

# RETENTION REVIEW NEWSLETTER



University College  
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

**April 2025**

## Did You Know?



Since September, the Office of Student Retention has been working to develop and implement a First-Year Experience program (FYE) for incoming students on the Stevens Point campus. The goal of this program is to help students find a sense of belonging on campus as they explore the rich array of activities, organizations, and events offered at UWSP. A similar program will be available soon for students on the Marshfield and Wausau campuses. Please contact me if you would like more information on programming in Marshfield and Wausau. Keep reading for information about the FYE program on the Stevens Point campus!

The first step in developing an FYE program was to gather a committee of colleagues and students. Committee members brought informed insight and amazing creativity to the task as well as a deep commitment to enhancing students' experience during their first year at UWSP. The committee consists of both staff members – Nathan Hilgart and Catherine Storey (Academic and Career Advising [ACAC]), Annette Hackbarth-Onson (Academic Success/University College), Diane Gilbert (Athletics), Samantha Samreth (DCA), Brad Van Den Elzen (Office of International Education/University College), Michaela Knepfel and Julie Zsido (Residence Life), Missy Burgess and Michele Miller (Student Affairs), Gretel Stock (University College) – and students: Hailey Bay, Phalisa Xiong, and Jared Arellano. Elijah Allord, Student Communications Specialist in University College, supported the committee's work by designing the FYE program logo featured above and by facilitating connections with colleagues in Communications and Marketing.

Thanks to the hard work of the FYE-Development Committee, we are ready to roll out *Pointers Engage!* for the Fall 2025 first-year cohort! We will promote the *Pointers Engage!* program throughout the summer on UWSP's social media channels, on the UWSP parent portal, and in other communications with parents and students. During Orientation and Pointers Week, we will provide additional information about the program to both students and parents, emphasizing the importance of getting engaged and establishing a sense of belonging on campus. We are currently coordinating efforts with staff members on the University's Communications and Marketing team to ensure ongoing promotion of *Pointers Engage!* throughout the academic year.

Students will find complete information about *Pointers Engage!* on Canvas. We are in the process of developing a *Pointers Engage!* module that will be included in two asynchronous Canvas courses—one from the Admissions Office and one from ACAC—that first-year students are required to complete. While students will use Canvas to access details about participating in the program, they will not upload proof of participation through Canvas. Instead, we will track their participation through the SPIN (UW-Stevens Point Involvement Network) app. The SPIN software will automatically record attendance for each student who checks in to an FYE-eligible event. I will use attendance records to track participation and analyze data.

The structure of the program encourages students to engage with each of the Seven Dimensions of Wellness developed at UWSP (career, emotional, environmental, intellectual, physical, social, and spiritual) as well as financial wellness. To complete the program, students must participate in one event, activity, or organization within each of the wellness categories for a total of eight required instances of engagement during their first year. Students can easily find FYE-eligible events by looking for the FYE tag in SPIN.

All students who complete the *Pointers Engage!* program will receive a certificate of completion. Additionally, students who complete the program will be eligible to win one of 15 \$25 Amazon Gift Cards and one of two \$1,000 UWSP scholarships. Scholarship funds will be applied to winners' tuition in the following fall semester. Most important, students who complete the program will enjoy increased engagement as well as a stronger sense of belonging and embeddedness as a Pointer.

If you would like to ensure that your department's events, organizations, or activities are included in the FYE, please contact me at [lorandal@uwsp.edu](mailto:lorandal@uwsp.edu) or 715-346-2484. I will be happy to help you post your events in SPIN and tag them as part of the *Pointers Engage!* program. No event, activity, or opportunity is too big or too small for inclusion in the FYE. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you would like to include one or more of your department's planned events in the *Pointers Engage!* program.

As you identify offerings within your department that might be a good fit with the FYE program, please consider the following specific goals of the program, which were drawn from the [UWSP Retention Framework](#).

By the end of their first year, students will

- begin to identify potential career paths through active exploration of personal interests and values
- attend at least one career-related event to feel more comfortable with the career-exploration process
- be involved in at least two co-curricular interest areas
- engage in University-wide events designed to build community
- utilize at least one campus resource critical to their success and well-being
- increase their financial literacy, while solidifying a financial plan for the second year of college
- understand how their physical, emotional, and financial health impact academic and personal success.

Please note that you can also use SPIN to promote Pointers Week events! SPIN is the go-to location for both Pointers Week and the *Pointers Engage!* program. If you need help adding events to SPIN for either Pointers Week or the FYE, please contact me or work directly with a staff member in Student Affairs by sending your questions to [case@uwsp.edu](mailto:case@uwsp.edu).

Thank you for all you do to help Pointers engage with our campus community!

## CONTACT INFORMATION



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