

STAY@FAU

OFFICE OF STUDENT RETENTION NEWSLETTER • DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

FLC Update

Due to the success of the Freshman Learning Community pilot program in Fall 2001, the FLC was expanded to include 206 incoming freshmen in a total of ten cohorts this semester. These students are in cohorts based on their intended major (Arts and Letters, Business, Criminal Justice, Education, Nursing, Pre-Med, Psychology or Undecided) and take all of their courses as a group with the other students in their major – including a section of SLS 1503 (Learning Strategies and Human Development) taught by someone from within the students' major. Students in the FLC believe that they are making easier transitions and connecting better to FAU as they easily meet other students, form friendships and study groups and have a true support system. Future research

will compare student outcomes (GPA and persistence rates) with students who participated in the FLC versus students who are not part of the FLC to see if participation in a learning community has a significant impact on student retention.

Note to faculty

Retention literature emphasizes the importance of faculty involvement with first-year students as a key to student success. You can make a tremendous impact on students by teaching the SLS 1503 course. In addition to a stipend, you can help create better prepared students for your college by teaching SLS for a learning community within your department or college. Please email stay@fau.edu if you are interested in more information about teaching the SLS course next year.



Predictive Modeling for Retention

Universities across the nation are looking toward predictive modeling to identify students who are at-risk for drop-out. The Office of Retention is currently working on a predictive model for retention, which uses specific

student characteristics that contribute to non-persistence at FAU. This can help University-wide as we plan and implement proactive interventions to prevent student attrition. The challenge is identifying factors that contribute to a student's risk level and the relative importance of each variable. Since the majority of students who leave FAU make that decision during their first semester, an entering student model that examines known factors is essential to enhancement of student retention rates.

Orientation Programs Make a Significant Impact

As we wrap up another cycle of orienting new students to the University, we look at how the *Continued on back)*

Florida Community College Transfer Students Succeed at FAU!

Students who transfer to FAU with an AA degree are graduating in record numbers! Although upper-division students at FAU enjoy a rigorous curriculum and many work full-time jobs in addition to attending classes, students who earn an AA degree from a Florida Community College prior to transferring to FAU are completing their baccalaureate degrees. Overall "success rates" (percent of students who graduate plus students who persist) for AA transfers is approximately 75% over the past several years! The chart below lists FAU's largest feeder schools and student outcomes. For questions about the statistics below e-mail stay@fau.edu.

Most recent Institution Attended prior to transferring to FAU		Outcomes Year 2	Outcomes Year 3	Outcomes Year 4
Broward Community College (N/year=470-664)	Graduated Persisted	21% 67%	49% 30%	60% 15%
Palm Beach Community College (N/year=545-605)	Graduated Persisted	19% 65%	44% 31%	57% 14%
Indian River Community College (N/year=135-145)	Graduated Persisted	16% 66%	51% 28%	65% 11%
Miami-Dade Community College (N/year=84-131)	Graduated Persisted	14% 67%	36% 36%	47% 19%
Santa Fe Community College (N/year=16-22)	Graduated Persisted	23% 57%	54% 18%	59% 8%

program impacts our students and their families. Thank you to all of the departments who help with these programs and make new students feel part of the FAU family. Here are some of the comments from the Orientation evaluations:

Virtual Orientation:

"Virtual Orientation is great for students who can't get to campus. Enough information was provided and answered all questions I had."

"It was very quick and helpful. All the info was just a click away. I will recommend to everyone, thank you!"

Transfer Orientation:

"You guys did an excellent job. Makes it worthwhile to be an Owl. I am very excited to be coming to FAU."

"Efficient and informative, yet mildly entertaining."

Freshman Orientation:

"Everyone was dedicated to helping out and showing that they cared for me."

"I thought it was very helpful and I learned a lot about the campus."

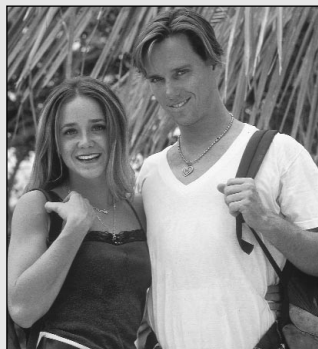
"Good job Orientation Leaders, [they] made me feel really welcome [at] FAU."

Freshman Parent Orientation:

"The most valuable part of the program was the warmth expressed by the faculty and orientation team toward the new students and the support that was clearly expressed."

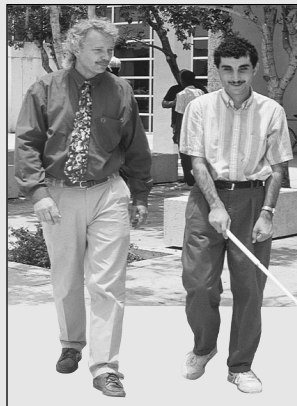
"Student Leaders did an excellent job... high energy."

"The orientation crew was very informative and they were all very nice and helpful."



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: OFFICE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

In each issue of stay@fau, a particular office or service that works to improve student retention rates will be highlighted. In future editions look for a focus on advising, residential life, financial aid, and student involvement opportunities.



The mission of the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) within the Division of Student Affairs is to support students with disabilities in their pursuit of equity and excellence in education. The OSD works with FAU faculty and staff to ensure that reasonable accommodations are provided to allow this population of students an equal opportunity to learn in the classroom setting, and to have access to all areas around the FAU campus. To receive accommodations due to a disability, students must register with the OSD and provide documentation of the disability.

Accommodations are individualized and granted to students on an "as needed" basis. These accommodations must not compromise course content or the requirements for satisfactory course completion. The faculty need not fundamentally alter the nature of their classroom

materials. Some common accommodations include: the use of note takers, permission to tape record lectures, extended exam time, tests in an alternate format, or an isolated testing setting. The OSD counselors often provide other support services for students with disabilities, including: advocacy/advisement, time management training, and study and test-taking strategies. The students may borrow equipment, such as lap top computers or tape recorders, and be offered training in assistive technology through the Associate Technology Lab, which consists of a collection of specialized equipment designed to provide customized access for students. Some of the advanced technology in the Lab includes Naturally Speaking (a voice recognition system that enables the computer to recognize spoken words and convert them to printed text at a conversational pace), computers with large screens, screen readers, scanners, and a Braille translator and printer.

The number of students registering with the OSD is consistently increasing (up 8% for this academic year). Referring students to the OSD increases student retention by helping students discover services available to them earlier in their academic lives; increasing the use of assistive technology; increasing the number of volunteers assisting students with disabilities; and providing continued cooperation and referrals among FAU student service offices.

For more information, please contact the OSD at the Boca Raton, Davie, or the Jupiter campuses. On the Boca campus the OSD is located in the Library,

room 175, (561) 297-3880; on the Davie campus, in MOD I, room 104 (954) 236-1222; and on the Jupiter campus, in the Student Affairs Office (561) 799-8621. Additional information is available from the OSD web page at www.osd.fau.edu.

How Can I Help?

A regular question that we hear in the Office of Retention is: "What can I do as a member of the FAU community to enhance student satisfaction and retention?" Thus, each Retention newsletter contains "how can I help" tips for faculty and staff – little things that you can do to help to retain students.

The "how can I help" tip for the Fall semester is to encourage any student that you think may have a disability to register with the OSD. Also, please encourage any current OSD students who are encountering problems to see their OSD counselor. Finally, encourage students within your classes or who come to your offices to volunteer with the OSD, as their assistance is appreciated and needed by students with disabilities – and as we all know, students who are involved on campus are more likely to persist.



STAY@FAU,

the University's Retention newsletter, is published bi-annually. Please look for future issues that will go in-depth with some of the key services that enhance student persistence and how YOU can help increase the retention rates of our students.