New Faculty Orientation
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Student Services Office
Support for Students, Faculty and Staff
CALS Student Services Office

Recruitment Team
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Retention Team
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Director of Multicultural Student Success
   Covers retention AND recruitment
   Elizabeth Martinez-Podolsky

Support from 1st contact through graduation
Retention and Revenues

- Tuition revenue is the most important source of expendable revenues for the college
  - Roughly 5K/student/year, so a decrease in 200 students is equivalent to a loss of 1M/year
  - Upperclass students bring in more tuition revenue than freshmen and sophomores in most majors due to differential tuition

- Retention through graduation is not only important to students, but also for the financial stability of our programs
Factors Affecting Student Retention

- Innate student ability
- Previous academic preparation and performance
- Student effort/commitment to success
- Financial barriers
- Medical/mental health barriers
- Substance abuse issues
- Bias incidents/inclusion issues
- Lack of family support
- Lack of knowledge/utilization of campus resources
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Student Retention Programs

- **Smart Steps**
  - Provides structure and accountability
  - Weekly or bi-weekly meetings with trained retention specialist
  - Provides academic coaching and free tutoring
  - Track record for success/ added 3 grad students this fall

- **Student Support Advocates**
  - Assists students in finding and accessing campus and community resources (financial, medical, mental health)
  - Added 2 grad students this fall

- **Emergency/Completion Grants**
  - 68 students last year, 270K, 88% still enrolled/graduated
CALS Advising Goals

To create an environment where each student can reach their potential:

- Academic achievement
- Personally
- Socially

Academic success (college degree, good grades, relevant experiences) is the ticket to open doors to a variety of careers

- However, IQ only explains 6% of success once people are working in chosen career
- We need to foster emotional intelligence and strong communication skills as well as technical knowledge
Current Topics in Academic Advising

■ The first advising session
  □ Setting the stage for the advising relationship

■ Goal setting
  □ Dreams vs. reality

■ Diversity and inclusion
  □ Issues facing multicultural, first generation, low income, veterans, LGBTQIA+ students, etc.

■ Students in distress
  □ Mental health, emotional challenges, medical issues, academic challenges, etc.
First Advising Session
The First Advising Session

- Set the ground rules
- Establish trust
- Learn about their goals
- Discuss their options
- Share yourself (be genuine)
- Recap meeting and set plans for the future
Goal Setting
Dreams vs. Reality

First priority is to help students chase their dreams.

You can be honest with what it takes to achieve that dream, but it is not your job to tell them they are not capable.

- Provide information, provide support, provide specific goals but do not provide your opinion.
- Tough love is only effective if they feel the love first...
- Encourage ALL advisees to pursue multiple career options – every student can benefit.
Demographics and Challenges with Diversity and Inclusion
CALS 4-Year Graduation Rates

- Male students within-college graduation rate is ~20% higher than the rate for female students
  - Male student numbers decreasing
- Rural students within-college graduation rate is ~15% higher than the rate for urban students
  - Rural student numbers decreasing
- Iowa residents within-college graduation rate is ~15% higher than the rate for non-resident students
  - Resident student numbers decreasing
- White students within-college graduation rate is ~30% higher than the rate for minority students
  - White student numbers decreasing
- In addition, first-generation and low-income students also graduate at lower rates than their counterparts…
Minorities are more at risk to face additional barriers to their success as incoming students:

- Lack of financial aid/low income status
- Lack of family support
- First generation college students
- Academic under-preparedness
- Low scores on traditional college admissions tests
- Absence of role models in their program
Improving Within-Program Retention of Non-Resident and Minority Students

- Continue focus on new student programs starting prior to the first day of class
  - Intentionally create a sense of community
  - Recognize and address faculty and student biases (racial, ethnic, urban/rural)
- Identify at risk-students earlier and intervene appropriately
  - Many factors create increased risk of student loss
- Directed recruiting to provide a critical mass for different demographics
- Identify faculty/staff role models
Student Issues
What is your role?

Often the first point of contact for a student in need – find problems EARLY before they become a crisis. First you must gain trust - show that you care and make sure to be genuine (students will know if you are “playing the role” of a compassionate adviser).

- Take an active interest in their lives
  - Academic
  - Personal
  - Goals and dreams
- Offer confidentiality with limits

Remember: You are not there to find a quick solution or solve their problems.
Sympathy, Empathy, Compassion

**Sympathy** happens when you recognize a student’s distress and, pity them or feel sorry for them without being able to personally understand what that student is feeling (sympathy = awareness)

**Empathy** happens when you recognize a student’s distress and share that feeling (empathy = awareness + experience)

**Compassion** involves recognizing a student’s distress and it *also* involves the desire to assist (compassion = awareness + action)

This requires knowledge of resources, an increased time commitment, and willingness to advocate for that student despite any perceived risks that may exist

Risks include personal risks (what if I make things worse?), perceived legal risks (are you legally liable if you get involved and the student commits suicide?) and professional risks (what if my colleagues misunderstand my involvement?)
Barriers to Adviser Involvement?

- What concerns you most about handling student issues?
- Where are your boundaries?
- How do you handle confidentiality issues?
Take Home Message: The Three R’s

Recognize (just ask, then listen!)
Respond (give confidence, provide hope)
Refer (let them know what to expect, offer to go along)

- If the student refuses outside help, then consult!
  - Your options are limited to support UNLESS they pose an IMMEDIATE threat to themselves or others
- Know your support service staff, their personalities, strengths and weaknesses
- Personally follow up with student
- Make sure you are aware of your own emotional health – ask for help for yourself, too!
Discussion Questions