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Early Alert Important Dates

Thursday, October 9

Early Alert Codes due via SAIL

Friday, October 10

Text of the message that is sent to each alerted student is sent to all participating faculty members.

Wednesday, October 15

Registrar sends lists of identified EA students to the Ballatti Learning Center BLC sorts and prioritizes students based on indicators of need and urgency: Academic Probation, Lower GPA's, Multiple Alerts. BLC sends sub-lists to various services and offices for outreach to alerted priority students.

Chalk Talk

(Excerpts printed from *Chalk Talk* with permission of author Donna Qualters, Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence.

When you ask the class a question or to work on a problem, tell the students that they have some specific amount of time to think about it, say 3 minutes. Then look at your watch and make sure that you wait the allotted amount of time, without interruption. This makes certain that you actually give the students a reasonable amount of time, and also guarantees that you won't waste any class time.

Newsletter Published by the Student Retention and Success Committee

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- Walter Caffey, *Assoc. Vice-President, Enrollment and Retention Mgt*
- Sebastian Royo, *Associate Dean, CAS*
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- Christine Perry, *Assistant Dean Enrollment/Director of Financial Aid*

Student Retention & Success Newsletter

Building Bridges to Learning: The Millennial Learning Paradox (part 1)

by Donna Qualters, Director, Center for Teaching Excellence



Every time I speak on the "new" generation in our classrooms today, the so-called millennial students, participants raise their hand to outdo each other in sharing the most outrageous (at least in their mind) story about today's students. We hear about helicopter parents, the student who sent a 3 a.m. e-mail and then one at 3:15 a.m. wanting to know why the teacher hadn't responded yet, excuses for not doing an assignment justified because it interfered with vacation plans and on and on. The overarching theme that comes from interactions with colleagues is how different this generation is from the previous generations and how stressful it can be to deal with them in the classroom.

What can we as teachers do about this? Do we need to get stricter, easier? Push students, pull students? Stop fighting the tide, go with the flow? Retire? As I read more and more about this generation the answer seem to form itself in my mind as a metaphor of bridge building rather than generational collision. Research is emerging which tells us that this is the largest generational difference between faculty teaching styles and the skills and student learning styles AND that that gap is increasing. If that's true we can envision new students hurtling towards old faculty resulting in an explosion and the destruction of both. But, what if we take an alternate course and think of the process of education as crossing a stream with students starting on one side to build the bridge and faculty on the other to meet somewhere in the middle to cross the divide.

Let's begin by exploring the research. I place a caveat here. The research identifies general trends and may not reflect every student in our institutions, but it does give a picture why this generation responds, thinks, and sometimes acts the way they do.

When you look at the Millennial and the research on this generation it becomes clear that this is a generation living in paradoxes. The box below points out the tensions that exist for students today.

Confident/Entitled	Naive about social interactions/require constant feedback
Term Oriented	Individuals
Ethical/Strong Social Concerns	Highest record of cheating than any generation
Achievement Oriented	Seeking balance in life
Hands on learners	Educationally passive

What does this mean for the classroom? This question will be answered in part 2 coming in the November issue. Stay tuned!

What If I Am Asked?

What grade will I get if I drop this course now? As of October 1 students will receive a grade of W on their transcript. Last day to drop a course without a failing grade is October 31.

First Year Experience Student Issues

October Happenings

Roommate relationships develop more fully and become stressful

Possible Issues/Concerns

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.

Can "Tough Education" be Effective with Today's Students?

submitted by Ken Garni, Director, Counseling Center



This column reflects the opinions of the author, raises questions and provides few answers. Simply, it is offered as "food for thought" and discussion. **HERE THEY ARE!**

A comprehensive study that surveyed 16,475 college students nationwide between 1982 and 2006 found that "...today's college students are significantly more narcissistic and self-centered than their predecessors" (Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell and Bushman, 2008). Analyzing student responses on the *Narcissistic Personality Inventory*, the authors found that two-thirds of the study participants in 2006 had above-average scores, representing an increase of 30 percent over the 1982 administration. The authors of the *NPI* defined narcissists as "...more likely to have romantic relationships that are short-lived, at risk for infidelity, lack emotional warmth, and to exhibit game-playing, dishonesty, and over-controlling and violent behaviors". Twenge, who authored *Generation Me: Why Today's Young Americans Are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled – and More Miserable Than Ever Before* (2006), added that narcissists also tend to lack empathy, react aggressively to criticism, and favor self-promotion over helping others. Current advances in technology may also have unintentionally fueled the increase in student narcissism. As Twenge pointed out, by their very name MySpace and YouTube encourage such attention-seeking.

Seemingly more so than ever, college faculties and administrators are being challenged to develop effective counterpoints to "earlier lessons" learned by their new students. Those include the "I am special" and "everyone wins a trophy" syndromes that are a key part of the developmental "packages" that many students bring to campus with them. The foregoing findings raise questions about the potential links between those levels of student narcissism, the increasing frequency and severity of mental health pathology on college campuses, and student resistance/delay in seeking assistance from support services on campuses.

NOW WHAT? An earlier column (*Should Teaching Independence be Included in the Curriculum?*, September 2008) focused on the increasing sense of personal isolation and lack of social skills that are characteristic of many of our students. To be successful (ie: to get their "lessons" learned), faculty and administrators must go beyond just challenging students to become more self-defined and autonomous in their functioning. They must also find ways of imparting realistic and positive social attitudes as antidotes to earlier (mis)teachings brought to campus by first-year students.

A recent study on college students at a large midwestern

university examined the relationship between positive social attitudes and wellness (Miville, Romans, Johnson and Lone, 2004). It measured Universal-Diverse Orientation (UDO), a social attitude characterized by awareness and acceptance of both the similarities and differences among people. It is a social attitude not commonly associated with narcissism of any type. The study concluded that UDO was "...linked with adaptive attitudes and behaviors that involve a competent and positive sense of oneself as an individual and as a social group member, along with a capacity to respond well in difficult times". Of all of the wellness variables examined by the study, researchers found that belief in oneself as a competent person (self-efficacy) was the primary predictor of UDO. The authors concluded that a strong link between beliefs and attitudes about self and beliefs and attitudes about others can lead to well-functioning or dysfunction among college students. The authors also concluded that the college setting is an ideal place to provide therapeutic interventions aimed at changing belief systems in order to help create healthier functioning among young adults.

How to do so? We might consider the "Bill Gates Solution". In speaking to a class of high school seniors, he addressed how feel-good, politically-correct teachings had created a generation of students with no concept of reality and how hanging on to such concepts was a recipe for failure in the real world. He then outlined eleven "rules of life" that students did not (and will not?) learn in school (college?), some of which are listed below.

Rule 1: Life is not fair – get used to it!

Rule 2: The world won't care about your self-esteem. The world will expect you to accomplish something BEFORE you feel good about yourself.

Rule 4: If you think your teacher is tough, wait till you get a boss.

Rule 6: If you mess up, it is not your parents (teachers?) fault, so don't whine about your mistakes. Learn from them.

Rule 8: Your school (college?) may have done away with winners and losers, but life HAS NOT. In some schools, they have abolished failing grades and they will give you as many times as you want to get the right answers. This doesn't bear the slightest resemblance to ANYTHING in real life.

Rule 9: Life is not divided into semesters. You don't get summers off and very few employers are interested in helping you FIND YOURSELF. Do that on your own time.

Rule 10: Television is NOT real life. In real life, people actually have to leave the coffee shop and go to jobs. This "tough love" concept surely worked for Bill Gates. Should we consider teaching it to our students? Would it work if we did? How would we do it if we thought it would work? Input and reactions welcome. More to follow.

Re-Recruiting through “*Experiences with Impact – MGT200*”

by Laurie L. Levesque, Assistant Dean, SBS

This semester marks the rollout of the 2nd year portion of the revised BSBA and the focus on LINKS (Leadership-Innovation-Networking-Knowledge-Service). The cornerstone is the sophomore cohort experience, which is delivered via a one credit experiential course entitled, Leadership and Social Responsibility (MGT200). Faculty who teach junior and senior courses will be learning more about this experience so they can link their curriculum back to it, reference and build upon it, and generally help students understand the linkages among the courses in their curriculum. We believe that students who understand the reasons for required courses, and exactly how such foundational knowledge or experiences are related to academic and career success, will perceive and receive additional value from their Suffolk education.

In MGT 200, students don't perform direct service as volunteers. Rather, they work in teams for about three weeks to develop a solution to an organizational “challenge.” These are actual hurdles faced by local not-for-profits. Thirty-six teams were tasked with one of four challenges: fundraising to buy books for a pre-school curriculum, finding tutors and mentors for urban students in an alternative high school, creating fund-raising teams for cancer research, or implementing a bread and milk donation program for families and individuals who are in need.

MGT200 exposes students to the symbiotic relationship between corporations and not-for-profit organizations.

The course has several goals – developing skills, emphasizing service and corporate social responsibility, providing a common experience, and for some, an experience that is not only resume-worthy, but impressive. The class provides guidance on basic team and meeting skills, skills they will practice in the dozen or so upper-level courses with re-

quired team projects. The writing of a sustainability plan after the project is done helps students frame organizational challenges and solutions in broader terms, thinking forward toward implementation, expanding on the solution, or delivering the solution to multiple locations – all skills critical in business. From start to finish, we want our students to do something that matters to real people – and if possible take their project far enough that there are real results and a sense of accomplishment and pride in their Suffolk degree program.



Building on the freshman Business Foundations course (MGT101) rolled out in 2007, MGT200 exposes students to the symbiotic relationship between corporations and not-for-profit organizations. SBS students learn about the financial, ethical, and marketing benefits of socially responsible businesses. They meet the managers and leaders and learn the resource, staffing, and operational challenges faced by not-for-profits. Many of our students will someday be in a position where they can create or encourage a partnership with a not-for-profit or offer paid employee time for service. Their own experiences in this class will show them how small groups and strategic partnerships with local firms can have a real impact on not-for-profits and do more for society.

On the afternoon of Friday September 12th nearly 250 students filed into the C. Walsh Theater; they were curious what was in store for them. We knew what they'd be doing and why, but not how far they could go. By the time this newsletter is out, we'll be compiling information about their actual accomplishments – stay tuned for the results.

Save A Student Award - *Sharon Lenzie, Assist to Dean, CAS*

Peter Palumbo of the CAS Advising Office writes: I would like to nominate Sharon Lenzie for the "Save a Student" Award. Our office works closely with Sharon on a number of academic matters but a large portion of our time is dedicated to those students in some degree of academic limbo. A large portion of her job is to work very closely with many CAS students that are on the verge of academic peril, specifically her role as chair of the Academic Standing Committee. Sharon is continually able to gracefully walk the line between being an administrator that has to maintain the College's high degree of standards as well as being empathetic and supportive to those students during their difficult times. It is hard to pin-point one student or situation in which Sharon helped to redirect a student's academic career because it happens on a daily basis. In a time when students can go many semesters with relatively little administrative contact and access much of their academic information from a computer, Sharon plays an invaluable role of showing students that there are administrators that truly care for students.



Why it is Important to Issue Early Alerts By Ed Morgan, Associate Director, BLC

Evidence is plentiful that early and frequently graded assignments will encourage students to acclimate to new academic demands, and to learn more effectively. Only those teaching a course can credibly provide this feedback. Furthermore, new students arrive here from over a 1000 different high schools or colleges. Some are more prepared than necessary, and some are not well prepared. Yet, to make wise choices, students need information about not only the academic demands, but also the intensity of work that is required for excellent grades in Suffolk courses. This raises the question: how many need early alerts and other academic warnings, in addition to the supplemental learning activities we offer, in order to earn high grades?

Last fall, Suffolk University welcomed 1326 new undergraduate students, and by June 2008, 17.42% or 231 of them ended their first year with a cumulative GPA below 2.3. We all know that earning a C or D in entry level

Important Early Alert deadlines appear on page 1 of this newsletter.

courses creates a weak foundation upon which to complete core courses in one's major. Evidence of this currently exists: this fall, 460 students are studying with some form of academic warning (e.g. probation, low major GPA, too many I, L, W, or F grades, etc.). Unfortunately, these same students persistently avoid the offices that provide academic support services to students. So, how can the Suffolk University community convince students to engage in supplemental learning activities?

Through Early Alert Grades these students emerge as needing supplemental academic activities. Alert Grades, along with a strong personal recommendation, are an effective means for instructors and faculty members to encourage students to work with academic support professionals. But this year, we are doing more with the Alert grades you issue: We have in the past reached out if a student receives an Alert from Professor A, and another Alert from professor B, or receives an Alert while on probation. And

last year we started to send notes of outreach results back to the faculty members who submitted an Alert grade. This year, if you assess your students, and issue an Alert grade, we will add those grades to a line of evidence from each student's academic record. We will complement the Alert grade with several different academic scores, from cumulative Undergraduate GPA, high school GPA, placement scores, Admission Status (conditional admission), or SAT scores. This way, we can more precisely identify students who have a greater probability of ending the year with a GPA below 2.3.

Once we identify these high priority students, how will we approach them? For years we have sent an email message to every single student receiving an Alert. We will also try to identify support professionals who have a connection with these students and call the phone numbers listed for high priority students. We know, however, that these students are at-risk because they are not engaged; they are occasionally absent from class, have not updated their contact information, and do not participate in the social life of the university. In many cases, instructors have the only personal contact with these individuals since they avoid cold calls from professional academic support staff members. In these cases, your strong referral, if you monitor the student afterwards, is our best hope to engage these students in supplemental learning activities.

You may wonder why I write to encourage use of the Early Alert Project. After all, many faculty members are consistent contributors to the Early Alert Project. It appears that more do not contribute. While this is not a perfect measure, of those 231 who as noted above ended the year with a cumulative GPA below 2.3, 101 received one or more Alerts, and 130 did not receive any Alerts. I write to encourage more partnerships of faculty members and academic support professionals, to increase the percentage of students who receive Alerts if they are not performing well early in the semester.

Navigating the Hill by Olena Savystka

The first month of school has been anything but slow. Course work has been heavy from the very first week. My extracurricular commitment has grown, and my teaching assistant position, as well as my paralegal internship, has taken up a substantial chunk of my time. It is quite unusual, albeit fortunate, that I enjoy everything that I do, everything I am a part of. My classes are fascinating; I would never have imagined that Government and Economics overlap in so many ways. Student Government has enabled me

to become a leader among my peers; my only wish is to contribute as much as possible to this organization in the course of the year. Both of my jobs provide a great learning experience, and will prepare me well for my future career. Yet there are so many other things I would like to do: study French, join Mock Trial – the list goes on.

Concerned About a Student?

The Student Affairs Office is here to help. Deans in the Student Affairs Office are available to consult with faculty members who may be concerned about a student for any reason. Student difficulties may present in a variety of ways while students are on campus including poor class attendance, poor academic performance, disturbing writings in homework assignments, and changes in behavior and personal habits.

An on-line report form has been created to allow the Student Affairs Office to receive and respond to reports more rapidly and ultimately lead to more effective early interventions. Please note: the on-line form is not sent via a "secure line" so if you have special concerns about confidentiality, please call in your concerns to Ann Coyne, Dean of Students, at (617) 573-8239. Visit the Student of Concern web page at <http://www.suffolk.edu/campuslife/22771.html>.