifies academic factors that correlate to retention rates at Nazareth (ACAD). The score, along the ACAD dimension, that was assigned to each student was comprised of the following six variables:

| Variable                            | Group Level        | Retain % | Score |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|-------|
| High School GPA                     | A Range GPA        | 89.4%    | 1     |
|                                     | B Range GPA        | 77.4%    | -1    |
|                                     | C Range GPA        | 67.6%    | -2    |
|                                     | D or F Range GPA   | 66.7%    | -2    |
| Advanced Placement Credits          | Any AP Credits     | 88.9%    | 1     |
|                                     | No AP Credits      | 78.5%    | -1    |
| SAT Score                           | 1240-1600 Range    | 90.6%    | 1     |
|                                     | 1045-1240 Range    | 84.8%    | 0     |
|                                     | 0400-1045 Range    | 76.2%    | -1    |
|                                     | No SAT Score       | 78.9%    | -1    |
| Undeclared Major Status             | Declared Major     | 82.7%    | 0     |
|                                     | Undeclared (+EDU)  | 85.0%    | 0     |
|                                     | Undeclared         | 76.2%    | -1    |
| EDU Program/2nd Major Status        | ADO/INCL Program   | 85.8%    | 1     |
|                                     | Second Major       | 85.8%    | 1     |
|                                     | No EDU/2nd Major   | 81.2%    | 0     |
| Attempted Credit Load in First Term | 15 or More Credits | 82.7%    | 0     |
|                                     | 12 to 14 Credits   | 79.7%    | -1    |

*Table 1. Scoring for the ACAD dimension variables.*



Table 1 presents each of the variables used to compute the ACAD score, along with the levels within each variable and the score assigned to each level. The fall-to-fall one year retention rate was computed for each group/level within each variable and that rate was compared to the overall rate found for all students that were in the 2008 through 2012 entering freshman cohorts (82%). If the one year retention rate for each group/level was within 3% of the overall average (roughly 79% to 85%), then the score for that group/level was 0. This equates to a student being in an averagely retained group. If the one year retention rate was above 85%, the group received a +1, and conversely if the one year retention rate was below 79%, the group received a -1. A select few groups had retention rates below 70%, and those groups were given a score of -2.

In the most basic sense, the score was composed of adding the score that each student received for each variable based on which group/level they fell into, in the following way:

**ACAD** = HS GPA + AP Credits + SAT Score + Undeclared + EDU/2<sup>nd</sup> Major + Attempted Credits

The only problem with computing the ACAD score this way is that it lends equal weight to all of the variables, when this is not the case. A variable such as high school GPA is far more predictive of second year retention than whether or not the student was in an undeclared major. Thus, a method was needed to assign a “weight” to each variable in the equation so that the appropriate level of predictive strength was represented. The most direct method for determining the relative contribution of each variable to ACAD was to perform a logistic regression model (LRM) on second year retention. The results from such an LRM are in the table below.

| LOGIT REGRESSION MODEL WITH ACADEMIC FACTORS |    |             |         |
|--|----|-------------|---------|
| Factor                                       | df | Chi-Squared | p-value |
| High School GPA                              | 4  | 32.347      | 0.0001  |
| Advanced Placement Credits                   | 1  | 8.050       | 0.0046  |
| SAT_Score                                    | 3  | 5.127       | 0.1628  |
| Attempted Credit Load in First Term          | 2  | 1.917       | 0.3834  |
| Undeclared Major Status                      | 2  | 1.778       | 0.4111  |
| EDU Program/2nd Major Status                 | 2  | 1.635       | 0.4415  |

*Table 2. Results of a logistic regression model regressing all ACAD variables on second year retention.*

The Chi-Squared score is a measure of how well the group/levels within that variable predict second year retention, and the p-value provides a measure of the statistical significance of the Chi-Squared value. The rows shaded in yellow represent those variables that were statistically significant, and they also possess the highest Chi-Squared value. The results, above, suggest that

high school GPA is the single-handed largest predictor of second year retention followed by whether or not the student brought in any AP credits. Following those two variables, the remaining variables were all about equal in how well they predicted second year retention. While they are relatively poor predictors on their own, collectively, they can influence a student's predicted retention.

The Chi-Squared value provides the weighting factor for the simpler ACAD equation above. The score that each student receives for each variable can now be multiplied by the Chi-Squared value for that variable to get a weighted score for each variable. When all of the weighted scores are combined, a final ACAD score emerges. An example of how this weighted score is calculated is below.

**ACAD** = HS GPA + AP Credits + SAT Score + Undeclared + EDU/2<sup>nd</sup> Major + Attempted Credits

**ACAD** = (32.347 \* -1) + (8.050 \* 1) + (5.127 \* 0) + (1.778 \* 0) + (1.635 \* -1) + (1.917 \* -1)

**ACAD** = -32.347 + 8.050 + 0 + 0 - 1.635 - 1.917

**ACAD** = -27.849

The above score of -27.849 would be for an incoming freshman student that had a high school GPA in the range of a B average (-1), brought in a few AP credits (+1), had an SAT score of about 1100 (0), was currently enrolled in a BA.UND.INCL program (0), and was only planning on attempting 13 credits in the first term (-1). That score would place this student on the lower end of the MEDIUM group for ACAD. Once the ACAD score was computed for all students in the entering 2008 to 2012 freshman cohort, cut-offs were established for what constituted the LOW, MEDIUM, and HIGH groups. Any ACAD score below -42 was considered LOW and any score above 24.5 was considered HIGH. All other scores, in between, were considered MEDIUM. The breakdown of all 2,340 students in those 2008 through 2012 cohorts is in Table 3 below.

| ACADEMIC PREPARATION |        |       |              |
|----------------------|--------|-------|--------------|
| LOW                  | MEDIUM | HIGH  | TOTAL        |
| 772                  | 849    | 719   | <b>2,340</b> |
| 33.0%                | 36.3%  | 30.7% | <b>100%</b>  |

*Table 3. Distribution of 2008 through 2012 freshman cohorts by ACAD levels.*

The other dimension along which students were rated was a dimension involving how well the student will fit in and become engaged at Nazareth, and how much they want to be here. Because no single word captured both types of measures, this dimension was labeled engagement/motivation (ENMOT). The rationale for this group is that students that want to be here and have some *a priori* “latching points” already in place, prior to arrival, will retain at higher rates. Eight distinct variables provided a measurement of students along the ENMOT dimension. They are laid out in Table 4 below.

For both the ACAD and ENMOT dimensions, a priority was placed on using variables that the campus could know about students prior to registration, which is necessary in order to provide proactive outreach. As is evident in both Table 1 and Table 4, all variables were available very early on, in the admissions and enrollment cycle.

| Variable               | Group Level                   | Retain % | Score |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-------|
| Campus Organization    | Athlete                       | 86.3%    | 1     |
|                        | HEOP Program                  | 90.6%    | 1     |
|                        | No Campus Org                 | 80.3%    | 0     |
|                        | Work Study                    | 80.4%    | 0     |
|                        | EXCEL Program                 | 71.1%    | -2    |
| Campus Visits          | Many Visits (3-4)             | 88.2%    | 1     |
|                        | Some Visits (1-2)             | 81.5%    | 0     |
|                        | No Visits                     | 76.9%    | -1    |
| Home Metropolitan Area | Binghamton                    | 89.1%    | 1     |
|                        | White Plains                  | 86.5%    | 1     |
|                        | Buffalo                       | 84.1%    | 0     |
|                        | Capital District              | 82.7%    | 0     |
|                        | Long Island                   | 84.6%    | 0     |
|                        | Rochester                     | 82.4%    | 0     |
|                        | Syracuse                      | 82.0%    | 0     |
|                        | New York City                 | 75.4%    | -1    |
|                        | Out of State                  | 73.9%    | -1    |
|                        | Watertown/Massena             | 78.4%    | -1    |
| Distance From Campus   | No Data Available             | 90.9%    | 1     |
|                        | 0 to 20 Miles from Campus     | 81.6%    | 0     |
|                        | 20 to 100 Miles from Campus   | 82.9%    | 0     |
|                        | 100 to 500 Miles from Campus  | 81.2%    | 0     |
|                        | 500 or More Miles from Campus | 69.8%    | -2    |
| Program Elasticity     | Elastic                       | 87.3%    | 1     |

|                           |                       |       |    |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|-------|----|
|                           | Inelastic             | 80.3% | 0  |
| Campus Residency          | Resident              | 82.8% | 0  |
|                           | Commuter              | 74.6% | -1 |
| Application Received Date | Early (Before Jan)    | 84.7% | 1  |
|                           | Normal (Jan or Feb)   | 80.1% | 0  |
|                           | Late (March or Later) | 74.6% | -1 |
| First Generation          | No First Gen Data     | 82.9% | 0  |
|                           | Non-First Gen         | 82.8% | 0  |
|                           | First Gen             | 77.7% | -1 |

Table 4. Scoring for the ENMOT dimension variables.

Campus organization was devised to determine whether or not students had a team or group with which they would be affiliated before arriving on campus. Campus visits were important because it is a well-known predictor in determining yield for students with offers, and it also demonstrates the motivational intent of the student to come to Nazareth. The only other variable that requires some definition is the program elasticity variable. This variable refers to a financial aid term for students enrolled in certain in-demand academic programs where the amount of aid does not necessarily directly correlate with yield. Students in these inelastic programs will attend regardless of the level of institutional grant aid and thus these students are coming to Nazareth specifically for these programs.

All of the ENMOT variables were run in a logistic regression model to examine the strength of each's effect on second year retention. The results of the LRM for the ENMOT variables are represented in Table 5, below.

| LOGIT REGRESSION MODEL WITH ENGAGE/MOTIVATION FACTORS |    |             |         |
|---|----|-------------|---------|
| Factor  | df | Chi-Squared | p-value |
| Campus Organization                                   | 4  | 22.808      | 0.0001  |
| Home Metropolitan Area                                | 9  | 15.700      | 0.0734  |
| Campus Visits   | 2  | 11.611      | 0.0030  |
| Program Elasticity                                    | 1  | 8.179       | 0.0042  |
| Distance From Campus                                  | 4  | 7.479       | 0.1126  |
| Campus Residency                                      | 1  | 5.724       | 0.0167  |
| First Generation                                      | 2  | 3.363       | 0.1861  |
| Application Received Date                             | 2  | 2.788       | 0.2481  |

Table 5. Results of a logistic regression model regressing all ENMOT variables on second year retention.

It was interesting to note how strongly campus organization and home area predicted second year retention. Those were, by far, the two largest predictors in second year retention, despite the fact that five of the eight variables significantly predicted retention (rows shaded in yellow). Once again, the Chi-Squared value was used as a weight for each variable. Those weighted scores for each variable were added together and that sum was the ENMOT score for each student.

| ENGAGEMENT-MOTIVATION |        |       |              |
|-----------------------|--------|-------|--------------|
| LOW                   | MEDIUM | HIGH  | TOTAL        |
| 662                   | 1027   | 651   | <b>2,340</b> |
| 28.3%                 | 43.9%  | 27.8% | <b>100%</b>  |

Table 6. Distribution of 2008 through 2012 freshman cohorts by ENMOT levels.

Table 6 above shows the distribution of all 2008 through 2012 freshmen by ENMOT level. The distribution of students along the ENMOT dimension was not as even as it was along the ACAD dimension. There was a very pronounced normal bell-shaped distribution for ENMOT where more of the students were around the middle values and fewer were at the extremes. Along the ACAD dimension, students were more evenly scattered from high to low.

Once scores and levels were determined for each student along the ACAD and ENMOT dimensions, they could be crossed and students could be represented by the intersection of which level they were in along each dimension (*i.e.*, LOW-MEDIUM or HIGH-HIGH). The distribution of all 2,340 students in the 2008 to 2012 cohorts along both dimensions is represented in Table 7, below.

| HEADCOUNTS<br>(COHORTS 2008-2012) |        | ACADEMIC PREPARATION |        |      |              |
|-----------------------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|------|--------------|
|                                   |        | LOW                  | MEDIUM | HIGH | TOTAL        |
| ENGAGE-<br>MOTIVE                 | LOW    | 282                  | 225    | 155  | 662          |
|                                   | MEDIUM | 299                  | 378    | 350  | 1027         |
|                                   | HIGH   | 191                  | 246    | 214  | 651          |
|                                   | TOTAL  | 772                  | 849    | 719  | <b>2,340</b> |

| HEADCOUNTS (%)<br>(COHORTS 2008-2012) |        | ACADEMIC PREPARATION |        |       |             |
|---------------------------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|-------|-------------|
|                                       |        | LOW                  | MEDIUM | HIGH  | TOTAL       |
| ENGAGE-<br>MOTIVE                     | LOW    | 12.1%                | 9.6%   | 6.6%  | 28.3%       |
|                                       | MEDIUM | 12.8%                | 16.2%  | 15.0% | 43.9%       |
|                                       | HIGH   | 8.2%                 | 10.5%  | 9.1%  | 27.8%       |
|                                       | TOTAL  | 33.0%                | 36.3%  | 30.7% | <b>100%</b> |

Table 7. Distribution of 2008 through 2012 freshman cohorts by both ACAD and ENMOT levels. The top panel represents headcounts of all students and the bottom panel represents the percent of the total population in each cell.

Having established a way to rate incoming freshmen in terms of academic and engagement factors, it was now possible to identify those students who would benefit most from the proposed intervention strategies. To identify those students, the second year fall-to-fall retention rates were calculated for the group of students falling into each cell in Table 7. Knowing that the overall retention rate for all students was 82%, cells where the rate was below 75% were targeted. The second year retention rates of students, in each cell are in Table 8, below.

| RETENTION<br>(COHORTS 2008-2012) |        | ACADEMIC PREPARATION |        |       |              |
|----------------------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|-------|--------------|
|                                  |        | LOW                  | MEDIUM | HIGH  | TOTAL        |
| ENGAGE-<br>MOTIVE                | LOW    | 64.5%                | 73.3%  | 89.0% | 73.3%        |
|                                  | MEDIUM | 75.6%                | 81.2%  | 90.0% | 82.6%        |
|                                  | HIGH   | 85.3%                | 88.6%  | 95.3% | 89.9%        |
|                                  | TOTAL  | 74.0%                | 81.3%  | 91.4% | <b>82.0%</b> |

Table 8. Second-year retention rates for each cell.

Cells shaded in blue were those where the retention rate was significantly below the 82% average and those in red represent retention rates significantly above the 82% overall rate. The manner in which the retention data are arrayed in Table 8 validates the design of this model. As expected, retention rates, overall, increase from LOW to MEDIUM to HIGH along each dimension.

The retention rate of students that fell in the LOW ACAD cells were only adversely affected when the ENMOT levels were LOW or MEDIUM. The retention rate of those that fell in the MEDIUM ACAD cells were only adversely affected when the ENMOT level was LOW. It was decided that students that fell in the LOW level along the ACAD dimension and in the LOW or MEDIUM level along the ENMOT dimension would be candidates for an academic coaching program. They are the largest threat to leave because of potential academic preparedness issues, so this is the best group for a coaching intervention strategy.

Conversely, students that fell in the LOW level along the ENMOT dimension and in the LOW or MEDIUM level along the ACAD dimensions would be the best candidates for the proposed staff mentoring program. They are students that have not demonstrated a strong motivation to be here and/or may need another resource on which to latch, on campus. Students that rated highly on the ACAD dimension are retained at exceptionally high enough rates that they would likely not benefit as much from such a program.

To determine the size of the coaching and staff mentoring program, for a typical entering freshman cohort of 425 students, the percent distribution numbers in the lower panel of Table 7 were multiplied by 425. The results in Table 9 display the number of students that would fall into each blue-shaded cell in the upper-left corner of the grid for an average-sized cohort of 425. Based on these numbers, there would be approximately 105 students that would be candidates for a coaching program (those that are in the LOW level on the ACAD dimension and in the LOW or MEDIUM levels on the ENMOT dimension). Approximately 90 to 95 students would be considered good candidates for the proposed staff mentoring program.

| HEADCOUNTS<br>(AVG 425 COHORT) |        | ACADEMIC PREPARATION |        |      |            |
|--------------------------------|--------|----------------------|--------|------|------------|
|                                |        | LOW                  | MEDIUM | HIGH | TOTAL      |
| ENGAGE-<br>MOTIVE              | LOW    | 51                   | 41     | 28   | 120        |
|                                | MEDIUM | 54                   | 69     | 64   | 187        |
|                                | HIGH   | 35                   | 45     | 39   | 118        |
|                                | TOTAL  | 140                  | 154    | 131  | <b>425</b> |

*Table 9. Headcount for each cell based on a typical entering cohort of 425 students.*

## **FACULTY ASSEMBLY DAY 2014**

### **NOTES FROM BREAK-OUT SESSIONS**

The Retention and Student Success task force is reviewing the suggestions and comments from the Faculty Assembly Day Break-Out Sessions. The notes have been organized by session topic and further broken down by 1) Issues: areas that require further review; 2) Strategies: ideas and tips currently being employed that can be replicated; 3) Recommendations/Action items: items being considered or addressed by the task force or elsewhere.

#### **Engaging and Effective Teaching Practices**

##### Issues

- How do we as faculty think about effective teaching and what is developmentally appropriate for Freshmen-Seniors? Not clear about expectations at each level. Students need better sense of whole.

##### Strategies

- Use Guided Notes (<http://ada.osu.edu/resources/fastfacts/Guided-Notes-Fact-Sheet.pdf>)
- Make notes available before class.
- Make concepts relevant to students and show how it is relevant to careers.
- Important for students to be exposed to a variety of different organized teaching methods – different approaches work for different learning styles.
- Take time to talk with colleagues (informal conversations, demonstrations of how people teach, sitting in classes, etc.).
- Clarity and organization do not have to squelch creativity.
- Give space for reflection – offers clarity from student side.

##### Recommendations/Action Items

- Develop a professional development series focusing on engaging and effective teaching practices.



## Student Success at the Graduate Level

### Issues

- Academic probation—three semesters may be too long (more stringent requirements for academic warnings).
- The elimination of a separate Graduate Student Services Office is a concern.
- Lack of clarity regarding what types/amount of support for professional development is available, criteria for application, and process surrounding this support.
- Infrastructure and support of international students is a concern.

### Recommendations

- In follow up survey, percent who strongly agreed with recommendations from graduate student success team: Tutoring: 54%, Writing: 77%, Professional Development: 62%, Leadership and Service: 54%, Student Support & Counseling Services: 62%, Course Scheduling and Instructional Delivery: 75%
- Tutoring
  - Use of the terms "Lab" or "clinic" have more positive implications for this work, and possibly foster a more proactive approach to support.
- Writing
  - Form a faculty group with expertise to move forward with the Moodle site for additional training and support.
  - Expand writing tutorial/support for various types of academic and clinical writing and reading skills support.
  - Develop an on campus or online pre-semester writing workshop for all grad students.
  - New Director of Writing Center should be made aware of graduate specific needs and concerns.
- Student Support & Counseling:
  - Summer counseling should be available and counseling should be available to part time grad students.
- Other:
  - Explore needs of international students.
  - What is meant by student success and programs that are gatekeepers for professions needs to be discussed openly so there is an understanding throughout the college
  - Pursue ways to strengthen graduate student engagement and connections to the college such as mentoring undergrads, facilitating internships, and coordinating service projects.
  - Establish regular meetings for all graduate Program Directors.

### Recommendations/Action Items

- Emails from Bob Marino and Andy Morris at start of the semester outlined actions taken based on Graduate Student Success team recommendations.

- Academic Support: Graduate tutoring available and outreach to Program Directors each semester in “high risk” courses to encourage early intervention strategies. Increased collaboration with the Writing Center, and an opportunity to identify early in the semester students who are in need of writing support. Graduate specific flags created in Starfish.
- Professional Development: Increased funds being pursued in budget development for next year.
- Course Scheduling and Instructional Delivery: Faculty in individual programs will work with their program directors, chairs and deans to ensure quality instruction in a format that meets the goals of each program.
- Communicate to faculty how services formerly housed in Graduate Student Services have been reassigned. Information available at <http://www.naz.edu/graduate-student-services>.
- Andy Morris is working with Admissions, the English Department, Center for International Education, and the Writing Center to better understand the needs of international students and non-native English speakers in order to develop targeted strategies to address the needs.
- Establish a graduate advisory board or other body charged with following up on the work of the Graduate Student Success team in order to monitor progress?

## Fostering Self Reliance

Issue: How do we reach the students that don't come for help even with outreach? Why don't they seek help?

### Strategies

- Emphasize in class and in syllabus that seeking help is not a sign of failure or lack of ability, but of "ownership" of learning.
- Have students see professor and discuss how they studied and strategies for the next assignment if they earn below a certain grade.
- Require students to come to office hours and say hello at the beginning of semester.
- Review syllabus mid-semester.
- Ask students to write about why they didn't do well on an assignment. And at the end of the semester they have to write a letter to the next class about what to do to do well.
- Address specifically in syllabi when to make faculty aware of a situation/concerns about class, how to contact and bring up the issue with a teacher and where else students can go for additional help. This could also be incorporated in ACS classes but should not only be emphasized there.

Issue: Trend for faculty to have to give more and more specific instructions and students wind up asking to be shown and "hand held". Parents and Starfish kudos may enable this behavior.

### Strategies

- Specifically address in class and syllabi that they are expected to take responsibility for their own learning- realizing that it's not just what is covered specifically in class, but the reading/work required outside of class needs to be integrated with what they do in class.
- Activities on the very first day of class to help promote responsibility (doing "the work", being prepared to participate, responsible for learning.)
- Make sure that instructions and resources given students are clear, easily accessible, and understandable from the students' point of view.
- Need to let students fail if they are not putting in effort or meeting standards.
- Question if you are enabling.
- Promote critical thinking skills, teach how to analyze assignments.
- Shift burden of responsibility for success from instructor to student.
- Use a clear syllabus and maintain organization and consistency throughout the semester.

Issue: Many of our students have work, family, or other extracurricular requirements that significantly impact the time and energy they have to do school work.

### Strategies

- Ask students how many classes/credits they are taking, multiply by hours for homework, add other obligations, then calculate how many hours in the week.
- Specific section of the syllabus that says how much time they should be doing each night reading, reviewing notes etc. It's important that this be done on a class by class basis (not a college wide policy) and that in estimating professors use a) actual data from students and the student's point of view (not how long it "should" take, but how long it actually takes students to do things.)
- Collect data from class on how much time they spend on various aspects of the class. Create a correlation between how long they spend and they grade and show it to the class.
- Use practice quizzes (with no grade) and allow students to retake until they get an A, then show the correlation between grades and who took the quizzes.

Issue: Many classes have a large project due at the end of the semester that students can't do before the end of the semester, so they wind up writing 5 mediocre papers (at best) because there's no way they could complete those assignments even with good planning (because end of semester projects often require them to use information/skills not learned until the end of class.)

### Strategies

- Create structured projects that have due dates throughout the semester. Have faculty submit examples of project assignments that use this organization and post on a central website.
- Organizing time - Think about when you do your best work, when you are at your most awake/motivated. See the book "The Clockwork Muse" by Eviatar Zerubavel.

Various Issues: (1) fragility, (2) reliance on parents, (3) lack of self-awareness, (4) lack of accountability, (5) don't see selves as future professionals (bridging – from high school to now), (6) don't set own goals (extrinsic motivation), (7) dependence, (8) take grades personally, (9) mental health identity struggles, (10) brain is not as developed/mature, (11) prolonged childhood.

### Recommendations/Action Items

- Build fostering self-reliance more intentionally into ACS and the first year experience. Andy Morris and Heidi Northwood are currently working on changes to the ACS curriculum and are working with Jane Kelly on changes to the first year experience.
- Develop professional development opportunities for faculty that focus on how to foster self reliance.
- Develop a robust centralized learning support website. This is included in the responsibilities of the Director for Student Success position (search is underway). The website should include resources for faculty and students related to self-reliance, including those outlined below.

- For Faculty- specific assignments, syllabus language, handouts, calculators, or other resources that faculty use and/or have created to foster self-reliance in students. Send a call for faculty to submit these types of documents, then make faculty aware once available on the web. The idea is for faculty to see and share tips and ideas for things they can build into classes, assignments etc. that help foster self-reliance.
- For Students- ask faculty to submit any handouts, links, or resources to advice/information they give to students related to self-reliance. These should be organized on the web site in a meaningful way (e.g. “Studying for Exams”, “Reading Difficult Texts”, “Taking Useful Notes in Class”, “Avoiding Procrastination”, “How & When to Talk to Your Professor” etc). Since the strategies and skills for these areas will vary depending on the discipline, class level, and particular teacher, it’s important to solicit these types of handouts/resources from a wide variety of faculty. There is not a “one size fits all.” This will also allow faculty to point to the specific resources on the page they think might be useful for a particular student.

## Integrating Career Planning into Academic Programs

### Issues

- Question of what is developmentally appropriate for the first year.
- What is the status of endowed scholarships for internships?
- Need more service learning in FYS.
- How to integrate professions into CAS?

### Strategies

- The Art - Visual Communications and Design program takes their students to local firms (field trips), provides externship/shadowing opportunities, brings professionals into freshmen and sophomore classes and uses the senior seminar to prepare students for careers.
- In Communication Science and Disorders, there are now opportunities for seniors to do service-learning in non-clinical settings. These experiences give students confidence that they can do something other than what they thought they were going to do with their degree.
- Make sure reflective prompts for applied experiences asks students to talk about their skills.
- Idea for workshop: How to be a professional. Core qualities of being a professional. This links up with “how to define a successful student”.

### Recommendations/Action Items

- The Retention and Student Success task force is charged with developing a clear and consistent process for planning and assessing strategies to support student success and retention. In addressing this charge, it is important to consider how career integration is addressed in the major, REACH, ACS, co-curriculum, internships, career services, Center for Entrepreneurship, etc.

## Engaging Students in Online Learning

### Issues

- How to manage online adjuncts?
- How do we provide support services to online students, especially the international students?
- Enrollment caps not adhered to in online courses.
- Some students take online courses for convenience but they aren't prepared to succeed in an online learning environment.

### Strategies

- Build a clear schedule and make expectations clear up front.
- Use Google docs for online collaboration.
- Ways to create instructor – student interaction: video, audio, chat, phone calls, face to face meetings as needed, comment on every post
- Ways to create student – student interaction: require responses to other students, post drafts for peer feedback
- Engage students in breaking down major tasks:
  - Multiple drafts w/ feedback, submit feedback w/ final draft and ask if they incorporated
  - Step for citation (sources & formats) w/ feedback, plus other meaningful milestones
  - Comments in drafts require student comment in return → dialog

### Recommendations

- Develop a course evaluation tool specifically for online courses.
- Establish a distance learning advisory committee?

## Working with Students on the Autism Spectrum

### Challenges:

- Handing in assignments
- Needing reminders to complete work
- Challenges with inter-personal skills that impact interviews and clinical placements
- Group-work within the classroom setting
- Class attendance
- Anxiety
- Mental health concerns
- Students wanting information to be structured/organized (checklist)
- Classroom management and behavior
- Student not disclosing or sharing accommodation letter

### Recommendations/ Action Items

- Increased communication with faculty to improve awareness of existing campus resources and more proactive outreach to faculty to develop skills in working effectively with students with disabilities. With staffing transitions this year, this has been a challenge. This is a priority for the Office of Students with Disabilities and has been emphasized through the search process to the incoming Director, who is scheduled to move into the role later in February.



## Challenging our Strongest Students

### Issues

- Faculty reported strong students leave because: they feel there is a culture of low level expectations among peers; fellow students are not interested in challenging themselves; they can't pursue their intellectual interests with enough vigor.
- Can administration support independent studies and smaller classes that allow faculty to work with the strongest students on individual research?
- How can faculty effectively teach a class with a wide disparity between the strongest and weakest students?
- Further review is needed of Starfish "kudos".

### Strategies

- Give students the grades they earn. If students are not doing well in the class their grade should reflect that.
- In Math they push the strongest students to apply for summer programs (REU). Getting them to participate in these things make them realize that they are in a good program at NAZ. Another thing that works is something like a mini-independent study; i.e. finding a bit extra for the best students to do in each class. Make this available for the best students.
- When a student does something especially well, give them personal positive feedback, encouraging them to put out even more. Taking aside the gifted student is important. Making the student feel almost like a colleague.
- Art students are encouraged to do outside things-- enter contests, exhibitions.
- In classes where students do cooperative learning, color-code the performance level so students can change colors as the course proceeds.
- Peer pressure built into assignments (group work).
- In-class project presentations with peer-evaluation forms.
- Promote student participation in Phi Kappa Phi, Honors program, Fullbright scholars.
- Chemistry has raised money internally and externally to get money for going to the conference every year. They get some of the Chemistry budget designated for research.
- Use the IS cluster as a tool for helping students do more in-depth work in areas in which they are most interested.

### Recommendations/Action Items

- Consider establishing a special dorm for the more serious students.
- Use honors as more of a marketing tool.
- Use focus groups and/or survey to determine why strong students stay at Naz.
- Starfish implementation team plans to survey students this semester to gauge perceptions of Starfish, including kudos.
- Develop professional development opportunities for faculty that focus on how to challenge strong students.

## Student Success through Service Learning

### Issues

- Transportation is a challenge. With Experiential Learning built into the New Core, need infrastructure to support students and faculty in getting off campus for those experiences.
- There are challenges in developing international service learning programs, including cost, faculty time investment, and equity for students without the economic resources to pay for such experiences.

### Strategies

- Create a compilation of reflection prompts and materials from within the college.
- Find ways to incorporate service learning experiences, assignments, and outputs into the CARS program.
- Developing a brief step by step document to clarify how to receive funding and how to process it.

### Recommendations/Action items

- Consider current resources and support for service learning and what is needed to better promote this high impact practice.

## **Notes from March 4 Staff Assembly**

### **Student success definition**

- Should we include more detail about what happens when a student graduates and their preparation for career or grad school? The idea is that their education has provided “choice”.
- Include “self-reliance” in the one sentence summary definition?
- Incorporate ability to set realistic goals?
- Emphasize the importance of staying on campus and partaking in events?
- Is definition too passive on the student side?
- Consider that academic success is relative.
- Consider focusing more on what the student perceives as student success and their personal goals (what is unique to the student).
- Place more emphasis on "others" in the definition as well as critical thinking and communication skills and challenging and stretching perspectives.
- Informed Decision Making – Self Sufficient – Students must learn to resolve conflicts on their own and not be dependent on parents. Parents need to be a dimension of the definition and be aware of the definition.
- Community Involvement needs to be more explicit in the definition.
- Personal Reflection is ambiguous especially its connection to the core. This needs to be explained better to staff. Staff needs to be aware of what the core is, and what it is attempting to accomplish through personal reflection.
- What do we mean by self-awareness? Why is it important for students to be aware of this? Not necessarily obvious to the non-authors of the statement.
- Promoting Self-Advocacy should be a stronger element in the definition.
- What about student development and the recognition that students enter at different levels of development?
- How do we communicate and show the institution’s support of the definition?
- How will we communicate the definition to students? How will we measure the achievement of the outcomes listed in the definition?
- Student success definition needs to convert to something consistent with the TED talk video. It is too ornate to show students. Can we boil down to “our purpose” and the “why”?
- How do we measure the various elements? Words like “sense” – how does that tie to outcomes?
- Year by year objectives fresh-senior and measurements for each.
- 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph “Students are prepared” not “well”
- Def. does not seem to reflect groups like adult learners, vets, International students and graduates - seems too developmental for them
- Why is ‘mastery in field’ not part of the definition?
- How does this definition of *Student Success* differ from others? (St John Fisher; Le Moyne; etc.) What is unique about Nazareth with regard to student success, and whatever that essence is, how do we describe it and include it in the definition? The

definition seems like it fits all institutions, and shouldn't we have something that speaks to "Nazareth-ness"?

- Careful not to create a positioning or marketing statement as opposed to a definition; however, our commitment to it as an institution and as employees comes from the uniqueness of this characteristic of a Nazareth culture of student success. And this definition doesn't define that specialness. – How do we articulate the "why"?
- A definition is very important to have because there must be a shared understanding of a common value.
- Lack of cultural diversity in definition concerning.
- Good definition with important elements

### **How do we contribute to student success?**

- We provide guidance and mentoring through student employment opportunities (responsibilities, setting a positive example) and service learning opportunities for academic credit.
- We contribute through our support of high impact practices such as promoting experiential and service learning as well as creating an awareness of self and of others.
- We advocate for the students by providing technology and other tools for their success and spending with the student in mind, asking ourselves how will this expenditure benefit our students?
- Participation in athletics helps to teach life skills such as dealing with criticism, adversity and defeat.
- As a community, we support and care about the student as a whole person though we are mindful of the necessity to promote self-reliance in our students as well.
- Helping them to learn responsibility, self-reliance, accountability, and real-world jobs/skills
- Helping to navigate the waters of Nazareth –get where they need to go and know what they need to know
- Being there when they are having a bad day; taking an interest in students; helping students feel stable emotionally
- Model behaviors for students (professionalism, recognize, attend events, participate in community, etc.)
- Helping students to create an identity
- Promoting informed decision-making
- Connections through genuine interactions
- Importance of communicating who we are – promotes FIT
- Active involvement
- Getting students to buy in and accept help
- Empowerment
- Remembering the why everyday – student centered
- Value student workers and teach them accountability
- Stress relief
- Community service/fund raisers
- Problem solving with students' struggles

- Customer service
- Encouragement
- Helping students unravel problems and assist with solutions
- Giving 100% in all interactions regardless of “your day”
- Open door policies
- Need to increase community amongst staff (connects to community building)
- Transfer advocacy groups
- Increase info sharing across campus for all depts. (staff/faculty)
- Staff morale effects student experience

### **General ideas and recommendations on culture of student success**

- It is difficult for staff who don’t have direct student contact to think in terms of how they impact student success. Ways to build this understanding might include new employee orientation, opportunities for current staff to discuss, and more clear and consistent communication to entire campus on what student success programs and services exist.
- Many staff working directly with students; it is sometimes hard for those with no student contact to understand their roles. Important to see roles as helping administration make better decisions and/or support and enhance systems and processes that directly impact students.
- What are we doing to help under-represented groups and international students with their transition to college? Something as simple as checking in with these students after the first week of classes to see how they’re doing might help.
- The group discussion centered around a holistic approach to student success focusing on fostering opportunities for students to engage outside of the classroom: i.e. athletics, work study jobs, student activities, etc. There was agreement that students who make those connections are much more likely to be successful and retain, but that the campus structure may have a gap in following up with new students to be sure they are finding their niche. Regarding the academic experience, the discussion was around whether or not the fit was appropriate (too challenging/too easy).
- Is there an opportunity to leverage alumni more in promoting success of students (mentoring, networking, linked-in, webinars, etc.)?
- It is important for all staff to make time for students to show them that they are valued.
- High Standards are good but do we have the support for students to achieve the standard?
- How we do connect to student activities? Early on in the academic career? How do we communicate the culture to potential students?
- We need a student union? Create a centralized center of student activity which communicates the culture to current and future students?
- Communication and awareness are important. Consider a 101 type debriefing for all office functions. Standard training on how to contribute to student success would be helpful.
- Communication/ integration/ collaboration among everyone is key for student success. It is important for students to have input for policies, faculty meetings, academic calendars, etc.
- Need more exploration of the “why” students leave – how do we not meet their needs?

- There is importance in both the direct interactions with students as well as the *indirect* (trickle-down) connections between staff work and student satisfaction.
- We don't spend enough time on the 80% of students who stay. Spend our time analyzing the "whys" of the students who leave. And we need to spend time on the "why" of those we retain.
- An important quality about Nazareth is creating community across differences. Important for students who are so connected to home through social media that we work with them and for them to build a new community for them here.
- Need to have this sense of community – from a student perspective, need to connect the *me* to the *community*.

**DEFINITION OF STUDENT SUCCESS**  
***Created Spring Semester 2014***

The true measure of student success is how well students are prepared to accomplish their current and future academic, personal, and professional goals through the development of knowledge, a sense of responsibility and self-reliance, and a connection to the college and wider community.

**KNOWLEDGE**

1. PERSONAL MEANING: Students develop a sense of purpose and perceive the Nazareth experience (both curricular and co-curricular) as being personally and professionally relevant to this purpose
2. PERSONAL REFLECTION: Students think reflectively about what they are learning and connect it to what they already know or have previously experienced so as to be better prepared for future personal and professional success
3. SELF-AWARENESS: Students develop self-awareness by becoming mindful of their learning styles, learning habits, and thinking patterns.

**RESPONSIBILITY**

4. INFORMED DECISION-MAKING: Students seek relevant information and take responsibility for themselves and their decisions
5. ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT: Students are actively engaged in the learning process (both inside and outside the classroom), exploration of their major and college requirements, and in the use of campus resources

**CONNECTION**

6. PERSONAL VALIDATION: Students feel personally validated and that they matter to Nazareth
7. SELF-EFFICACY: Students believe that their efforts matter and that they can influence or control the prospects for their success
8. SOCIAL INTEGRATION: Students are open to learning from those who have different backgrounds and perspectives, and can form meaningful relationships with members of local and global communities.

*\*See reverse for outcomes*

## **Student Success Outcomes**

***Student Retention (Persistence)***: entering college students remain, re-enroll, and continue their undergraduate education. For example, first-year students return for their sophomore year.

***Educational Attainment***: entering students persist to completion and attainment of their degree, program, or educational goal. For example, 4-year college students persist to completion of the baccalaureate degree.

***Academic Achievement***: students achieve satisfactory or superior levels of academic performance as they progress through and complete their college experience. For example, students avoid academic probation or qualify for academic honors.

***Student Advancement***: students proceed to and succeed at subsequent educational and occupational endeavors for which their college degree or program was designed to prepare them. For example, 4-year college students are accepted at graduate schools or enter gainful careers after completing their baccalaureate degree.

### ***Holistic Development***

- *Intellectual* Development: developing skills for acquiring and communicating knowledge, learning how to learn, and how to think deeply.
- *Emotional* Development: developing skills for understanding, controlling, and expressing emotions.
- *Social* Development: enhancing the quality and depth of interpersonal relationships, leadership skills, and civic engagement.
- *Ethical* Development: formulating a clear value system that guides life choices and demonstrates personal character.
- *Physical* Development: acquiring and applying knowledge about the human body to prevent disease, maintain wellness, and promote peak performance.
- *Spiritual* Development: appreciating the search for personal meaning, the purpose of human existence, and questions that transcend the material or physical world.



# **Planning and Implementing a Mentoring Program**

## **Connect at Nazareth (C@N)**

*Mentoring is “a formalized process whereby a more knowledgeable and experienced person actuates a supportive role of overseeing and encouraging reflection and learning within a less experienced and knowledgeable person, so as to facilitate that persons’...personal development” - Roberts (2000)*

### **Design the parameters for the program**

- Define the population that the program will serve
  - Based on student success model
- Identify the types of individuals who will be recruited as mentors
  - Approachable and friendly; someone who takes a genuine interest in students and appreciates the opportunity to make a difference in students’ lives
- Determine the type of mentoring that the program will offer - one-to-one, group, team, peer or e-mentoring
  - One-to-one
- Structure the mentoring program — as a stand-alone program or as part of an existing organization
  - This is one of several coordinated programs designed to promote student success and retention for first year students
- Define the nature of the mentoring sessions (such as campus support, academic support and socialization).
  - Socialization and personal validation are the primary purposes of the sessions. Referral to student support programming is a secondary purpose.
- Determine what the program will accomplish and what outcomes will result for the mentors & mentees.
  - Mentors
    - Develop meaningful relationships with mentees.
    - Improved awareness of student success initiatives and campus resources for students.
  - Mentees
    - Improved retention
    - Develop meaningful relationships with mentors.
    - Feel personally validated.
- Determine when and where the mentoring will take place, how often, and how long matches should last
  - In addition to Kickoff and Closing events, minimum of one meeting in second or third week of semester, at midterms, and end of semester
  - FUSE funds will support lunch meetings or other meeting activities

- Formal matches should last through the end of the spring semester of the mentee's first year at Nazareth, at which point mentors and mentees will have an opportunity to determine expectations going forward
- Decide how to evaluate program success
  - Success will be evidenced in improved retention rates for mentees in comparison to students with similar profiles who did not participate in the program
  - Quality of relationships and personal validation will be evaluated using responses to qualitative survey questions

## **Implement the Program**

- Recruit mentors and mentees
  - Finalize list and contact potential mentors by early June
  - Identify mentees and contact them by end of July
  - Means of contact? Needs to be coordinated communication with GEM, Coaching, H.E.Y
- Orient and train mentors, mentees and parents/caregivers
  - Offer 2-3 training sessions for mentors in early-mid August
- Match mentors and mentees
  - Should be done as early as possible and must be before kickoff event at start of semester
  - Use survey for mentors and student profile to inform matching
- Bring mentors and mentees together for mentoring sessions that fall within program parameters
  - Kickoff event during first week of class
  - Remaining monthly sessions scheduled by the mentor and mentee
- Provide ongoing support, supervision and monitoring of mentoring relationships
  - Reminder emails to mentors at required meeting times during the semester
  - Discussion and debriefing sessions for mentors after each required meeting time
- Recognize the contribution of all program participants and help mentors and mentees reach closure
  - Hold a Closing event in May

## **Mentoring Program Lifecycle**

### **Stage 1: Initiation**

- Kickoff event at the start of the fall semester
- Mentors and mentees get to know each other
  - Ice-breaker activity
  - Exchange information
  - Discuss the benefits of mentoring relationship
  - Discuss the parameters of the relationship.

### **Stage 2: Cultivation**

- Mentor and mentee communicate throughout the semester

- Minimally a two week, mid-semester and end of semester check-in

### **Stage 3: Separation**

- Mentee gradually becomes less reliant on mentor as they become acclimated to the college

### **Stage 4: Redefinition**

- Closing event at the end spring semester signaling the end of the formal program.
- Evaluate the success of the program from the perspective of both the mentor and the mentee
- Mentors and mentees determine if/how the relationship continues.

## **Tips for Mentors**

***Challenge students with honesty:*** Many times we hear or see students saying or doing things that are inappropriate, but we do not address the behavior and simply say, “Kids will be kids.” This is not the attitude to have when you are in a mentor role with a student. Your role as a mentor is to help a student learn and grow, therefore don’t write it off as just another comment. You need to be willing to help them develop by being honest with them and helping them look at alternative behaviors for the future.

***Be willing to share yourself:*** One of the most important aspects of mentorship is to be able to share your experiences with the student. Often times the life lessons you learned with friends, relationships, and classes can be of great benefit to your mentee. Be willing to share your experiences, successes, and defeats so that they can achieve a greater understanding of how to navigate those obstacles.

***Be A Mentor:*** Remember that you can be friendly and helpful while still maintaining clear boundaries and being a mentor. In the eyes of a student you are the authority and expert, so you need to remain as such in your relationship with them while still being approachable. Set clear expectations of when you will be available and when you will not. Being responsive to your mentee’s needs is important, but it is not necessary to be available all the time. It is important to establish regular meeting times when you can be face-to-face. While technology is taking over how we communicate, you will get more out of your mentorship experience by meeting in real time to discuss challenges and progress.

***Lose the language and find your purpose:*** Get rid of the “I am the adult and your mentor and you are the student and my mentee” way of thinking. Work together to decide and understand why you each engaged in this relationship. Work together to decide how each of you can operate both as a mentor and a mentee. What can each of you teach the other? What can each of you learn from the other? In this, you will develop a sense of purpose for your relationship. The mentoring experience should yield just as much growth for you as it does for your mentee.

## **Strategies for Mentors**

- Understand the person's hopes and dreams
- Share background information.
- Be honest and open.
- Expect to learn and benefit from the relationship just like the mentees.
- Work at building trust and at feeling it yourself in the relationship.
- Recognize that mentoring is a process that has the potential to change both of you.
- Seek feedback from the mentee about how she or he thinks the relationship is working.

## **Strategies for Mentees**

- Know your goals for the relationship.
- Share background information.
- Seek a mentor you can trust.
- Work to develop familiarity
- Be prepared to work and act on your mentor's advice (or explain why you aren't).
- Ask your mentor for help with things you are struggling with and cannot find the answer easily.
- Seek feedback from the mentor about how the relationship is working.