

**Strategic Plan for Retention  
Admission and Retention of Students Committee  
April 2017**

### **Guiding Principles**

- This plan is one piece of a broader campus process to improve PLU's retention and graduation rates. It is meant to be a living document, one that evolves to meet emergent needs and priorities.
- As discussed below, this plan outlines goals to improve first year student retention. However, it is imperative that PLU also identify processes to support the success of students at all class levels, including transfer students.
- We acknowledge the outstanding efforts taking place across campus to support student success and retention. This plan builds on the good work already taking place.
- We recognize that student needs are not uniform and that, to be effective, retention strategies should respond to the complexity of students' intersecting identities.
- Each member of the PLU community shares responsibility for supporting student success and retention.

### **Introduction**

In spring 2017, Provost Rae Linda Brown directed Pacific Lutheran University's (PLU) Admission and Retention of Students (ARTS) Committee<sup>1</sup> to develop a strategic plan to help guide the work of the campus community as we work to stabilize and improve first year student retention. The ARTS Committee is part of the faculty governance system at PLU and our charge is "to study problems, recommend policy, and, in general, represent the faculty in matters dealing with admission, retention, student academic status, and policy recommendation and formation related to enrollment."<sup>2</sup> We have developed the recommendations in this plan based on our study and review of the research literature, best practices, strategic plans for retention developed by other institutions, and PLU's current practices. Because these recommendations come from a faculty committee, we are not able to offer specific steps for implementation or accountability. We present this plan to the members of President's Council so that they can identify specific units on campus to take the lead in implementing these goals and objectives.

This plan is the first step in a long-term process that will identify strategies to improve PLU's retention and graduation rates, implement strategic enrollment management practices, and support student success and belonging from first contact with PLU through graduation and beyond. Thus, the goals discussed here are meant to be a starting point in a broader process that

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<sup>1</sup> ARTS is made up of six elected faculty members and nine advisory members. In Spring 2017, ARTS membership includes Kevin Berg, Registrar; Teresa Ciabattari, Associate Professor of Sociology; Hal DeLaRosby, Director of Academic Advising; Jacob Egge, Associate Professor of Biology; Oksana Ejokina, Assistant Professor of Music; Melody Ferguson, Director of Admission; Leslie Foley, Director of Academic Assistance Programs; Mike Frechette, Interim Dean of Enrollment Management; Eva Frey, Dean of Students; Beth Griech-Polelle, Associate Professor of History; Sergia Hay, Assistant Professor of Philosophy; Charlie Mogen, ASPLU Representative; Ronald Noborikawa, Interim Director of Financial Aid; Kris Plaehn, Senior Advisor to the President; and Amy Stewart-Mailhiot (Chair), Instruction Coordinator and Reference Librarian.

<sup>2</sup> Pacific Lutheran University Faculty Handbook, 8th Edition, page 35.

may move well beyond the specific strategies outlined below. In addition, this strategic plan for retention is a living document, one that will be revised and updated as objectives are met and new needs are identified.

Retention rates are highly visible and closely monitored metrics of institutional character and performance. An institution's officially reported retention rate is defined as the proportion of first-time, full-time degree-seeking students who are enrolled in fall of their second year. For example, PLU's 2016 retention rate of 79 percent means that 79 percent of first year students who entered in fall 2015 returned for fall 2016. This official rate does not include any information on the persistence of returning students and transfer students. Although the scope of this strategic plan is specifically on the experience of first year students, ARTS strongly recommends that PLU also prioritize the development of policies and practices to support the persistence and timely graduation of all PLU students, including transfer students.

PLU faces an imperative to improve our retention rate for three reasons. First, recruiting students to attend PLU without offering them sufficient supports to thrive once they enroll threatens our institutional integrity. Our mission identifies *care* as a core value of a PLU education. Educating students to care for others, for their communities, and for the earth means modeling that care in our institutional policies and practices. Students who accrue educational debt without earning a degree experience significant negative impacts. PLU's commitment to care means we must consider the long-term well-being of all students who are a part of our community. As such, PLU aspires to be a student-ready college, "one that strategically and holistically advances student success, and works tirelessly to educate *all* students for civic and economic participation in a global, interconnected society."<sup>3</sup>

Second, institutional retention rates are reported to applicants and their families when they apply for financial aid, search the U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard, and use other college ranking systems. PLU's retention rates are lower than that of our peers; for example, in 2015, Gonzaga University's rate was 92 percent, Seattle University's was 87 percent, Seattle Pacific University's was 85 percent, Western Washington University's was 83 percent, and the rate at St. Martin's University was 80 percent. While there may be legitimate reasons for these differences, applicants and families may not understand (or be concerned) about those reasons. In short, PLU's lower retention rate reflects poorly on the institution, which may make it more difficult to recruit students to attend PLU.

Finally, retention rates are directly related to the university's bottom line. It costs more to recruit students than to retain them. Every student who chooses to leave PLU without earning a degree represents not only lost tuition revenue, but a loss on the investment of resources that were spent to recruit that student to PLU. Nationally, small 4-year private institutions spend an average of about \$2200 per student on recruitment.<sup>4</sup> According to PLU's Division of Enrollment

<sup>3</sup> Tia Brown McNair, Susan Albertine, Michelle Asha Cooper, Nicole McDonald, and Thomas Major, Jr.. *Becoming a Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2016), 5.

<sup>4</sup> Ruffalo Noel Levitz. "2016 Report: Cost of Recruiting an Undergraduate Student for Four-Year and Two-Year Institutions." (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Ruffalo Noel Levitz, 2016). Retrieved from [www.RuffaloNL.com/BenchmarkReports](http://www.RuffaloNL.com/BenchmarkReports).

Management, each student who does not retain represents a loss of about \$20,500 in net tuition revenue. Thus, the 135 non-returning students in the fall 2015 cohort represents a net loss of over \$2.7 million for the institution.

### Retention at PLU

As shown in Table 1 below, PLU's first-year retention rate averages to 82.1 percent over the last eleven years. The dip to 79.0 percent retention for the 2015 cohort marks a substantial decrease in what had been our typical pattern.

**Table 1: PLU First-Year Student Retention Rates over the Past Ten Years**

| Cohort | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | Mean |
|--------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Rate   | 81.7 | 84.0 | 84.8 | 81.1 | 82.0 | 81.9 | 82.8 | 81.8 | 81.5 | 82.8 | 79.0 | 82.1 |

Because of concern about this decrease and the resulting financial consequences for the university, President Krise convened a number of working groups in fall 2016 to better understand current conditions and to make recommendations to improve them. This Strategic Plan for Retention builds on the efforts of several of these working groups that gathered information and made recommendations to improve student success at PLU.<sup>5</sup> For example, one group considered the lower retention rates of commuter students and recommended that PLU revise its Residency Requirement Policy and offer incentives for local students to live on-campus. Another working group reviewed the profiles of the students in the fall 2015 first year cohort who did not return in fall 2016 to identify any students who would be good candidates to return to PLU to continue their education. The Retention Data Working Group did a large-scale, multivariate analysis of factors that affect retention at PLU. This analysis found that factors in three areas—academic characteristics, financial resources, and sense of belonging—were significant in affecting students' likelihood of persisting.<sup>6</sup> The goals and objectives outlined below propose strategies to improve student experience in each of these three areas.

This plan is also informed by work done by the ARTS Committee over the past several years. In 2014 - 2015, ARTS identified 16 "puzzle pieces" that inform student persistence and graduation at PLU and made several recommendations to improve their efficacy. These puzzle pieces form the foundation for this strategic plan. In addition, the committee consulted existing strategic plans for retention developed by other institutions.

<sup>5</sup> These reports are available to members of the PLU community at <https://www.plu.edu/president/protected-employee/working-group-proposals/>.

<sup>6</sup> More specifically, the analysis found that, all else equal, the following factors reduced first-year student persistence: SAT/ACT score less than 19 (equivalent to about 1010 on the SAT composite); high school GPA lower than the 25th percentile for PLU first-year students (lower than 3.43); fall semester GPA lower than the 25th percentile for PLU first-year students (lower than 2.66); commuting during fall semester; being from out of state; and identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native. Students with higher retention rates, all else equal, include students who have a high school GPA above the 75th percentile (greater than 3.98); have a fall semester GPA higher than the 75th percentile (greater than 3.67); participate in an intercollegiate sport; are in the College Bound program; participate in work study; identify as Hispanic or Asian; and have advanced standing.

In developing this plan, we have also reviewed the Strategic Enrollment Management Advisory Committee (SEMAC)'s 2014 report which had stated goals to reach 85 percent first year retention by 2017 and 90 percent first year retention by 2020.<sup>7</sup> This report also projected that undergraduate student enrollment would increase 3.4 percent between 2014 and 2020, with a first year class of 700 students in 2020. Soon after this report was developed, SEMAC recognized its limitations, as our enrollment situation has moved in the opposite direction, with a 6 percent decline in undergraduate enrollment between fall 2014 and fall 2016. In addition, the Philosophy of Enrollment, which was approved by the Board of Regents in May 2016, refocused PLU's goals on stabilizing, rather than growing, PLU's student body.

ARTS does not have enough information at this time to endorse a specific goal for our retention rate. Rather, we recommend that PLU's Office of Institutional Research partner with the Division of Enrollment Management, the Long Range Planning Committee, SEMAC, and the ARTS committee to run enrollment and retention models to determine an appropriate metric. These models should consider not only where we would like to be, but what it will cost to get there. Based on this analysis, a realistic and cost-effective goal can be identified. Ideally, this evidence-informed goal will be identified and used to inform practices for the fall 2017 cohort.

### **PLU Retention in Context**

As is evident in the goals, objectives, and strategies discussed below, ARTS takes seriously the findings of extensive research that retention is the responsibility of the entire university community. This plan includes goals, objectives, and strategies that build on the work of Student Life, Enrollment Management, the Academic Division, and others. In short, we cannot improve our retention and graduation rates without the cooperation and investment of all parts of the community. Braxton et al.<sup>8</sup> use the term "institutional levers of action" to describe this multifaceted, diffuse, coordinated, and integrated approach to supporting student retention and success. Students should expect to be treated with respect and to be offered appropriate support by all members of the campus community. Successful institutions demonstrate in ways big and small that they are committed to student welfare and student success. The goals in this report emphasize the importance of creating a culture of awareness and shared ownership around retention and student success and of ensuring equitable opportunity for academic and community engagement for all students.

Vincent Tinto, whose model of student retention revolutionized studies of retention in the 1970s, identifies five conditions that must be in place to support first year student persistence.<sup>9</sup> First, he argues that "students are more likely to persist and graduate in settings that hold high and clear expectations for student achievement." Second, students are more likely to persist when they have access to both academic and social support. Third, students succeed when they get regular and frequent feedback. This feedback includes both effective classroom assessment and early alerts for assistance. Fourth, students who are involved in the campus community are more likely

<sup>7</sup> This report did not include any information on how these goals were to be achieved.

<sup>8</sup> John M. Braxton, William R. Doyle, Harold V. Harley III, Amy S. Hirschy, Willis A. Jones, Michael K. McLendon. *Rethinking College Student Retention* (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Vincent Tinto. "Taking Retention Seriously: Rethinking the First Year of College." *NACADA Journal*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1999, pp. 5-9.

to persist. Finally, students need to learn: “The more students learn, the more value they find in their learning, the more likely they are to stay and graduate.”

The goals listed below are well supported by the research literature. To persist at PLU, students must be intellectually challenged, welcomed authentically into the community, and provided appropriate social, academic, and financial supports. As an institution, we are called to create an inclusive, supportive, equitable, diverse, and challenging community in which all of our students can thrive.

### **Goals**

- Goal A: Create systems and processes for gathering, disseminating, and responding to critical information to improve first year student support and success.
- Goal B: Develop academic resources and processes that empower and enable students to make informed decisions about their academics and vocation.
- Goal C: Enhance and increase opportunities for first year students to engage with faculty so they may develop meaningful and purposeful connections to the academic community.
- Goal D: Develop integrated curricular and co-curricular programs and services that expand experiential learning opportunities for first year students, increase student engagement in campus life, and deepen student connections to the university.

**Goal A: Create systems and processes for gathering, disseminating, and responding to critical information to improve first year student support and success.**

**Objective A.1.** Identify and analyze data and processes that are critical to first year student success and retention.

**Strategy A.1.1.** Foster partnerships among the Office of Institutional Research, the ARTS Committee, the Division of Enrollment Management, and other relevant offices and departments to coordinate data collection.

**Strategy A.1.2.** Integrate institutional data with data that offers information on student experiences and intentions, such as from Mapworks, National Survey of Student Engagement, Student Athletics, Campus Climate Surveys, and similar surveys.

**Strategy A.1.3.** Create a map of current retention efforts to identify successes, redundancies, and opportunities.

**Strategy A.1.4.** Use predictive analytics on the incoming class prior to New Student Registration and New Student Orientation to inform practices and programming.

**Strategy A.1.5.** Use data on factors that are critical to student success to inform admissions practices.

**Collaborators:** Institutional Research, Enrollment Management, Student Life Council<sup>10</sup>, Academic Advising, Academic Success Partners, ARTS Committee

**Objective A.2.** Regularly report to the campus community on how data are being used to support first year student success and retention.

**Strategy A.2.1.** Educate the campus community on existing data resources, such as the Factbook, and on how to use tools like the Academic Dashboard within Administrative Reporting on Banner.

**Strategy A.2.2.** At Program Leaders or similar meetings, provide updates to the campus community on the progress of recent enrollment and retention efforts and solicit feedback.

**Strategy A.2.3.** Engage faculty in informal discussions of retention-related issues at Faculty Assembly.

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<sup>10</sup> The Student Life Council includes the Vice President for Student Life; Associate Vice President for Campus Life; Assistant Vice President for Diversity, Justice and Sustainability; Dean of Students; Executive Director of Hospitality Services and Campus Restaurants; Director of Athletics & Recreation; Campus Pastor; Director of Campus Safety; Director of Residential Programs; Director of Career Connections; Director of Health and Counseling Centers; and Director of Student Involvement & Leadership and New Student Orientation.

**Collaborators:** President's Council, ARTS Committee, SEMAC, Information and Technology Services, Institutional Research,

**Objective A.3.** Develop a coordinated retention response process that is easily identifiable to the campus community and that can respond to identified needs of specific students to help support their persistence.

**Strategy A.3.1.** Identify a fulltime coordinator whose responsibility it is to develop and implement cross-divisional response and intervention strategies that expand the use of Mapworks data and the platform of available tools, such as the referral, attendance, and academic alert options.

**Strategy A.3.2.** Continue to assess and revise existing systems, such as the Progress Alert Process and the Student Alert System, to maximize their effectiveness.

**Strategy A.3.3.** Provide financial assistance to students in the form of gift aid, short-term loans, counseling, or loan repayment assistance as a way to increase persistence and retention.

**Collaborators:** Academic Advising, Student Life Council, Enrollment Management, ARTS Committee

**Objective A.4.** Provide programs and services to support equity and inclusive excellence, based on regular assessment and evaluation, for student populations who have been identified at greater risk of leaving PLU prior to 10th day of their second year.

**Strategy A.4.1.** Clearly articulate definitions of what "at risk" means at PLU, based on the data.

**Strategy A.4.2.** Improve early identification and intervention for at risk student populations.

**Strategy A.4.3.** Conduct assessment of the Summer Academy program to determine effectiveness as a retention tool.

**Strategy A.4.4.** Develop a robust Financial Literacy Program for first-year students, including information about budgeting, credit cards, saving, and student loan repayment.

**Strategy A.4.5.** Assess demand for basic need support services, such as food and housing security, mental health and wellness services, and childcare, and develop strategies to meet these needs on campus or through community partnerships.

**Collaborators:** Institutional Research, Student Life Council, Enrollment Management, Academic Advising, Academic Success Partners, President's Council, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Programs, Center for Community Engagement and Service, Center for Gender Equity, Diversity Center, University Diversity Committee

**Goal B: Develop academic resources and processes that empower and enable students to make informed decisions about their academics and vocation.**

**Objective B.1.** Provide high-quality faculty and professional advising for all first year students to help them find an appropriate academic home at PLU.

**Strategy B.1.1.** Use assessment data and predictive analytics to inform the placement of students with appropriate advisors and, if appropriate, expand the number of faculty advisors to enhance students' sense of academic connection.

**Strategy B.1.2.** Assess the success of first year students in upper division courses and consider appropriate changes to advising guidelines, course prerequisites, and the General Education program.

**Strategy B.1.3.** Incorporate intrusive advising strategies<sup>11</sup> that identify students at curricular crossroads and academic crisis points to provide academic guidance and resources.

**Strategy B.1.4.** Create a coordinated advising system to include First Year Experience Program, Academic Advising, faculty advisors, and Enrollment Management.

**Strategy B.1.5.** Provide continuous professional development for faculty and professional advisors.

**Collaborators:** Faculty advisors, First Year Experience Program Steering Committee, Academic Advising, Enrollment Management, General Education Council, Wild Hope Center for Vocation, Educational Policies Committee

**Objective B.2:** Create a Center for Student Success that integrates academic support services into a single location on campus.

**Strategy B.2.1.** Conduct a program review to identify service gaps, process inconsistencies, and overlaps among academic support services and explore alternative models for administrative organization.

**Strategy B.2.2.** Identify the units that are most likely to benefit from co-locating.

**Strategy B.2.3.** Develop an academic coaching program to include among the support services.

**Collaborators:** Academic Success Partners, Enrollment Management, Academic Advising, Student Life Council, Mortvedt Library, Finance and Administration, Office of

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<sup>11</sup> For more information on intrusive advising for first year students, see W.R. Earl, "Intrusive Advising for Freshman" on the *NACADA Clearinghouse of Academic Advising Resources* website: <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Clearinghouse/View-Articles/Intrusive-Advising-for-Freshmen.aspx>



the Provost, Facilities Management, Student Life Council

**Objective B.3.** Develop a web interface and mobile application for students to access, manage, and monitor their academic programs and to complete academic procedures and forms.

**Strategy B.3.1.** Implement a Banner web portal that provides a single point of access and communication for items related to registration, advising, finances, academic progress, and career planning.

**Strategy B.3.2.** Better integrate the schedule of classes, course descriptions, major advising guides, two-year course cycles, and students' Curriculum, Advising, and Program Planning (CAPP) report.

**Strategy B.3.3.** Provide online academic advisor information for students to identify, communicate with, and schedule appointments with their advisor via Banner, and ensure that students are assigned to a new advisor when their advisor is on sabbatical or other leave.

**Strategy B.3.4.** Conduct an inventory of forms that students use to conduct university business (add/drop a course, apply for graduation, etc.) and make all forms electronically available on a single web page.

**Collaborators:** Information and Technology Services, Enrollment Management, Academic Advising, Finance and Administration, Student Life Council, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Programs, Deans and Department Chairs

**Goal C: Enhance and increase opportunities for first year students to engage with faculty so they may develop meaningful and purposeful connections to the academic community.**

**Objective C.1.** Provide early and consistent opportunities for faculty interaction with first-year students to enhance academic success and institutional connectedness.

**Strategy C.1.1.** Increase opportunities for first year research and creative engagement with faculty (e.g. Undergraduate Research Symposium, Common Reading).

**Strategy C.1.2.** Develop and enhance communication and collaboration between faculty and the Division of Enrollment Management in order to increase student-faculty contact prior to student enrollment. This would also include engaging faculty in recruitment and cohort building for Act Six Scholars, Yellow Ribbon, and 253 PLU Scholars, as well as Presidential and Regents' Scholarships.

**Strategy C.1.3.** Create more direct and strategic faculty involvement in New Student Registration, New Student Orientation, and the Common Reading Orientation event.

**Collaborators:** Faculty, Enrollment Management, Common Reading Committee, Undergraduate Research Symposium Committee, Student Life Council, Center for Community Engagement and Service

**Objective C.2.** Enhance mechanisms to support holistic and sustainable faculty participation in the First Year Experience Program (FYEP).

**Strategy C.2.1.** Allocate resources to ensure that WRIT 101 and FYEP Inquiry Seminars are taught by full-time faculty.

**Strategy C.2.2.** Train and equip FYEP faculty to engage directly with Mapworks to provide holistic and robust support to first year students.

**Strategy C.2.3.** Strengthen, enhance, and expand upon existing residential learning communities as a home for students exploring particular interests, majors, or career options.

**Strategy C.2.4.** Review and revise, as necessary, the J-term Rationale passed by Faculty Assembly in 2004 in order to ensure appropriate course offerings for first year students and to maximize the potential for student engagement and faculty connection.

**Strategy C.2.5.** Develop resources to provide incentives for FYEP faculty to participate in professional development workshops.

**Collaborators:** Academic Advising, Student Life Council, Enrollment Management, First Year Experience Program Steering Committee, Student Services, International Honors Program, Faculty, Wang Center, PLUTO (PLU Teaching Online), Wild Hope Center for Vocation, Office of Advancement, Educational Policies Committee

**Objective C.3.** Support faculty development to ensure equitable opportunity for academic and community engagement for all students.

**Strategy C.3.1.** Provide instructional support to faculty to design courses, develop assignments, and create learning contexts that represent best practices for inclusive pedagogies.

**Strategy C.3.2.** Provide training on implicit bias and stereotype threat to minimize its impact on students' educational experiences.

**Strategy C.3.3.** Provide expanded opportunities for faculty to develop pedagogical approaches that enhance student engagement in and out of the classroom, including creating courses and programs that offer students opportunities to reflect on salient identities and facilitate meaning making for vocation.

**Strategy C.3.4.** Identify internal or external funding sources to support the development of a Center for Teaching and Learning.

**Collaborators:** Associate Provost for Undergraduate Programs, Diversity Center, Center for Community Engagement and Service, Center for Gender Equity, Office of Advancement, First Year Experience Program Steering Committee, Faculty Affairs Committee, University Diversity Committee

**Goal D: Develop integrated curricular and co-curricular programs and services that expand experiential learning opportunities for first year students, increase student engagement in campus life, and deepen student connections to the university.**

**Objective D.1.** Provide opportunities for first year students to engage in exploration of vocation through aspirational discernment about their personal, academic, and professional pursuits.

**Strategy D.1.1.** Examine the link between student success and the “Transitions to PLU” course. Conduct a feasibility study to explore possibility of expanding the course to be a required element for all new incoming students.

**Strategy D.1.2.** Continue to assess the impact of the Explore retreat on student retention and success and make appropriate revisions.

**Strategy D.1.3.** Develop interdisciplinary and interdivisional teams based on intended major in order to support student’s sense of belonging and retention.

**Collaborators:** First Year Experience Program Steering Committee, Student Life Council, Academic Advising, Institutional Research, PLUTO (PLU Teaching Online), Wild Hope Center for Vocation, Educational Policies Committee

**Objective D.2.** Expand offerings which allow first year students to engage in educational experiences aimed at increasing their understanding and appreciation of global citizenship.

**Strategy D.2.1.** Expand offerings of developmentally appropriate J-term First Year Experience Program Inquiry Seminars as study away courses. To keep costs down and increase accessibility to all first-year students, these may be primarily domestic courses that follow the 1:2:1 model where students are only away from campus for two weeks.

**Strategy D.2.2.** Explore opportunities for offering more alternative spring break courses/labs, including the possibility of linking the course/lab with a course and/or offering the trip for credit.

**Strategy D.2.3.** Partner with the Office of Advancement to raise targeted funds to support student participation in these high impact programs.

**Collaborators:** Wang Center, Center for Community Engagement & Service, First Year Experience Program, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Programs, Office of Advancement, Global Education Committee

**Objective D.3.** Engage interested students in campus work programs that promote the hard and soft benefits of sustained on campus employment.

**Strategy D.3.1.** Gather and analyze data related to student employment and how it relates to student success, retention, and time to graduation.

**Strategy D.3.2.** Establish a more holistic culture related to student employment that emphasizes the benefits of a campus connection, and a community of care and support with staff and peers.

**Strategy D.3.3.** Promote post-first year summer on-campus employment opportunities to help students maintain a connection to the university and articulate the value of these opportunities in students' career journey.

**Collaborators:** Career Connections, Finance and Administration, Institutional Research, Enrollment Management, Advancement

**Objective D.4.** Assess and refine co-curricular programming to ensure it meets the diverse needs of first-year students and to increase student awareness of these programs.

**Strategy D.4.1.** Conduct a needs assessment for increasing the number, variety, and consistency of free time options and events, including on weekends.

**Strategy D.4.2.** Develop and implement a communication tool that consistently keeps students informed about events taking place on campus.

**Collaborators:** Student Life Council, Marketing and Communication, Campus Life Committee

**Objective D.5.** Enhance the role of Campus Restaurants as venues for fostering a sense of community.

**Strategy D.5.1.** Assess how current dining policies and proposed revisions affect belonging and connection for students.

**Strategy D.5.2.** Develop policies that are responsive to student needs, e.g. allow students without meal plans to eat with other students in the Commons in order to better integrate off-campus students into campus life.

**Collaborators:** Student Life Council, Finance and Administration, Hospitality Services and Campus Restaurants.