

Student Retention & Success Newsletter

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BLC Adds Drop-in Hours for Educational Consultants

Submitted by Michael Dickinson, Director,
Ballotti Learning Center

Students are getting connected to tutors more quickly in the Ballotti Learning Center (BLC) this semester. The BLC has instituted drop-in hours for students to request tutors. Previously, students were expected to schedule an appointment with an educational consultant (EC) in order to be matched with a peer tutor. Now between 11:00 AM and 3:00 PM Monday through Friday, students can meet with an EC on a drop-in basis to request a tutor. Students are still expected to meet with an educational consultant, but the drop-in hours have helped to streamline the process. Before students are matched, students meet with an educational consultant to clarify their needs and to make sure that students are connected with the most appropriate resources. ECs are able to make a quick assessment of students' needs through reviewing students' academic history and asking pointed questions. For example, ECs will often ask if and how many hours a week a student is working to learn if financial reasons or time management may be a cause for academic difficulty. If students' answers to questions provide reason to be concerned, educational consultants will discuss with the students a plan beyond tutoring to address the students' needs. Otherwise, with the new streamlined process, students can be quickly connected to tutoring resources.

Chalk Talk

(excerpts printed from [Chalk Talk](#) with permission of author Donna Qualters, Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence)

Quick Tip: Consider discussing your grading system with the class before final exams, so students understand your expectations.

Quick Tip: To help faculty grading, prepare the answer key or scoring guide with assigned points before administering the exam. This allows any mistakes to be caught, and uses time effectively if there is little time between the exam and the due date for grades. Grades are due **December 15**.

Quick Tip: Contact either the Office of Student Affairs, Office of Retention, or academic advisors for questions about student performance. Others may be able to provide additional insight for a particular student, and can also help to direct the student to additional services.

Educational consultants are still available by appointment for students to receive support with academic challenges. Drop-in hours are intended for students who are simply looking to get matched with a tutor. In addition, all peer tutoring is still done by appointment. If anyone has questions about tutoring, the role of ECs or other academic support questions, please contact the Ballotti Learning Center at (617) 573-8235.

On the Road with Retention

Submitted by Susan James Leyva, Director, Office of Retention Services

Each month the Office of Retention Services sponsors a "Suffolk Spirit Night" to help create school spirit and highlight our athletes. This past month, along with co-sponsorship from the Department of Athletics, Off-Campus Housing Office, Residence Life/Summer Programs and the Office of Student Activities, we were able to bring students to Dilboy Stadium in Somerville to cheer on our Women's and Men's Soccer Teams. Students boarded the "Suffolk Spirit Shuttle", ate pizza, received some noise makers and cheered our teams on to victory!

This month we are hosting the final "Suffolk Spirit Night" of the semester as we cheer on our very own "Lady Rams". **The Women's Basketball Team will play here at Suffolk in the Ridgeway Gym on Tuesday, November 18, at 7:00pm.** Come out and cheer on our team, eat some pizza, have photo opportunities with our mascot, and watch a talented group of students put on a "Wicked" half-time show. Hope to see you there!



First Year Experience Student Issues

November Happenings

Possible Issues/Concerns

Roommate relationships develop more fully and become stressful.

Academic stress from midterms builds with the great demand for studying and preparation.

Midterm workload pressures are followed by feelings of failure and loss of self-esteem.

Roommate problems continue, but they are smaller in scope than previous months.

Values exploration continues, especially in the area of sexuality.

Dating/non-dating/friendship anxieties extremely high. Non-dating students feel a sense of loss of esteem because so much value is placed upon dating.

Students decide to withdraw from school because they either realize that college is not the place for them, they return home for personal reasons, or they transfer to another school.

Grief from not being part of a group develops because of inadequate skills for finding a group, or from not being selected by one.

Financial strain sets in from lack of budgeting experience.

Homecoming blues develop because of no date for social affairs, and/or lack of ability/opportunity to participate in activities.

Time conflicts between academic and social expectation emerges.

Signing up for classes involves starting to think about the following semester.

Adjusting to new study habits includes not just being able to study the way they did in high school. More time and greater workload needs to be incorporated into their schedule for studying.

December Happenings

December Celebrations

Finals

Quiet Hours

Closing of term information

Possible Issues/Concerns

Increasing thoughts/deliberation about suicide occur from inability to cope with the pressure of academic and social expectations.

Final exam pressures including anxiety, fear and guilt increase as exams approach and papers become due. Increased use of alcohol and drugs is related.

Extracurricular time strains—seasonal parties, concerts, social service projects and religious activities drain student energies.

Financial worries occur with the thought of Christmas/holiday gifts and travel costs.

Pre-holiday blues emerge especially for those who have concerns for family.

Friendship tensions become high with the onset of final exams.

Pressures increase to perform sexually because of the approach of vacation and the extended separation.

Meet the Faculty Luncheon Series

Submitted by Susan James Leyva, Director, Office of Retention Services

The Office of Retention Services has been working with academic departments and the Office of the Dean in the College of Arts and Sciences to promote opportunities for students to engage with faculty outside of the classroom in informal settings. Through the "Meet the Faculty" luncheon series, freshmen and sophomore students are invited to have lunch with their academic department to find out about opportunities, scholarship information, internship possibilities, and learn more about the faculty that teach them. We also invite the undeclared majors to these events in the hopes that they find a major that they can connect to.

We hosted the Communication and Journalism Department, Biology and Chemistry Departments, Sociology Department, Government and NE-SADSU. The responses from both the students and faculty have been wonderful!

We will be outreaching to other academic departments to begin scheduling the spring semester – so stay tuned! If you are interested in having your department participate, contact Susan Leyva at 617.573.8718.

Navigating the Hill

by Olena Savystka

Although the fall semester is not over yet, I find myself contemplating my plans for junior year. My double major will certainly call for careful planning, especially if I elect to study abroad. The opportunities are tempting - perfecting my Spanish while studying Economics and Government at CEU San Pablo; improving my French and getting acquainted with Paris at the Sorbonne; or maybe both. However, there is the possibility of a research assistant position or an internship at the State House, as well as the appeal of another exciting year with the SGA – the opportunity cost of a semester abroad may be too large for me. While I look ahead, my plan for the spring semester is to move ahead with fulfilling major requirements and to keep an eye out for summer programs such as the government department's seminar on the European Union.

Students Get Involved

submitted by John Silveria, Assistant Dean of Students

As we get in to November, student involvement is moving full steam ahead. It's a great time to point students to a variety of campus organizations for annual events and programs.

Performing Arts organizations typically have showcases and programs for each organization throughout November and into December. Student organizations such as the Black Student Union have annual events like the African Diaspora event scheduled for November 7th, and Program Council will host the annual Winter Ball on December 5th. All of these events and more can be found on the main Campus Cruiser calendar under Student Activities.

For students interested in starting their own new organization, Student Activities has created the Program Advising Center in 537 Donahue to help in that process. Student organizations that do form and become registered student organizations can typically receive funding from the Student Government Association for hosting programs, lectures, a variety of social events and for conferences also.

Some students like the structure of being involved with a University based office program. Two that are booming this year are the new Residence Hall Association coordinated by Residence Life and the new leadership program offered through Student Activities entitled "The Journey". Both have seen a large number of students show interest in being part of these new programs.

Information on all of these programs and more can be found by guiding students to the following website. www.suffolk.edu/getinvolved

What If I Am Asked?



I heard there is a snow storm headed our way during finals week. What happens if school is closed on Wednesday when our final is scheduled?

If the University is closed on any day during exam week,

Friday, December 12, is scheduled as the makeup date. Information will be updated on the University home page. Students, faculty and staff who provided the University with their emergency numbers will receive a phone and text notification. Please encourage any student who has not updated this information to access SAIL and click on Update My Address information.

I know it is after the deadline to withdraw from a course, but are there any exceptions? My scholarship may in jeopardy if I do not receive a C or better and I am not sure I can bring my grade up to a C.

Beginning November 1 a student may request a late course withdrawal, but will need faculty approval. The Office of Student Affairs will give the student a late course withdrawal petition that the student must bring to the faculty member for approval. The faculty member will check either the **I approve** or **I do not approve** box and sign the form. The student must return the form to the Office of Student Affairs. If approved, the Dean of Students will forward the late course withdrawal and petition to the Registrar's Office and the student will be issued a grade of "W". No petitions for late course withdrawal can be filed once the student has taken the final exam.

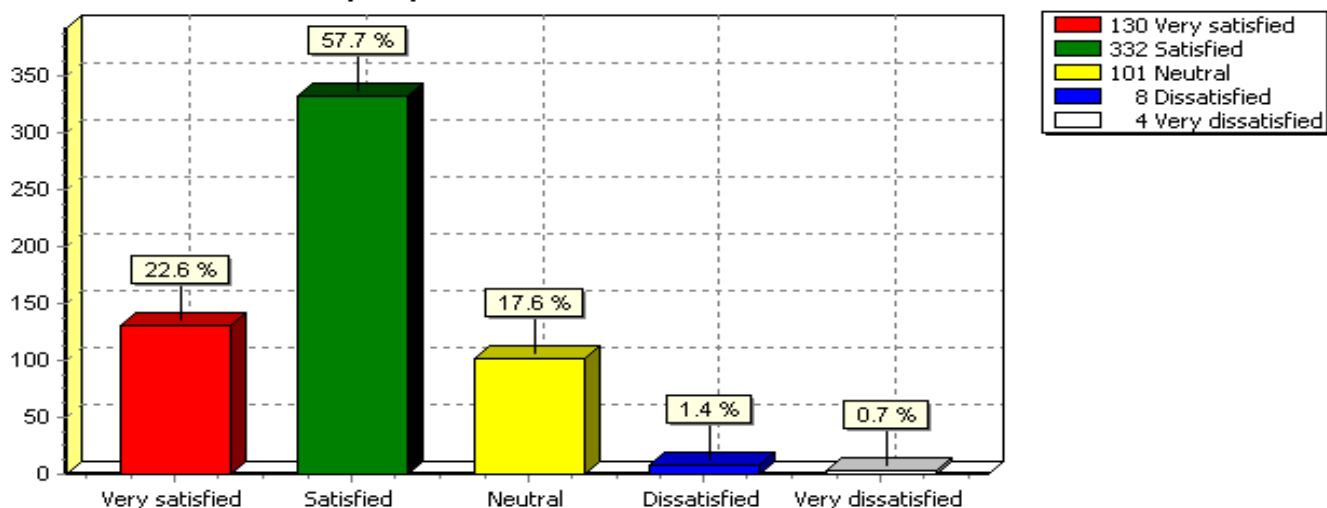
Student Satisfaction with Overall Quality of Instruction

submitted by Michal Duggan, Director, Enrollment Research and Planning

Enrollment Research & Planning conducted a survey of new freshmen during the fall 2008 semester. About 80% of the respondents reported they were satisfied with the "overall quality of instruction". Only 2% of respondents were dissatisfied.

The complete results of this survey are available. Please contact Mike Duggan if you would like a copy of the results at mduggan@suffolk.edu.

Satisfaction with: - Overall quality of instruction



Building Bridges to Learning: The Millennial Learning Paradox (part 2)

by Donna Qualters, Director, Center for Teaching Excellence



When you look at the Millennial and the research on this generation it becomes clear that this is a generation living in paradoxes. What does this mean for the classroom? Three thoughts come to mind. First, we may need to re-envision our role as educators. Traditionally, higher education centered on knowledge acquisition, today it is more about knowledge management. This shifts the balance in our classes to juggling content with skills such as training students in divergent thinking. For example giving students exercises where they have to break down the knowledge and reconstruct it in a new way, or having them work together to generate as many different and creative answers to complex questions as they can. Secondly, students today may not be as independent and skilled in problem solving as past generations. It becomes important for teachers to review our expectations for ourselves and our students, to use more questioning techniques, and to model self-efficacy strategies for students.

Lastly we need to look at the paradoxes above and think how to address them in our classrooms. To help with the confidence yet naivety about their abilities, ungraded pre-tests may make students aware of what they know and don't know. "Shock Technique" may work for others by laying out the complexity of the course and the work very early in the semester. Incorporating more classroom assessment techniques into our teaching helps both the instructor and the student become aware of knowledge and skill gaps. Finally for newer undergraduates more detailed instructions for assignments may alert them to areas of under preparation.

Students' team orientation versus their individualistic drive for success can be balanced by providing a variety of learning situations through the semester. By varying individual work and accountability with pairings and small groups students have the opportunity to work together yet have individual achievement. We need to carefully think about our grading schemes and be sure that in group situations we have devised a fair and equitable way of judging everyone's contributions fairly and we may need to model and teach how groups work in our particular discipline.

Students' proclivity to hands-on learning versus their desire to be passive educationally is more difficult to tackle. It may help to tell students the "why" behind what you do to let them know the value of active learning in your class. Help students see the value for them in being actively engaged in their own education by having them reflect once or twice during the semester on what has helped them meet your course objectives. This exercise has led many students to realize for the first time that the real learning for them came when they were made to use the material and apply it not just absorb it.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of students today is their call for an ethical world counterbalanced with the amount of cheating that goes on. Student cheat for a number of varied reasons: pressure to succeed parental expectations, lack of time management and so forth. It may be helpful to tackle this head on! Make explicit in your syllabus and discuss what is cheating in your course. For example for some faculty working together is allowed, for others it isn't so let your students know what your expectations are. Be vigilant, monitor exams and papers, if you have the reputation of doing this, cheating decreases. Jointly establish guidelines with your students about what should be done if someone cheats and what is their responsibility in making an honest classroom environment.

So how do we prepare for students who:

are one of the smartest generations
unsure of career options
are more diverse than ever before
have access to amazing amounts of information
are often savvy consumers

respect authority but expect delivery
have a lot and expect a lot
are optimistic about the future
have more involved parents

We need to think more about structure, clear expectation, scaffolding teaching techniques, re-thinking our role and sharing our expectations for students. My question to you – What will your bridge look like?

Save A Student Award



AJ Meyers nominates **Paula Fleck** for the Save A Student award. As Bursar, Paula has instituted a new 5-month tuition payment plan for the Spring 2009 semester. Recognizing that these tough economic times may impact students' ability to pay their Spring 2009 tuition in one or two payments, the new plan will allow students and/or their families to spread their semester expenses over five interest-free monthly payments. Previously this plan was only available to full-time students who began in the Fall term. Congratulations to Paula and the Student Accounts Office staff for taking proactive actions to prevent further financial burdens to students which could impact their ability to continue their education at Suffolk.

Student Retention and Success Committee Members

Marguerite Dennis, *Vice-President, Enrollment & International Programs*
Walter Caffey, *Assoc. Vice-President, Enrollment and Retention Mgt*
Sebastian Royo, *Associate Dean, CAS*
Morris McInnes, *Associate Dean, SBS*
John Hamel, *Director of UG Admissions*
Rich DeCapua, *Associate Dean of Students*
John Silveria, *Assistant Dean of Students*
Michael Dickinson, *Director, BLC*
Michael Duggan, *Director, ERP*
Mary Lally, *Assist Dean Enrollment/Registrar*
Susan James Leyva, *Director, Retention Services*
Christine Perry, *Assistant Dean Enrollment/ Director of Financial Aid*

It is not too late to refer students to the BLC, (x 8235) English Writing Center, (x 8270) Math Support Center (x 8763) or Second Language Services (x 8485) for tutoring services. Contact the appropriate office for details.