

THE WORKING GROUP

Here are the individuals who came together to create this Retention Framework draft – **individuals in bold** also serve on the Retention Steering Committee:

- Tobias Barske - Assistant Dean, College of Letters and Science
- **Laura Bell** - Associate Director, Enrollment Management
- **Andrew Cinoman** – Director, Student Retention (Chair)
- Jason D’Acchioli – Assistant Dean, College of Letters and Science
- **Julia DeAngelis** – Student Leader
- Jacqui Guthrie – Assistant Director, Academic and Career Advising Center
- Laura Ketchum-Ciftci – Director, University Dining
- Brenda Lackey – Associate Dean, College of Natural Resources
- Shanny Luft – Associate Dean, University College
- Stuart Morris – Assistant Dean, College of Fine Arts and Communication
- Kevin Neuman - Assistant Dean, College of Professional Studies
- **Troy Seppelt** - Dean of Students
- Erin Speetzen - Director, Center for Inclusive Teaching and Learning

THE PROCESS

- **We began by brainstorming: *What are the CORE elements of the student experience at UWSP?***

After several conversations, we articulated FIVE CORE ELEMENTS of the student experience, and identified a set of factors that helped us to envision high level student outcomes for each area, as well a set of guiding expectations for faculty and staff. These elements include:

- **Academic Success** - Retention activities that focus on supporting and improving student learning, fostering degree progression and degree completion, and/or meeting learning outcomes in a major, department, school, or College.
- **Academic Belonging** - Retention activities that focus on community building and engagement with peers, faculty, and the leadership of the Major/Department/College, and that foster connection to opportunities to participate in the academic life of their major department and/or College.
- **Major/Career Readiness** - Retention activities that focus on providing guidance and mentoring to students around the choice of their major, engaging in early career experiences, learning about possible career paths, and/or focus on the development of [NACE \(National Association of Colleges and Employers\) Career Competencies](#).
- **Belonging and Connection** - Retention activities that focus on involvement in campus activities outside of the major department or College that help students meet new people and build strong relationships, gain leadership skills, and feel a greater sense of connection to the university.
- **Personal Development** - Retention activities that focus on the mastery of core developmental tasks that are a foundation of the university experience.

- **We then worked in pairs to brainstorm a small set of high-level learning/behavioral outcomes for each of these CORE ELEMENTS, across all four years of the student experience:**

We focused on examining the following prompt: *What do we expect students to LEARN, KNOW, UNDERSTAND, DO, EXPERIENCE, OR FEEL in a particular core area, at each point in their experience at the university?* We worded these outcomes based on this prompt: *By the end of the first (second, third, fourth) year, students WILL...*

Our goal was to create outcome statements that are broad enough in scope so that the entire university can see their work reflected in these outcomes *no matter what they do in their departments*. Instead of listing an action a student should take (joining a student organization), we attempted to articulate the goal that will be achieved by doing this action (to develop meaningful relationships).

- **We used the core values of the institution as a broader lens for our work, so these outcomes ensure our students:**
 - Feel a sense of belonging and that they fit into the **student-centered** environment of the university.
 - Exhibit an appropriate level of engagement with the **university community**.
 - Display an appropriate degree of understanding of (and respect for) the **diversity** that exists at the university and in the surrounding community.
 - Exhibit and foster **inclusivity** and a mindset of Social Justice, through campus engagement both inside and outside of the classroom.
 - Master the essential elements of **critical thinking** needed for academic and personal success.
 - Take action to engage in meaningful ways with the surrounding **community** of Stevens Point.
 - Identify a set of goals to accomplish for **professional preparation**.
 - Participate in opportunities for **research, scholarly, and creative activity**.
 - Take steps to adopt and practice the mindset of **sustainability**.
 - Graduate from the university embracing the practice of **lifelong learning**.

- **We also discussed the developmental and transitional changes that students experience as they come into the university, and progress from year to year until they graduate.**

How is a sophomore different from a first-year student? What makes the experience of a junior distinct from the sophomore or senior year experience?? *How do these differences influence the goals that we develop?*

THE OUTCOMES FOR EACH CORE AREA OF THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

These outcomes represent a starting point to *begin* to create greater focus for departments as they plan their yearly work.

We recognize that this framework will be at the center of a process of continuous improvement, which will identify outcomes that need to be added or refined...so this retention model will always be a work in progress and should be seen as flexible and adaptable to changes in strategic priorities at the university level. These outcomes have been initially mapped to the University Strategic Plan: *Purpose Made Possible*, to ensure that the goals and strategies articulated in the plan are represented in this framework.

Assessment of these outcomes will be a critical piece of the implementation of this Retention Framework. Preliminary discussion in this working group focused on several elements of this process that include:

- **Proper onboarding and training of department leadership in the use of EAB Navigate** to identify students who participate in different retention activities, as well as the use of the Analytics functionality to examine high-level impact of these activities on student persistence.
- **Student self-assessment of these outcomes through the New Student Survey**, which is administered in the first half of the fall semester – this will provide an opportunity to gather information about initial feelings of competence and growth over time in these core areas, while providing the university with feedback on whether retention efforts are accomplishing their intended goals.

Academic Success - Retention activities that focus on supporting and improving student learning, fostering degree progression and degree completion, and/or meeting learning outcomes in a major, department, school, or College.

By the end of their first year, students will:

- Understand and adapt to the academic expectations of the university.
- Develop effective learning strategies for success in university coursework.
- Understand when and how to obtain the support needed to succeed academically.
- Complete General Education *Foundational Skills and Dispositions* requirements as needed.
- Earn 30 credits toward their degree in Good Academic Standing.

By the end of their second year, students will:

- Display a nuanced understanding of academic success in college.
- Successfully balance their academic courseload with increasing work and extracurricular demands.
- Be comfortable approaching major/minor professors for support with their coursework.
- Earn 60 credits toward their degree in Good Academic Standing.

By the end of their third year, students will:

- Complete elective and other coursework that aligns with personal and professional goals and competencies.
- Create a plan for graduate or professional study as needed.
- Earn 90 credits toward their degree in Good Academic Standing.

By the end of their fourth year, students will:

- Complete a capstone experience that applies classroom learning in a field setting.
- Be able to articulate how the components of their degree (majors/minors/certificates) have prepared them for their future career/educational path.
- Complete all degree requirements necessary to earn the bachelor's degree in their program of study.
- Apply for graduation in a timely fashion.

For the university to accomplish these outcomes, faculty and staff will support the academic success of our students by:

- Adopting a classroom/departmental environment, pedagogy, and/or programming that is "[student ready](#)".
- Fostering the development of core skills for academic success, including written/verbal communication and critical thinking.
- Providing activities, inside and outside of the classroom, that pique curiosity and a desire to obtain new knowledge.
- Taking steps to ensure proactive use of academic support programs and services that build a foundation for success.
- Transparently communicating expectations for behaviors that are tied to academic and personal success in college.
- Creating opportunities for students to receive frequent feedback to improve learning.
- Requiring active engagement in academic recovery programs as needed.

Academic Belonging - Retention activities that focus on community building and engagement with peers, faculty, and the leadership of the Major/Department/College, and that foster connection to opportunities to participate in the academic life of their major department and/or College:

By the end of their first year, students will:

- Identify and use the academic and personnel resources of their degree-granting college.
- Begin to build a network of meaningful relationships with faculty, staff, and peers within their degree-granting college.
- Know whom to talk with in their degree-granting college about majors, minors, and concentrations.
- Feel a positive connection to their college through active participation in events and programs.

By the end of their second year, students will:

- Complete at least one high impact practice designed to build community within their degree-granting college.
- Participate in a scholarly activity with a faculty mentor.
- Develop a supportive relationship with their assigned faculty adviser.
- Plan an internship, practicum experience, or summer research program related to their major.
- Display a deepening connection to their degree-granting college.

By the end of their third year, students will:

- Strengthen their leadership skills by serving in a role that helps other students achieve academic and personal success.
- Work with their faculty adviser to explore potential career paths, or options for graduate/professional study.
- Complete an internship, practicum experience, or professional work experience related to their major.

By the end of their fourth year, students will:

- Participate in a capstone culminating experience (e.g., student research, field experiences) as a mentor or team leader.
- Engage in at least one professional development opportunity, such as a conference or workshop.
- Seek out higher-level leadership roles through their organizational involvements, such as planning a workshop or event.
- Feel confident (with their knowledge) and ready to move into a career or graduate/professional school.

For the university to accomplish these outcomes, faculty and staff will support the academic belonging of our students by:

- Establishing and communicating expectations for, and the value of, participation in academic programs, events, and student organizations.
- Creating and participating in events and programs that foster intentional interaction with faculty, staff, and peers, both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Enabling seamless involvement in undergraduate research and other scholarly and creative activities.
- Actively promoting completion of university programs that expand the scope of learning: study abroad, student exchange, university performances, etc.

Major/Career Readiness - Retention activities that focus on providing guidance and mentoring to students around the choice of their major, engaging in early career experiences, learning about possible career paths, and/or focus on the development of [NACE \(National Association of Colleges and Employers\) Career Competencies](#):

By the end of their first year, students will:

- Know who their assigned adviser is and attend all required meetings with their academic adviser.
- Use curricular resources (such as the Catalog and the Degree Progress Report) to plan course schedules.
- Declare a major that is the best fit with academic interests and abilities.
- 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.

By the end of their second year, students will:

- Finalize academic declarations (major track(s), minor(s), certificate(s)) in partnership with their academic adviser.
- Create a personalized template for a graduation plan.
- Conduct a [Gap Analysis](#) to recognize the specific skills/experiences needed to prepare for potential career paths.
- Create a draft of application materials, that include a [cover letter](#), a [Handshake profile](#), and/or a [LinkedIn profile](#).
- Secure on-campus or near-campus employment related to their major/career field.

By the end of their third year, students will:

- Meet with their major's [Career Development Coordinator](#) to refine a career search process.
- Work with faculty/staff mentors to determine if graduate or professional school is an appropriate goal.
- Take steps to address outstanding gaps in preparation for their targeted career path: refining interviewing skills, completing experiential learning, pursuing networking and employment opportunities, etc.
- Begin to build an authentic career wardrobe.

By the end of their fourth year, students will:

- Be able to articulate their professional goals, and how they have developed career competencies through their academic and co-curricular experiences.
- Develop and execute a [job searching process](#) that identifies primary targets and refines a portfolio of materials.
- Identify professional references and invite them to review their application materials and develop letters of recommendation as needed.
- Join relevant professional associations and take advantage of virtual and in-person networking opportunities.
- Successfully gain full-time employment or admission to graduate/professional school within six months of graduation.

For the university to accomplish these outcomes, faculty and staff will support the major/career readiness of our students by:

- Providing opportunities for students to: evaluate/select/confirm a program of study that is a strong fit with academic interests and abilities, discover their sense of purpose, and clarify their career values.
- Developing learning/programmatic outcomes that teach and assess skills and competencies necessary for career progression.
- Transparently articulating the connection between academic/co-curricular experiences and the development of these skills and competencies.
- Creating and intentionally connecting students to opportunities to gain hands-on experience that provides preparation for the world of work, such as service learning, internships, field experiences and/or co-op experiences.

Belonging and Connection - Retention activities that focus on involvement in campus activities outside of the major department or College that help students meet new people and build strong relationships, gain leadership skills, and feel a greater sense of connection to the university:

By the end of their first year, students will:

- Be involved in at least two co-curricular interest areas.
- Develop at least one meaningful, supportive relationship with a university faculty/staff member.
- Engage in University-wide events designed to build community.
- Utilize at least one campus resource critical to their success and well-being.
- Be proficient in the use of university systems necessary to navigate the institution (e.g., AccesSPoint, Canvas, Navigate, SPIN).

By the end of their second year, students will:

- Deepen their on-campus involvement in ways that move beyond initial participation.
- Engage in community service/service learning on campus and/or in the surrounding community.
- Seek out a leadership opportunity within at least one affinity area.
- Formally acknowledge the support of their professors, advisers, and/or supervisors to strengthen these relationships.

By the end of their third year, students will:

- Build mentoring relationships with at least two professors, staff members, or supervisors.
- Take steps toward developing a professional network/connection to the world of work.
- Seek higher-level leadership opportunities in affinity groups, to help new students feel a sense of belonging.

By the end of their fourth year, students will:

- Participate in opportunities to form a connection to the greater community of Stevens Point.
- Attend events that expand personal and professional networks.
- Develop a strategy for building community after graduation.

For the university to accomplish these outcomes, faculty and staff will support a sense of belonging and connection in our students by:

- Intentionally connecting students to opportunities for campus involvement in a range of affinity groups, including student organizations, athletics, co-curricular activities/programs, employment on campus, etc.
- Actively developing meaningful, supportive relationships with students that build a sense of community.
- Providing programs, services, and opportunities to enhance interpersonal skills: communication, conflict resolution, problem-solving, decision making, etc.
- Ensuring that campus engagement opportunities include a focus on the development of essential leadership skills.

Personal Development - Retention activities that focus on the mastery of core developmental tasks that are a foundation of the university experience:

By the end of their first year, students will:

- Exhibit greater autonomy and self-advocacy in behavior and decision-making.
- Begin to exhibit a “growth mindset”: recognizing that the challenges that come with the transition to college are opportunities to learn and grow.
- Adopt healthy strategies to manage the stressors in their lives.
- Increase their financial literacy, while solidifying a financial plan for the second year of college.
- Understand how their physical, emotional, and financial health impacts academic and personal success.

By the end of their second year, students will:

- Understand and articulate how they have changed since they began college.
- Identify their personal strengths and areas of continued growth.
- Display greater confidence in expressing their identities, while deepening their understanding of individuals who hold identities different than their own.
- Develop relationships with faculty, staff, and peers that are increasingly mature and interdependent.

By the end of their third year, students will:

- Feel comfortable making important decisions.
- Identify their leadership style and understand how it contributes to the work of a team.
- Have a clearer vision of what their life might look like after graduation.
- Begin to understand the keys to financial wellness after college.

By the end of their fourth year, students will:

- Develop routines and activities that maintain physical, emotional, and financial health.
- Clearly and comfortably express their own salient identities and articulate the importance of this visibility.
- Apply the concepts for building and maintaining healthy relationships in any context (romantic, work, friendships).
- Develop a plan to successfully transition into the next phase of their lives: full-time employment, graduate/professional school, etc.
- Understand how to utilize a growth mindset as they transition into the world of work or graduate/professional study.

For the university to accomplish these outcomes, faculty and staff will support the personal development of our students by:

- Including intentional opportunities for reflection, critical thinking, and self-understanding when facilitating events, activities, and programs, both inside and outside of the classroom.
- Providing opportunities for students to reflect on, identify, and express their personal values and beliefs.
- Helping students recognize how to navigate the changes in their lives, value differences in others, and work through challenges.
- Prioritizing emotional, physical, and financial wellness as critical outcomes when planning events and activities.