

## **Enhancing Information about Struggling Students**

The Academic Retention Team has been reaching out to students who are struggling academically. In particular, Sonya emails these students, inviting them to attend one of her study skills workshops and to meet with her one-on-one to talk about strategies for succeeding academically. In many cases, we also alert academic advisors, RDs, and coaches and ask them to direct students to Sonya.

Information from faculty about struggling students is centralized in two places—the database through which we file Care Reports and in midterm grade reports. Some enhancements to those systems might improve our ability to address students' needs.

### **Midterm Grades—Participation**

This fall, 40 faculty reported midterm unsatisfactory grades. As the system currently works, when no unsatisfactory grades are reported for a course, we don't know whether all the students in the course are doing satisfactorily or whether the professor simply did not report the students who are doing poorly. Interestingly, some of the professors who give the lowest final grades are among those who never (or very seldom) respond to requests to submit midterm grades.

#### ***Questions for Senate:***

Should we adapt the system so that faculty can easily indicate that all students are doing satisfactorily? If we made that adjustment, how might we encourage all faculty to report midterm grades?

### **Feedback to Students—Timing**

This year, midterm grades were due a week and a half after the midpoint of the semester; the last day to drop a class was one week later. Earlier deadlines for submitting midterm grades or a later deadline for dropping a class would give students, advisors, and coaches more time to respond to information that students are doing poorly.

Of course, many students know they are struggling long before midterm grades are posted. Some faculty keep their "grade books" updated on Canvas so students always know their current grade. Some faculty give early assessments so students have plenty of time make adjustments to their study habits. Especially when those early assessments are "formative" rather than "summative," students can use them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and target areas that need work.

#### ***Questions for Senate:***

Should we consider making the midterm grade deadline earlier or the drop date later?

Would faculty benefit from workshops or discussions about different forms of feedback (e.g., formative, summative)?

Should we consider finding ways to encourage faculty to provide early feedback to students (e.g., by keeping grades updated on Canvas)?

### **Centralizing Information about Students**

Faculty have made good use this semester of Care Reports. When a report is filed, a “case” is opened in “Advocate,” the system currently used by ART, the Care Team, and the Student Life staff investigating conduct violations. Over the next year we will be adopting a new tracking system, Pharos, that will enhance our ability to identify and track “at-risk” students.

Pharos will be most effective if faculty use it to record relevant interactions with students, giving authorized staff (e.g. ART and Care Team members, RDs, VP for Student Life, etc.) more complete information about how a student is doing, and what types of support have already been given to the student.

Similarly, some learning management systems make it possible for an administrator to view all the data on a particular student from all of her classes—each professor’s “grade book” and all the data on how often a student has looked at material for a course. If members of ART or the Care Team had access to such information, they could more easily identify students needing help.

#### ***Questions for Senate:***

Would faculty be supportive of giving ART or the Care Team access to their grade books and other data for their courses on Canvas?

What would encourage faculty to make use of Pharos?

### **Support for Struggling Students**

This semester the Library has partnered with the Provost’s Office to provide a new service to students. We are providing additional support for specific general education classes, many of which fall into the Common Contexts portion of the GE. This support involves weekly peer tutoring for General Chemistry (CHM 005) and Calculus I and II (MA 009 & 010); peer and librarian-led study sessions before tests and workshops for Introduction to New and Old Testament (RS 001 & 010), Perspectives on World History (HIS 010), and Composition (ENG 002). In role as Coordinator of Academic Support Services, Sonya oversees the Successful Scholars Seminar and has developed some one-time workshops for students wanting guidance in particular study skills such as note-taking. This year and in the coming months, Sonya will be looking at ways to improve the effectiveness of the Successful Scholars Seminar and the workshops.

#### ***Questions for Senate:***

What suggestions do you have for enhancing the seminar and workshops? What additional support services might be valuable for students?