

RETENTION REVIEW

NEWSLETTER



University College
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point

October 2024

Did You Know?



University College recently conducted a pilot attendance campaign in Navigate to identify and connect with students who may need support early in the semester to develop healthy course-attendance habits.

Fifty-one faculty and instructional staff members volunteered to participate in this pilot. Because participating instructors teach courses that typically enroll a high number of first-year students, the pilot campaign reached 83% of students (n=1,527) attending UWSP for the first time in Fall 2024. An additional 1,044 students in their second, third, or more year of study were included in this pilot.

During the week of September 16th, participating instructors received an e-mail message with a link to their course roster(s) in Navigate. Instructors used their roster(s) to place a check mark beside the name of each student who struggled with attendance during the first three weeks of the semester. University College staff members shared a list of these students' names with both Residence Life staff members and UWSP's Retention Coordinator. Residence Life staff members are working to connect with, offer support to, and share information about campus resources with identified students who live on campus. Our Retention Coordinator is doing the same for commuter students. Ninety-one students, approximately 4% of the total included in the pilot, were identified for outreach. Of those students, 62 were first-year students. This number represents approximately 4% of the incoming first-year class.

What have we learned so far?

Although data analysis is ongoing, we have already made a significant discovery: **students appreciate knowing that faculty and staff care about them.**

As Residence Life and Retention staff members report on their outreach to identified students, the theme of gratitude becomes increasingly clear. Students indicate being grateful for the chance to talk with someone about the struggles they are facing as they adjust to college. Students indicate being grateful for staff members' resource referrals and advice. Students indicate being grateful that their instructors noticed their absence and cared enough to follow up on it.

The role of caring in the classroom and in the student-instructor relationship has been of interest to K-12 education researchers since the latter part of the 20th century ([see, e.g., Noddings, 2005](#)). However, this topic has only recently gained attention in the context of post-secondary education ([see, e.g. Mattanah et al., 2024](#)). A growing body of literature confirms that caring is just as important to teaching and learning in post-secondary institutions as it is in elementary and secondary institutions. Initial findings of our pilot likewise confirm that caring is important to our very own students.

If you would like to know more about fostering a climate of caring in your office or classroom space, University College staff members can help! We are here to support you in using tools such as Navigate, Canvas, and the [student support resource guide](#). Moreover, the staff in our Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning (CITL) can help you recognize and enhance the ways that you already incorporate caring into your interactions with students. If several colleagues are interested in learning more about the effects of pedagogical caring, you may be interested in hosting a CITL workshop for your unit. One of CITL's workshops for academic units focuses on the role of student belonging in academic outcomes and the ways that faculty and instructors can promote a sense of student belonging by showing care, normalizing challenges, and more. To learn more about this workshop or to talk about a custom workshop for your unit, email CITL Director Erin Speetzen at (espeetze@uwsp.edu).

What's Next?

Staff in University College will continue to collect and analyze data relevant to the pilot attendance campaign. We seek to understand the effects of early intervention, such as the outreach conducted in response to this campaign, on students' success in the current year and persistence to their next year. Look for updates in future editions of the UWSP Retention Review!

Quotable Quotes: **Caring in the Literature**

“What mattered from professors was the sheer fact of their paying attention: she took the time; he helped me. Attention says to the student, ‘writing matters’; but more, it says ‘*Your* writing matters.’ Students learn from this attention paid by an important person. They learn that with careful work, their writing can improve...The real issue, then, is motivation, which is heightened by knowing that an audience—really, a person—cares.”

Chambliss & Takacs (2014) *How College Works*, p. 112 (on summarizing students' comments about their growth as writers.)

CONTACT INFORMATION



IN PERSON

Collins Classroom Center 332



PHONE

(715) 346-2484



EMAIL

lorandal@uwsp.edu



Office of Student Retention
332 Collins Classroom Center, 1801 4th Ave
Stevens Point, WI 54481

Phone: [715-346-2484](tel:715-346-2484)

Email: lorandal@uwsp.edu

Web: www.uwsp.edu/retention



University of Wisconsin
Stevens Point

STEVENS POINT • MARSHFIELD • WAUSAU