Academic Chairs’ Council

ACC Committee Report on Faculty Evaluation & Student Success (CFESS)

Spring 2012
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The policy framework relating to linkages between retention of students and faculty evaluation must be based on adequate empirical qualitative and quantitative research studies.

Retention is a complex construct and difficult to predict. Retention studies show that freshman class attrition rates are greater than any other academic year and commonly as high as 20-30%. High academic achievement consistently correlates with low attrition so that higher performing students persist in their studies to a greater degree than their lower achieving cohorts.

National comparative data reveals that NAU retention rates are comparable to similar institutions nationally. For example, data from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA reveals that NAU retention rates are what they would be predicted to be, around 71%. However, NAU students who are members of Learning Communities or programs such as Peer Jacks are retained at a much higher rate (85%).

Research into why NAU students have not returned for a second year suggests that personal and financial factors are the most prevalent reasons for their departure. Poor academic performance may also be implicated in the reports of personal and financial reasons and parents may be reluctant to pay the high cost of educating their son or daughter when he or she is not performing up to expectations (Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs). Non-returning students are not so much dissatisfied with their experiences at NAU as subject to pulls and pressures that lead them to return to their home community to be closer to friends, family and financial support. Some cite external factors such as they do not like the weather in Flagstaff. Other evidence exists that for students for whom NAU is not their first choice the chances are higher of transfer to another university. There seems little faculty can do to alleviate these kinds of influences on retention.

Based on a study by Pugliesi and St. Laurent (2009) factors that have the greatest influence on retention at NAU include:

- the characteristics of admitted students such as high school GPA, SAT/ACT test scores
- admitted with a math deficiency
- taking a remedial math class in the first year
- demographics including AZ residency, ethnicity, gender and parent’s education
- First Generation status; and
- academic success indicators (grades and credit hours completed).

The two most important predictors of retention found in the Pugliesi and St. Laurent 2009 study are first year cumulative GPA and the number of credits earned and the most important institutional experience variable in predicting retention at NAU is the number of advisor contacts.

According to EMSA [February 2012] other factors influence retention such as:

1. Lack of motivation associated with student uncertainty about the relevance of the academic experience to ‘real life’ outside the classroom. Strategies to combat this uncertainty involve incorporating experiential learning opportunities into the formal curriculum and experience in the classroom.
2. Social and emotional factors associated with isolation and the student’s lack of personal and meaningful social contact with other members of the college community can result in separation or marginalization with the greatest impact on students of color. Strategies that
combat this problem involve ‘social integration’ through promoting student-student peer interaction; promoting student-faculty interaction and promoting student-staff interaction.

3. Transitional adjustment difficulties are associated with student difficulties in coping with the initial changes, demands or stressors accompanying transition to college or into the department culture. Strategies to combat these transition problems include ‘front loading’ the college’s most effective, student centered instructors and advisors; proactive and intrusive delivery of psychosocial support (early identification, referral, and collaboration with support services for students) and minimizing, streamlining, and humanizing institutional bureaucracy.

4. Retention problems based on academic preparedness stem from inadequate student preparation for college demands and retention strategies include: collaboration between course instructors and academic support services to promote academic referral of students to student learning centers and study skills specialists; early alert systems such as GPS and Midterm grades; supplemental instruction for high risk courses through student learning centers; peer learning through peer led study groups and peer tutoring at student learning centers; structural learning assistance (SLA) requiring students to attend supplemental learning sessions at student learning centers; and early identification of academically gifted students for Honors programs, peer tutoring and other peer leadership opportunities.

Strategies for improving high achieving student success

NAU data also indicates that we lose just as many high achieving students after the freshmen year as we lose at-risk students. Ensuring high standards and class rigor with support from the course instructor and student services is important for student success for all students and particularly for our higher achieving students. Strategies introduced at NAU to address this dual problem have been to attempt to increase student engagement through the use of Action Research Teams and First Year Seminars and by enhancing the rigor of classes.

Student services must be proactive in their approach with freshmen. Faculty can also be proactive by making effective use of GPS systems, GTAs, student mentors, set high standards and incorporating early assessments in the first 2 weeks of classes. NAU research suggests that the first 6 weeks of the freshman year are critical for new students because many of the transition issues are revealed in those first 6 weeks. It is important to attempt to challenge students immediately, enhance their engagement, and to get them connected to services.

Student Success

According to the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (February 2012) NAU students indicate that they value the following in their classes at NAU:

- First year students prefer structure and clear expectations and contingencies in courses; policies that require/incentivize attendance; rubrics for assignment assessment; instruction about how to conduct research; clearly communicated expectations; early and frequent formal assessments/assignments versus only 2 or 3 exams or assignments throughout the semester.
- Course design work suggests that aligning course learning outcomes, learning activities and assessments are key to student success.
- Students desire engaging and challenging courses contingent upon attendance rather than lecture based pedagogies that do not require them to participate.
- Students value an NAU environment where faculty and staff care about how they are doing. They respond well to regular communication, timely feedback, GPS notices about how they
are performing, and truly appreciate when faculty demonstrate their interest in how they are doing in course work and at NAU generally.

- Students value linkages made between course work and the real world (contemporary issues) and their career choices. They prefer courses that they perceive to have high relevance to the world outside.

Recommendations of Committee by Mandate

1. Investigate ways in which faculty efforts to promote student success can be positively recognized in faculty promotion and evaluation processes.

In developing language to be included in appointments for each faculty classification, the Committee followed the existing language and inserted a statement about the commitment to student success. As with other faculty expectations, the standards for demonstrating a commitment to student success increase for more senior classifications. The Committee begins by adding a definition of student success for COFs to be employed in promotion and tenure and annual review.

Currently NAU has not adopted a definition of student success. The ACC Committee developed a working definition based on several alternate definitions based on a synthesis of the research and the NAU context as follows:

Option 1: Northern Arizona University defines student success through the realization of personal and institutional learning outcomes. At NAU, faculty provide students with opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to develop reasoned perspectives supported by facts on issues which allows them to develop independent views and to make informed decisions. At NAU, faculty provide students with the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to develop independent views and informed decisions, based on a critical assessment of the relevant facts. In these learning environments, students will develop leadership and collaborative skills both in and out of the classroom to apply their knowledge to improving the university or larger local communities.

Student success results when students are engaged and responsible in their own learning. By understanding both rights and responsibilities in realizing personal and institutional learning outcomes, students will be able to shape their identities as citizens and contributing members of a democratic society.

Option 2: Northern Arizona University defines student success as the realization of personal potential and academic goals. At NAU, faculty provide students with opportunities to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to develop independent views and informed decisions, based on a critical assessment of the relevant facts. In these learning environments, students develop leadership and collaborative skills both in and out of the classroom.

As engaged participants in their own learning, students gain an appreciation of their rights and responsibilities as citizens and contributing members of a democratic society.

Option 3: Northern Arizona University defines student success through the realization of personal and institutional learning outcomes resulting in graduates capable of making meaningful contributions to society. At NAU, faculty provide students with opportunities to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to develop independent views and informed decisions, based on a critical assessment of relevant information.
Student success results when students are engaged and responsible in their own learning. By understanding both rights and responsibilities in realizing personal and institutional learning outcomes, students will be able to shape their identities as citizens and contributing members of society.

NAU measures personal and institutional learning outcomes in undergraduate education by examining a variety of indicators, including measures of learning, academic engagement, connectedness to campus life, civic engagement, health and well-being, and opportunities after graduation.

General indicators of student success include: (a) students’ demonstrated proficiency in course and program learning outcomes; (b) student persistence evidenced through being retained (i.e., returning to the university the next year); and (c) students making substantial progress toward degree completion each semester.

Option 4: Student success is defined as students achieving academic, personal and professional growth.

2. Develop language that could be included in faculty appointment documents and Statements of Expectation identifying a faculty member’s responsibility for engaging students and helping promote their success in classes.

Appointment documents and the Statement of Expectations (SOE) are appropriate venues to highlight efforts facilitating student success.

The Statement of Expectations provides a clear description of faculty expectations and responsibilities for the contract year. The Conditions of Faculty Service (COFS) specify the need to construct the SOE so that the required responsibilities of faculty are aligned with department, academic unit, school, college and university mission and needs. Faculty, chairs/directors, and other university personnel are encouraged to include specific goals/objectives in the SOE regarding student success.

The committee has taken the approach that, in line with NAU practice, individual units will develop their own language concerning student success based on the needs and emphases within their discipline following the same processes usually followed.

The committee recommends language to be inserted into the COFS and Faculty Handbook relating to student success. In COFS a definition of student success is inserted. For language concerning student success the committee recommends inserting in the appropriate place a phrase a commitment to student success or a sustained commitment to student success. Each college and unit would then define how faculty efforts toward increasing student success would be assessed within each discipline.

3. Suggest how to implement such changes to faculty promotion and review processes

The goal of the committee was to change key portions of the COFS and Faculty Handbook so that student learning and success are elevated to their proper role in faculty roles and responsibilities and that faculty efforts in this area are recognized in their annual evaluations. Changes are proposed to section 1.4.5.3 of the NAU COFS (Annual Faculty Performance Report), section 1.4.6 of the NAU COFS (Policies for Faculty Review and Evaluation) and in section 4.2.3.1 of the Faculty Handbook (Definition of Teaching and Student Related Activities).

The first subsection shows the existing documents and the changes we propose in context. A phrase was added (see bold italics in part a.) to encourage faculty to report on their activities related to student learning and success in their annual faculty performance report. A statement was added to section 1.4.6
(in bold italics below) in order to direct academic units to include measures that focus on the effectiveness of faculty efforts to facilitate student learning and success, rather than focusing on measures like DFW rates that are influenced by other factors beyond the control of the faculty member. In section 4.2.3.1, the added statement in the first paragraph (see bold italics) clarifies that teaching in an effective manner includes facilitating student learning and success. The statement crossed out is redundant with one in the next paragraph and should be deleted. It incorrectly, we believe, singles out this aspect of teaching in an effective manner by putting too much emphasis on current trends and research in the discipline.

The second subsection reports on what the committee discovered as current best practices for student learning and success. Based on these best practices the committee recommends actions for NAU faculty when promoting student success such as:

1. Create opportunities to develop positive relationships with students.
2. Establish high and clear expectations for students and provide appropriate supports for students to be successful.
3. Use active and engaging pedagogies.
4. Develop background knowledge needed for mastery of discipline.
5. Activate prior knowledge.
6. Focus on culturally relevant teaching.
7. Provide regular feedback and connect students to university resources.

4. Identify existing or the need for new university resources to assist faculty and chairs in promoting student success.
Faculty best contribute to student success when provided with rich, diverse, and current resources supporting their own development as teachers and mentors. To that end, the University shall create a centralized online resource (“Student Success Central”) that draws together relevant student information, faculty development opportunities, and assessment strategies focused on student success. Additionally, the University shall provide a faculty evaluation process that acknowledges and values faculty efforts toward student success. Existing and recommended sources are offered in three categories: 1. Information, 2. Faculty Development, and 3. Faculty Evaluation.

5. Recommend language for faculty evaluation for those engaged in the University College 

The mandate around student success and the language suggested in this document for faculty evaluation is applicable to all university faculty including those engaged in the University College.
Mandate of Committee

In response to the administration’s desire that student success be directly linked to faculty evaluation, the Academic Chairs Council Committee on Faculty Evaluation & Student Success is charged to:

1. Investigate ways in which faculty efforts to promote student success can be positively recognized in faculty promotion and evaluation processes.
2. Develop language that could be included in faculty appointment documents and Statements of Expectation identifying a faculty member’s responsibility for engaging students and helping promote their success in classes.
3. Suggest how to implement such changes to faculty promotion and review processes.
4. Identify existing or the need for new university resources to assist faculty and chairs in promoting student success.
5. Recommend language for faculty evaluation for those engaged in the University College

The Committee is charged to report their findings and recommendations to the Academic Chairs Council at its April 2012 meeting.

Committee Membership
Cyndi Banks (Chair)
Kathleen Ferraro (SBS)
David Scott (CEFNS)
Steve Palmer (HHS)
Todd Sullivan (CAL)
Gerald Wood (Faculty Senate)
Kathy Bohan (COE)

Background

Retention and Faculty Evaluation

The policy framework relating to linkages between retention of students and faculty evaluation must be based on adequate empirical qualitative and quantitative research studies. It is noteworthy, however, that some colleges specifically limit the use of retention data in tenured faculty evaluation. An example appears in an agreement on faculty evaluation in a community college as follows:

Retention Data
“Retention data may be used to alert the evaluators that the faculty person needs to develop strategies to retain students. Retention data shall not be the basis for an unsatisfactory evaluation.”

Although there is a paucity of research, retention studies show that freshman class attrition rates are greater than any other academic year and commonly as high as 20-30% (Mallinckrodt and Sedlacek 1987). High academic achievement consistently correlates with low attrition so that higher performing students persist in their studies to a greater degree than their lower achieving cohorts (Kirby and Sharpe
Retention is a complex construct and difficult to predict. One study asserts that retention can only be modestly related to low freshman year academic achievement and low high school GPA (DeBerard, Spielmans and Julka 2004). Thus, colleges that are more selective in regard to high school GPA and SAT scores should expect greater achievement and retention among freshmen. Research studies on student retention also stress the need to identify different student sub-populations. One study categorizes non-retainers as drop-outs, stop-outs, opt-outs and transfer-outs (Bonham and Luckie 1993 and others cited in Hoyt and Winn 2004: 395). The factors that determine retention or attrition are linked to institutional interventions such as counseling, financial aid, orientation programs etc.

**Drop outs** are students who enroll in college but do not re-enroll or do not complete their degree program or courses (Tinto 1993 in Hoyt and Winn 2004).

**Stop-outs** include students who fail to complete their plan of study within the normal schedule, having missed a term or more and then return to college – so this group begins a plan of study, leaves college for a time, and then re-enrolls to complete their plan of study.

**Opt-outs** leave college because they have completed their objective even though they do not complete a course of study – they may have attended to take specific courses that do not make up a complete academic program – in essence, they choose to leave.

**Transfer-outs** comprises students who begin their college career at one institution and then transfer to another e.g. from a community college to a university and vice versa.

Accounting for the characteristics of non-returnees classified into the above categories is clearly a useful exercise. Surveys of non-returning students, preadmission surveys, admission applications and cohort tracking studies are commonly used to account for these categories. Once separated into the various categories, factors such as age, years in college, financial status, employment, family responsibilities, ethnicity and academic performance can be identified. This can be used to develop retention strategies and is an area that requires more research within the NAU context.

Hoyt and Winn (2004: 395) studied a single institution at a large 4 year public university with a student body of about 23,000. They argue that single institution studies are generalizable to similar institutions. At the institution, in an attempt to improve/enhance retention rates, the Office of Institutional Research (ORI) attempts to contact all first time freshmen who fail to return from one fall to the next fall. The first time freshmen cohort in fall 2001 was 2767, and of these, 48% were still enrolled in the following fall. Of the 1452 that failed to return 33% were transfer outs. ORI survey results indicated:

- Drop outs were more likely to cite low grades or poor academic performance as a major reason for not returning and had the lowest first term GPA on average. Drop outs comprised married students affected by family responsibilities and caring for children and single students experiencing academic challenges
- Stop outs – over half cited financial concerns as a reason for not attending next fall and almost half worked full time – many seemed to be stopping for a term or two to get back in control of their finances and appeared satisfied with the quality of instruction and the institutional environment

In terms of the reasons for dropping out, stopping out or transferring out, students cited the following:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cited Reason for Not Returning</th>
<th>Drop Outs (14%)</th>
<th>Stop Outs (53%)</th>
<th>Transfer Outs (33%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied with instruction</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Grades</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unresponsive staff</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial concerns</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working full time</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is illuminating to see that transfer outs were more dissatisfied with instruction (but not with low grades) than others and that unresponsive staff was cited much more by drop outs than the other two categories.

The above data points to significant differences between drop outs and stop outs.

In terms of the most common reason for leaving this college the study identified “financial concerns” as the greatest cause affecting drops outs (39%), stop outs (52%) and transfer outs (31%). In contrast “dissatisfied instruction” ranked 8%, 4% and 12% respectively; and “low grades” 14%, 7% and 5% respectively.

The study demonstrates the importance of disaggregating non-returning students into subpopulations and suggests that targeting resources could have different effects on the overall retention pattern. It also suggests that discrete interventions may be appropriate for different student subpopulations. The authors suggest that because transfer out students comprise over a third of non-returners, a focus on improving the quality of existing programs and adding new programs could reduce attrition rates. Other suggested interventions include academic mentors, tutoring services, supplemental instruction, cohort study and support groups, accessible faculty, freshmen seminars, and adequate physical study space.

**Defining Student Success**

Student success can be defined in many ways dependent on the type of institution, its mission and the characteristics of its student population. Firstly, it is instructive to learn how students define success in their postsecondary education.

**Student Definition of Success**

A study by Student Life Studies at Texas A&M University (2007) revealed that students’ definition of success included the following in order of priority:

- Doing my best (achieving personal goals; doing my best - period; working hard; being satisfied/proud of one’s accomplishments)
- Learning (for learning’s sake; understanding or having knowledge; retaining knowledge; integrated learning; continuing and lifelong learning) 34% of comments from freshmen; 20% from seniors
- Grades (30% only definition of success; 70% one of two or more criteria)
- Application
- Rewards (graduating, job, career, graduate school) – 64%
- Not grades – 6%
- Becoming a balanced, well-rounded person – 5%
Students were asked, ‘other than a job, what do students expect to gain from college?’ Their responses were:

- Friends 24%
- Skill development 12% (understanding people/interpersonal skills; communication skills; life skills; social skills and time management skills)
- Experience 11% (in general; college experience; life experiences; life lessons/know how the system works)
- Knowledge 9%
- Growth 6%
- Global perspective 4%
- Others (maturity; network/contacts; build a life; accomplishment; a life partner; education; fun)

Source: (http://studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/sites/studentlifestudies.tamu.edu/files/AcademicSuccessStudentsDefineSACSA07.pdf)

According to the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (February 2012) NAU students indicate that they value the following in their classes at NAU:

- First year students prefer structure and clear expectations and contingencies in courses; policies that require/incentivize attendance; rubrics for assignment assessment; instruction about how to conduct research; clearly communicated expectations; early and frequent formal assessments/assignments versus only 2 or 3 exams or assignments throughout the semester
- Course design work suggests that aligning course learning outcomes, learning activities and assessments are key to student success.
- Student desire engaging and challenging courses contingent upon attendance rather than lecture based pedagogies that do not require them to participate.
- Students value an NAU environment where faculty and staff care about how they are doing. They respond well to regular communication, timely feedback, GPS notices about how they are performing, and truly appreciate when faculty demonstrate their interest in how they are doing in course work and at NAU generally.
- Students value linkages made between course work and the real world (contemporary issues) and their career choices. They prefer courses that they perceive to have high relevance to the world outside.
**Possible NAU Definitions of Student Success**

Currently NAU does not have a definition of student success. The Committee developed a working definition based on a synthesis of the research and the NAU context for the purpose of this report. After extensive discussion with the full Chairs Council, the consensus was to report several alternative definitions of student success as follows:

Option 1: Northern Arizona University defines student success through the realization of personal and institutional learning outcomes. At NAU, faculty provide students with opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to develop reasoned perspectives supported by facts on issues which allows them to develop independent views and to make informed decisions. At NAU, faculty provide students with the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to develop independent views and informed decisions, based on a critical assessment of the relevant facts. In these learning environments, students will develop leadership and collaborative skills both in and out of the classroom to apply their knowledge to improving the university or larger local communities.

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Option 2: Northern Arizona University defines student success as the realization of personal potential and academic goals. At NAU, faculty provide students with opportunities to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to develop independent views and informed decisions, based on a critical assessment of the relevant facts. In these learning environments, students develop leadership and collaborative skills both in and out of the classroom.

As engaged participants in their own learning, students gain an appreciation of their rights and responsibilities as citizens and contributing members of a democratic society.

Option 3: Northern Arizona University defines student success through the realization of personal and institutional learning outcomes resulting in graduates capable of making meaningful contributions to society. At NAU, faculty provide students with opportunities to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to develop independent views and informed decisions, based on a critical assessment of relevant information.

Student success results when students are engaged and responsible in their own learning. By understanding both rights and responsibilities in realizing personal and institutional learning outcomes, students will be able to shape their identities as citizens and contributing members of society.

NAU measures personal and institutional learning outcomes in undergraduate education by examining a variety of indicators, including measures of learning, academic engagement, connectedness to campus life, civic engagement, health and well-being, and opportunities after graduation.

General indicators of student success include: (a) students’ demonstrated proficiency in course and program learning outcomes; (b) student persistence evidenced through being retained (i.e., returning to the university the next year); and (c) students making substantial progress toward degree completion each semester.
Option 4: Student success is defined as students achieving academic, personal and professional growth. [from Central Washington University as reported by Jan Bowers, ACE Fellow]

NAU measures personal and institutional learning outcomes in undergraduate education by examining a variety of indicators, including measures of learning, academic engagement, connectedness to campus life, civic engagement, health and well-being, and opportunities after graduation.

General indicators of student success include: (a) students’ demonstrated proficiency in course content; (b) student persistence evidenced through being retained (i.e., returning to the university the next year); and (c) students making substantial progress toward degree completion each semester.

AFT Higher Education suggests creating a framework for student success around common elements http://www.aft.org/pdfs/highered/studentsuccess0311.pdf. These elements are as follows:

Knowledge: in the field of study as well as the physical and natural world, intercultural knowledge and competence, civic knowledge and engagement, and ethics reasoning

Intellectual Abilities: critical inquiry, creative thinking, problem solving, independent learning, data manipulation, analysis and assessment of information, and synthesis

Professional/Technical Skills: application of knowledge in field of study through written communication, oral communication, quantitative literacy, information literacy, and teamwork skills

What Matters to Student Success?
The National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) commissioned a meta-analysis to synthesize “the relevant literature and emergent findings related to student success, broadly defined” with the goal of developing “an informed perspective on policies, programs, and practices that can make a difference to satisfactory student performance in postsecondary education” (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges and Hayek 2006: 3). The following figure is a summary of what they found that matters to student success.
Figure 2. Student Background Characteristics and precollege experiences

The NAU Context

National comparative data reveals that NAU retention rates are comparable to similar institutions nationally. For example, data from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA reveals that NAU retention rates are what they would be predicted to be, around 71%. It is important to note however, that NAU students who are members of Learning Communities or programs such as Peer Jacks are retained at a much higher rate (85%).

Research into why NAU students have not returned for a second year suggests that personal and financial factors are the most prevalent reasons for their departure. Poor academic performance may also be implicated in the reports of personal and financial reasons and parents may be reluctant to pay the high cost of educating their son or daughter when he or she is not performing up to expectations (Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs). Non-returning students are not so much dissatisfied with their experiences at NAU as subject to pulls and pressures that lead them to return to their home community to be closer to friends, family and financial support. Some cite external factors such as they do not like the weather in Flagstaff. Other evidence exists that for students for whom NAU is not their first choice the chances are higher of transfer to another university. There seems little faculty can do to alleviate these kinds of influences on retention.

Factors that have the greatest influence on retention at NAU include:

- the characteristics of admitted students such as high school GPA, SAT/ACT test scores
- admitted with a math deficiency
- taking a remedial math class in the first year
- demographics including AZ residency, ethnicity, gender and parent’s education
- First Generation status; and
- academic success indicators (grades and credit hours completed)
Other factors of significance include:

- connections to peers, faculty and staff;
- living on campus
- living in a learning community
- frequency of accessing supplemental instruction and tutoring
- commitment to educational and career goals; and
- intention to earn a degree from NAU.
- Honors and athletics involvement

Data also suggest that students who are not ready to begin foundational courses (math, science and English) in their first term are retained at lower rates than those who are deemed ‘academically ready.’

Academic performance variables that influence retention include:

1. First year cumulative GPA
2. First year credits earned
3. Any class with a grade of D, F, W
4. Number of:
   a. classes with a DFW grade
   b. math classes with a grade of A, B, or C
   c. math classes with a grade of D, F, or W
   d. English classes with a grade of A, B, or C
   e. English classes with a grade of D, F, or W
5. Fall semester probation status

The two most important predictors of retention found in the Pugliesi and St. Laurent 2009 study are first year cumulative GPA and the number of credits earned and the most important institutional experience variable in predicting retention at NAU is the number of advisor contacts. The report concludes the following:

- there is need to focus on academic success in the freshman year
- important initiatives are reducing the number of DWF rates in all courses and ensuring that students take and are successful in mathematics in their first year
- increased opportunities for first year students to personally consult advisors is important
- outcomes other than retention matter
- continued research is important

According to the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs (October 2009) admission standards have increased at NAU so that 4 years of math is now required while in the past it was only 3 years and the 4th year must have intermediate algebra as a prerequisite. NAU has held steady on the major indicators of student preparation (High School GPA; and mean SAT/ACT scores). There has been an overall decline in the proportion of students admitted with the kind of deficiencies linked to poor
academic performance (particularly math and science). ABOR sets NAUs admission standards and overall NAU is classified as being ‘moderately selective’ (http://nau.edu/Admissions/Getting-Started/Requirements/Freshmen/).

DFW rates are found to decrease the likelihood of retention while GPA, first year credits successfully earned, and a positive outcome from an attempt in mathematics increases the probability of persistence (Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. October 2009. “Analysis of Factors Related to Retention for Fall 06 and Fall 07 Cohorts”).

According to EMSA (February 2012) other factors influence retention such as:

5. Lack of motivation associated with student uncertainty about the relevance of the academic experience to ‘real life’ outside the classroom. Strategies to combat this uncertainty involve incorporating experiential learning opportunities into the formal curriculum and experience in the classroom.

6. Social and emotional factors associated with isolation and the student’s lack of personal and meaningful social contact with other members of the college community can result in separation or marginalization with the greatest impact on students of color. Strategies that combat this problem involve ‘social integration’ through promoting student-student peer interaction; promoting student-faculty interaction and promoting student-staff interaction.

7. Transitional adjustment difficulties are associated with student difficulties in coping with the initial changes, demands or stressors accompanying transition to college or into the department culture. Strategies to combat these transition problems include ‘front loading’ the college’s most effective, student centered instructors and advisors; proactive and intrusive delivery of psychosocial support (early identification, referral, and collaboration with support services for students) and minimizing, streamlining, and humanizing institutional bureaucracy.

8. Retention problems based on academic preparedness stem from inadequate student preparation for college demands and retention strategies include: collaboration between course instructors and academic support services to promote academic referral of students to student learning centers and study skills specialists; early alert systems such as GPS and Midterm grades; supplemental instruction for high risk courses through student learning centers; peer-led learning through peer led study groups and peer tutoring at student learning centers; structural learning assistance (SLA) requiring students to attend supplemental learning sessions at student learning centers; and early identification of academically gifted students for Honors programs, peer tutoring and other peer leadership opportunities.

NAU data also indicates that we lose just as many high achieving students after the freshmen year as we lose at-risk students. Ensuring high standards and class rigor with support from the course instructor and student services is important for student success for all students and particularly for our higher achieving students. Strategies introduced at NAU to address this dual problem have been to attempt to increase student engagement through the use of Action Research Teams and First Year Seminars and by enhancing the rigor of classes.

Student services must be proactive in their approach with freshmen. Faculty can also be proactive by making effective use of GPS systems, GTAs, student mentors, set high standards and incorporating early assessments in the first 2 weeks of classes. NAU research suggests that the first 6 weeks of the freshman year are critical for new students because many of the transition issues are revealed in those first 6 weeks. It is important to attempt to challenge students immediately, enhance their engagement, and to get them connected to services.
1. Investigate ways in which faculty efforts to promote student success can be positively recognized in faculty promotion and evaluation processes.

Student success depends, in significant part, on faculty exploration and implementation of new and discipline-appropriate pedagogies, innovative course designs, and effective and efficient methods of instructional delivery. Systems of evaluation for retention, promotion, tenure, and/or merit increase should acknowledge those faculty efforts.

The committee examined both national and NAU research to ascertain the best strategies for achieving student success. Importantly, these are combined efforts on the part of faculty, student affairs professionals and the institution.

Strategies for Achieving Student Success

An NPEC study entitled, “What Matters to Student Success: A Review of the Literature” by Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges and Hayek (2006) suggests that strategies for ensuring student success include:

1. Early interventions and sustained attention at key transition points (multiple learning support networks and safety nets; concentrate early interventions on those who have two or more risk factors)
2. Helping students to make connections to the postsecondary environment through student engagement in educationally purposeful activities, student persistence and achievement of their educational objectives (structure ways for commuter students to spend more time with classmates; meaningful student activity on campus through working on campus; conducting research for a faculty member; involvement in student governance or organizations; encourage students to live on campus for first year);
3. Creating a student centered culture through active and collaborative learning opportunities and through encouraging faculty to focus on deep learning activities involving synthesis assignments; and employing technology in effective ways
4. Focusing assessment and accountability on what matters to student success


The above NPEC report (Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges and Hayek 2006) suggests that institutions adopt ‘engaging pedagogies’ including “active and collaborative learning, classroom-based problem solving, peer teaching, service-learning, and various forms of electronic technologies”....”other promising instructional practices are supplemental instruction, peer tutoring, reciprocal teaching, attributional retraining, concept-knowledge maps and 1-minute papers (p. 67). Faculty are encouraged to set high expectations while at the same time supporting students and holding them accountable for reaching these high expectations. Studies have shown that when high expectations are set, students will adjust their behavior accordingly to meet these expectations, “regardless of prior academic history” (p. 67).

According to the study, influential instructor qualities comprised, “preparation and organization, clarity, availability and helpfulness, and concern for and rapport with students” (p 68). Other factors included faculty being knowledgeable about the subject matter, showing enthusiasm, encouraging student discussion, having interactions with students both inside and outside the classroom, providing timely feedback that is supportive and corrective, having an expectation that students will work hard, and providing individualized instruction (p. 68).

Active and collaborative learning strategies are more effective in student success because they feature 3 elements that impact student learning: “involving students, increasing time on task, and taking advantage of peer influence” (p 68). This type of learning encourages student engagement in their
education while they learn to apply concepts and approaches to real world settings. This strategy has been shown to increase success particularly for first-generation students (p. 68). Likewise, inquiry-based and problem-based learning has been shown to increase success particularly through in-class activities, discussions, debates and simulations. These were particularly effective in science, technology, engineering and math (p. 68). Students reported learning more from each other in an inclusive, fun, and dynamic environment and as a result, experiencing a greater sense of belonging.

Timely and appropriate feedback positively influences student success because students receive guidance and input into their progress in the course in ways that allow them to adjust as needed (p.69). Such feedback should be aligned with clear messages about the level of challenge, expectations and high standards as well as how to achieve those standards.

When technology is used in classroom-related activities students reported that their courses emphasized higher order thinking skills and that their courses “regularly emphasized applying theories or concepts to practical problems in new situations” (p. 69).

The use of technology by instructors is also associated with a requirement that students work in groups outside of class. Technology in course redesigns that focus on modular learning based on mastery of content with peer mentors, GA or TA assistance has helped foster an active, inclusive and learner centered environment where students actively and frequently participate. In such lab settings students feel less stigmatized when seeking help (p. 70).

The culture of student success is facilitated through partnerships between faculty and student affairs professionals in their efforts to support student learning both in class and out of class. Additionally, commitment to campus diversity is seen as beneficial to all students. Diverse perspectives are taught successfully when interactive teaching techniques such as small group discussions, role playing, and debates are incorporated into an inclusive, supportive, classroom environment (p. 72).

Some suggested strategies for improving at risk student success include:

1. Engaging staff, improve/enhance instruction, collaborate with others, and create support groups
2. Identifying and addressing particular learning needs of individual students
3. Creating supportive and competitive learning environments
4. Having bilingual and culturally sensitive staff and faculty
5. Providing mentoring opportunities
6. Designing interventions to improve/enhance basic skills, such as supplemental instruction opportunities
7. Taking advantage of learning communities programs
8. Establishing academic advising and assessment centers
9. Enhancing faculty understanding of students' realities
10. Providing opportunities to prepare faculty to deal with student success strategies
11. Creating special training options for faculty members who interact with at-risk students
12. Integrating technology wisely to student success interventions
13. Creating opportunities for growth outside the classroom and close to the real world
14. Continue to improve the early-alert systems for at risk students
15. Encouraging all departments to develop retention plans and strategies
16. Establishing institution-wide retention committees that include leaders with decision-making power
17. Shifting counseling and tutoring from the student services side to the academic affairs area
18. Encouraging faculty involvement in advising, counseling, and tutoring, as well as in retention committees
19. Centralizing the retention function as an institutional area in its own
20. Profiling and assisting students according to their academic needs
21. Enhancing student success in developmental and gateway courses from an individual goals perspective


Institutional conditions may also be critical in student success. Overall, Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges and Hayek 2006 suggest that the institutional conditions most associated with student success include:

1. A clear, focused institutional mission
2. High standards and expectations for student performance
3. Assessment and timely feedback
4. Student learning centered culture
5. Peer support
6. Encouragement and support for students to explore human differences
7. Emphasis on the first college year
8. Respect for diverse ways of knowing
9. Integration of prior learning and experience
10. Academic support programs tailored to meet student needs
11. Ongoing application of learned skills
12. Active learning
13. Collaboration among student and academic affairs, and among students
14. Environment that emphasizes support for academic work
15. Out of class contact with faculty.

(Kuh et al. 2006: 74)

Strategies for implementing these conditions across the country have included: front loading or concentrating resources on freshmen; developing learning communities; and including service learning and community involvement in classes (Kuh et al.: 74).

2. Develop language that could be included in faculty appointment documents and Statements of Expectation identifying a faculty member’s responsibility for engaging students and helping promote their success in classes.

Appointment documents and the Statement of Expectations (SOE) are appropriate venues to highlight efforts facilitating student success.

The Statement of Expectations provides a clear description of faculty expectations and responsibilities for the contract year. The Conditions of Faculty Service (COFS) specify the need to construct the SOE so that the required responsibilities of faculty are aligned with department, academic unit, school, college and university mission and needs.

Faculty, chairs/directors, and other university personnel are encouraged to include specific goals/objectives in the SOE regarding student success. The Committee has taken the approach that, in line with NAU practice, individual units will develop their own language concerning student success based on the needs and emphases within their discipline following the same processes usually followed.
The Committee makes the following recommendations for language to be inserted into the COFS and Faculty Handbook.

**Recommendations for Faculty Evaluation and Student Success**

In developing language to be included in appointments for each faculty classification, the committee followed the existing language and inserted a statement about the commitment to student success. As with other faculty expectations, the standards for demonstrating a commitment to student success increase for more senior classifications. The Committee begins by adding a definition of student success for COFs to be employed in promotion and tenure and annual review.

**NAU Conditions of Faculty Service (COFS) – The suggested language is highlighted in bold italics throughout**

*Student Success* (possible options for this definition; see pages 12-13)

**Option 1:** Northern Arizona University defines student success through the realization of personal and institutional learning outcomes. At NAU, faculty provide students with opportunities to acquire the skills necessary to develop reasoned perspectives supported by facts on issues which allows them to develop independent views and to make informed decisions. At NAU, faculty provide students with the opportunity to acquire the skills necessary to develop independent views and informed decisions, based on a critical assessment of the relevant facts. In these learning environments, students will develop leadership and collaborative skills both in and out of the classroom to apply their knowledge to improving the university or larger local communities.

Student success results when students are engaged and responsible in their own learning. By understanding both rights and responsibilities in realizing personal and institutional learning outcomes, students will be able to shape their identities as citizens and contributing members of a democratic society.

**Option 2:** Northern Arizona University defines student success as the realization of personal potential and academic goals. At NAU, faculty provide students with opportunities to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to develop independent views and informed decisions, based on a critical assessment of the relevant facts. In these learning environments, students develop leadership and collaborative skills both in and out of the classroom.

As engaged participants in their own learning, students gain an appreciation of their rights and responsibilities as citizens and contributing members of a democratic society.

**Option 3:** Northern Arizona University defines student success through the realization of personal and institutional learning outcomes resulting in graduates capable of making meaningful contributions to society. At NAU, faculty provide students with opportunities to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to develop independent views and informed decisions, based on a critical assessment of relevant information.

Student success results when students are engaged and responsible in their own learning. By understanding both rights and responsibilities in realizing personal and institutional learning outcomes, students will be able to shape their identities as citizens and contributing members of society.

NAU measures personal and institutional learning outcomes in undergraduate education by
examining a variety of indicators, including measures of learning, academic engagement, connectedness to campus life, civic engagement, health and well-being, and opportunities after graduation.

General indicators of student success include: (a) students’ demonstrated proficiency in course and program learning outcomes; (b) student persistence evidenced through being retained (i.e., returning to the university the next year); and (c) students making substantial progress toward degree completion each semester.

Option 4: Student success is defined as students achieving academic, personal and professional growth.

1.2 Faculty Classifications
1.2.1 Tenure Eligible Positions
The tenure eligible positions include assistant professor, associate professor, and professor. Tenure eligible faculty shall have a maximum probationary period no longer than seven (7) years in full-time service at tenure eligible rank, except in cases of waiver by the President for an individual faculty member. All tenure eligible positions require an earned doctorate or other terminal degree in the appropriate discipline. Any exception to this degree requirement must be recommended by the faculty and Chair of the academic unit, and approved by the Provost.

Achievement of a faculty rank at NAU shall be determined by evaluation and recommendation using written academic unit criteria which must be approved by the Dean and Provost before implementation. Academic unit criteria may exceed, but must not be less than ABOR standards (6-201 I.) and the NAU standards below.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
The rank of assistant professor is a tenure eligible position. To hold the rank of assistant professor, the faculty member, at a minimum, must:

a. Demonstrate effectiveness in teaching, advisement, and other student-related responsibilities and a demonstrated commitment to student success, or, in the case of a new appointment, show promise of effectiveness and commitment.
b. Show promise of scholarly activity or other creative endeavors related to the faculty member’s discipline.
c. Show promise of service to the profession and the university community.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
The rank of associate professor is a tenure eligible or tenured position. A faculty member may not be promoted to associate professor unless concurrently standing for tenure, but a faculty member may be hired as a non-tenured associate professor. Normally, a faculty member becomes eligible to apply for the rank of associate professor in the sixth (6th) year of full-time service at the rank of assistant professor at NAU. Any prior service credit to be counted must be agreed to in writing at the time of hire. To hold the rank of associate professor, the faculty member, at a minimum, must have:

a. A record that shows substantial evidence of effectiveness in teaching, advisement, and other student-related responsibilities and a demonstrated commitment to student success.
b. A record that shows a sustained pattern of scholarly activity or other creative endeavors related to the faculty member’s discipline.
c. A record that shows a pattern of sustained service to the profession and the university community, and the potential to assume a leadership role within the faculty as one moves toward the rank of professor.

PROFESSOR
A faculty member must be tenured in order to be promoted to the rank of professor, unless at the time of initial appointment the Notice of Appointment indicates it is at the rank of professor without tenure. Professors are faculty who have achieved significant accomplishments in the areas of teaching and research. Normally, a faculty member becomes eligible to apply for the rank of professor in the sixth (6th) year of full-time service at the rank of associate professor at NAU (including any prior service credit agreed to at the time of hiring as associate).
To hold the rank of professor, the faculty member, at a minimum, must have:

a. A sustained pattern of high-quality teaching, advisement, and other student-related responsibilities and a sustained and demonstrated commitment to student success.

b. A sustained pattern of high-quality scholarly or other creative endeavors related to the faculty member’s discipline.

c. A record that shows a mix of sustained service to the profession and the University community and evidence of leadership within the faculty member’s department (e.g., demonstrated ability to assume leadership roles within the department, college, and/or the University at large, and to mentor junior faculty).

In addition to providing evidence of effectiveness in all areas, faculty who apply for the rank of professor must demonstrate outstanding accomplishments in (a) or (b) above as defined by college and academic unit criteria.

1.2.2

Non-Tenure Eligible Positions

The non-tenure eligible positions include instructor, lecturer, clinical faculty, professors of practice, research faculty, visiting faculty, faculty research associates, part-time faculty, adjunct faculty, and visiting scholars.

Non-tenure eligible faculty shall have no expectation of continued employment beyond the end of the current appointment period. During their appointment non-tenure eligible faculty will demonstrate a commitment to student success.

Academic unit criteria may exceed the criteria listed below.

INSTRUCTOR

Instructors are non-tenured, non-tenure eligible faculty. This title should be used in one of two ways: (1) for appointments of no more than one year or (2) as a temporary designation for individuals who have been hired into a tenure-track assistant professor position but who have not yet completed all requirements for the terminal degree. Upon completion of the dissertation or other final degree requirements, such individuals will be ranked as tenure eligible assistant professors.

Responsibilities: Instructors are primarily responsible for teaching courses at the undergraduate level.

Term of Appointment: If an individual was appointed as an instructor into a temporary one-year position, case (1) above, then he/she may normally be reappointed once. If the title of instructor was given as in case (2) above, then his/her rank may be changed during an academic year. Should it change during the fall semester, then that academic year will be considered the first year of his/her six-year probationary period. Should it change during the spring semester, however, the mandatory probation period will not begin officially until the next fall semester. In either case, instructors are temporary faculty and shall have no expectation of continued employment beyond the end of the current appointment period.

Qualifications: For case (1) above, an earned master’s degree in the appropriate discipline and/or certification or licensing (where appropriate).

LECTURER

Lecturers are non-tenured, non-tenure eligible faculty. A lecturer faculty member is appointed to one of the following academic ranks: lecturer, senior lecturer, or principal lecturer.

Responsibilities: Lecturers are primarily responsible for teaching undergraduate, graduate, or clinical courses.

Term of Appointment: Lecturers are appointed for one to three (1-3) years. They shall have no expectation of continued employment beyond the end of the current appointment period. These appointments may be renewed.

Qualifications: Lecturer ranks require an earned master’s degree in the appropriate discipline.

a. Lecturer: To be eligible for the rank of lecturer, the faculty member must demonstrate effectiveness in teaching, advising, and student-related responsibilities and a demonstrated commitment to student success or, in the case of a new appointment, show promise of effectiveness if the candidate has no prior teaching experience.

b. Senior Lecturer: To be eligible for the rank of senior lecturer, the faculty member must have at least the following:

1. A record of substantial and continued effectiveness in teaching, advising, and other student-related responsibilities and a demonstrated commitment to student success.
2. A record of service and professional development related to the teaching role.
3. The equivalent of six years (12 semesters) of college-level teaching or other relevant professional experience.

**Principal Lecturer:** To be eligible for the rank of principal lecturer, the faculty member must have at least the following:

1. A record of sustained excellence at the senior lecturer rank in teaching, advising, and other student-related responsibilities and a sustained and demonstrated commitment to student success.
2. A record of sustained excellence in service and professional development related to the teaching role.
3. The equivalent of six years (12 semesters) of college-level teaching at the rank of senior lecturer or other relevant professional experience.

**CLINICAL FACULTY**

Clinical faculty members are non-tenured, non-tenure eligible faculty. A clinical faculty member is appointed to one of the following academic ranks: assistant clinical professor, associate clinical professor, or clinical professor.

**Responsibilities:** Clinical faculty members are primarily responsible for teaching and/or managing students in the practice components of their degree programs.

**Term of Appointment:** Clinical faculty members are appointed for one to three (1-3) years. They shall have no expectation of continued employment beyond the end of the current appointment period. These appointments may be renewed.

**Qualifications:** Clinical faculty are faculty members who have established themselves by professional experience and expertise over a sustained period of time to be qualified to teach or manage practicum, internship, or practice components of degree programs.

a. **Assistant Clinical Professor:** To be eligible for the rank of assistant clinical professor, the faculty member must have at least the following:
   1. An earned master’s degree in the appropriate discipline and/or certification or licensing in his/her field of competence (where appropriate).
   2. A record of effectiveness in teaching and other student-related responsibilities and a demonstrated commitment to student success or the promise of such effectiveness if the candidate has no prior teaching experience and/or, where appropriate, demonstrated clinical competence in the relevant discipline.

b. **Associate Clinical Professor:** To be eligible for the rank of associate clinical professor, the faculty member must have at least the following:
   1. An earned doctorate in the appropriate discipline or other terminal degree and/or certification or licensing in his/her field of competence (where appropriate).
   2. A record of performance in the job-related responsibilities that shows substantial effectiveness in the role assigned.
   3. The equivalent of six years (12 semesters) of college-level teaching or other relevant professional experience.

c. **Clinical Professor:** To be eligible for the rank of clinical professor the faculty member must have at least the following:
   a. An earned doctorate in the appropriate discipline or other terminal degree and/or certification or licensing in his/her field of competence (where appropriate).
   b. A demonstrated record of sustained excellence at the associate clinical professor rank in responsibilities related to the role assignment.
   c. The equivalent of six years (12 semesters) of college-level teaching at the rank of associate clinical professor or other relevant professional experience.

**PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE**

Professors of practice are non-tenured, non-tenure eligible faculty. A professor of practice is appointed to one of the following academic ranks: assistant professor of practice, associate professor of practice, or professor of practice.

**Responsibilities:** Professors of practice are primarily responsible for teaching courses, including seminars and independent studies, to undergraduate and graduate students and for modeling the intersection of theory and practice in the relevant field.

**Term of Appointment:** Professors of practice are appointed for one to three (1-3) years. They shall have no expectation of continued employment beyond the end of the current appointment period. These appointments
Qualifications: Professors of practice are faculty members who have established themselves by expertise, achievements, and reputation over a sustained period of time to be distinguished professionals in an area of practice or discipline but who may not have the terminal degree in the discipline.

a. **Assistant Professor of Practice:** To be eligible for the rank of assistant professor of practice, the faculty member must demonstrate effectiveness in teaching and other student-related responsibilities and a demonstrated commitment to student success or show promise of such effectiveness if the candidate has no prior teaching experience.

b. **Associate Professor of Practice:** To be eligible for the rank of associate professor of practice, the faculty member must:
   1. Meet the criteria for assistant professor of practice.
   2. Supply evidence of substantial scholarly, creative, or professional achievements.

c. **Professor of Practice:** To be eligible for the rank of professor of practice, the faculty member must:
   1. Meet the criteria for associate professor of practice.
   2. Supply evidence of outstanding scholarly, creative, or professional achievements.

1.3 Appointment

In addition to the ABOR policy set forth above, NAU shall comply with the following policies and procedures in making an appointment of a faculty member at NAU.

1.3.1 Appointment Policies

1. NAU is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer. All appointments shall be made consistent with all policies of the Arizona Board of Regents and Northern Arizona University.

2. Initial appointments of faculty shall be made on the basis of high-quality professional experience and educational background and the specific needs of NAU. Job-related factors take precedence in the selection process.

3. Initial appointments of faculty shall be made in accordance with the procedures set forth in 1.3.2 below and in ABOR policy 6-201D as set forth in the ABOR policy manual.

4. Renewal appointments of faculty shall be made in accordance with the procedures set forth in this document (section 1.4, Faculty Evaluation) and using the written Notice of Appointment referred to in 5 below.

5. Appointment of a faculty member at NAU (whether initial or renewal) shall be made using a written "Notice of Appointment," which shall include at least the following:
   a. A statement which reads: "This Notice of Appointment constitutes the employment contract of the faculty member named herein when accepted in writing by the faculty member;"
   b. The name of the faculty member;
   c. The beginning date of employment;
   d. The type of faculty appointment (e.g. associate professor); e. A statement defining the status of the appointment as full-time or less than full-time with tenure, tenure eligible, or non-tenure eligible. Non-tenure eligible appointments shall also state: "time served under this appointment does not accrue time toward sabbatical or tenure unless approved in writing by the Provost;"
   f. In the case of a tenure-eligible appointment, the Notice of Appointment will include a notification of any credit in years for prior professional activity toward tenure. These negotiated terms will not preclude the right of a faculty member to request a delay in tenure review, which shall be subject to approval by the President.
   g. The salary to be paid will be included. Where appropriate for non-tenure eligible faculty, the Notice of Appointment will state that the appointment is dependent for continuation upon funding and that the appointment may be terminated prior to the end of the designated contract period if funding is no longer available.
   h. The Notice of Appointment will also include a statement that employment is subject to ABOR Conditions of Faculty Service and Northern Arizona University Conditions of Faculty Service. Any other rules or policies including conditions of faculty service are found in the Faculty Handbook which is available at http://home.nau.edu/provost/. In addition, other policies that apply to different areas of service may be applicable. It is the individual’s responsibility to acquire additional materials of reference.
   i. In addition to the Notice of Appointment, a statement of general responsibilities for the faculty member at the time of initial appointment is required. This statement will be modified in consultation with the faculty member within six weeks after commencement of the appointment period and will then constitute the first
The Notice of Appointment will include a statement that the faculty member is expected to engage in activities that contribute to student success.

Statement of Expectations (SOE)

1.4.5.1 Statement of Expectations (COFS)

Normally, all tenured, tenure eligible, and non-tenure eligible faculty, whether full or part-time appointees, must have a Statement of Expectations that will be used as the basis for performance evaluations. Exceptions to this policy include part-time faculty.

A. Creating a Statement of Expectations:

A Statement of Expectations should be constructed so as to utilize the education, skills and talents of the faculty member as they relate to the missions and needs of the department, academic unit, school, college and/or the university. The performance of the faculty member will be measured within the context of his/her Statement of Expectations.

By April 1 of each year, all those holding faculty appointments at Northern Arizona University will have a Statement of Expectations covering the next academic contract (usually the academic year). The Statement of Expectations is the result of negotiation between the faculty member and the Chair and when indicated by department policy, the Faculty Status Committee or Promotion and Tenure Committee. Consultation with the Dean may be required to reach final agreement. The Statement of Expectations will be individualized for each faculty member. It will encompass the faculty member’s anticipated activities for the time period under university contract indicating the percentage of effort devoted to the activities. It will include or otherwise refer to formal, written criteria determined by the academic unit that will be the basis for the evaluation of faculty performance in that unit, both annually and for retention, promotion, or tenure, as appropriate. The Statement of Expectations for those faculty who have administrative responsibilities (such as Chairs, program coordinators, etc.) will enumerate these responsibilities, indicate the percentage of effort devoted to them, and establish the criteria for evaluation of their administrative performance.

Each Statement of Expectations is to be signed by the faculty member, the Chair (or Dean in non-departmentalized colleges), and the Chair of the Faculty Status.

The following are examples of faculty goals/objectives related to student success that can be listed in SOE’s:

- Use the GPS system to notify students who are absent from class and encourage them to attend class.
- Analyze student time spent reading online course materials and provide feedback to students based on the time spent.
- Give in-class quizzes at the beginning of random classes that assesses comprehension of required reading and materials.
- Others as determined by the academic units

Faculty Handbook

4.2.3 Teaching and Student-Related Activity

Teaching is at the core of the mission of the University; whether in the context of undergraduate education, mentoring graduate students, training students in the professional schools, or any of the other myriad ways faculty interact with students to facilitate success, inside and outside the classroom. The University places great emphasis on the teaching role of faculty and strives to provide resources to encourage and facilitate interactions between students and faculty members. Consequently, students should expect a rich and diverse learning environment. In all of their dealings with students, it is expected that faculty members will be fair and equitable, will support students in their own development within the University community, and will adhere to the highest standards of professional conduct.

3. Suggest how to implement such changes to faculty promotion and review processes

The goal of the committee was to change key portions of the COFS and Faculty Handbook so that student learning and success are elevated to their proper role in faculty roles and responsibilities and
that faculty efforts in this area are recognized in their annual evaluations. Changes are proposed to section 1.4.5.3 of the NAU COFS (Annual Faculty Performance Report), section 1.4.6 of the NAU COFS (Policies for Faculty Review and Evaluation) and in section 4.2.3.1 of the Faculty Handbook (Definition of Teaching and Student Related Activities).

The first subsection shows the existing documents and the changes we propose in context. A phrase was added (see bold italics in part a.) to encourage faculty to report on their activities related to student learning and success in their annual faculty performance report. A statement was added to section 1.4.6 (in bold italics below) in order to direct academic units to include measures that focus on the effectiveness of faculty efforts to facilitate student learning and success, rather than focusing on measures like DFW rates that are influenced by other factors beyond the control of the faculty member. In section 4.2.3.1, the added statement in the first paragraph (see bold italics) clarifies that teaching in an effective manner includes facilitating student learning and success. The statement crossed out is redundant with one in the next paragraph and should be deleted. It incorrectly, we believe, singles out this aspect of teaching in an effective manner by putting too much emphasis on current trends and research in the discipline.

The second subsection reports on what the committee discovered as current best practices for student learning and success.

Proposed Modifications

Annual Review
1.4.5.3 Annual Faculty Performance Report
Each faculty member shall file an Annual Faculty Performance Report with the immediate unit administrator on the appropriate working day as determined by the Personnel Action Calendar. The report shall specifically address the areas referred to in the Statement of Expectations and the workload assignment described therein for the evaluation period. A current curriculum vitae of the faculty member shall be attached to the report. The report shall contain reference to materials submitted as described in a-d below.

a. For the evaluation of teaching and student-related responsibilities, the faculty member will supply materials to document performance. As determined by the department/unit prior to evaluation, such materials may include a teaching portfolio consisting of syllabi, reading lists, handouts, samples of examinations and student papers; advising logs; colleagues’ peer-observation reports; reports of activities related to student learning and success; and reports of participation in teaching-improvement/enhancement workshops. Every annual review will include course evaluations by students and every faculty member is expected to be evaluated on every course, every semester.

b. For the evaluation of scholarship, research, and/or creative activity; and professional development, the faculty member will provide evidence appropriate to the discipline and the Statement of Expectations.

c. For the evaluation of service (including a faculty member’s administrative service duties), the faculty member will supply a list of his/her service activities (including service to the profession, department/school/college/university, and to the community as these activities relate to the mission of the university) as defined in a faculty member’s Statement of Expectations and any other relevant materials selected by consensus within the unit.

d. A faculty member may provide additional materials related to the three areas listed above as part of his/her performance report.

Faculty Promotion
1.4.6 Policies for Faculty Review and Evaluation (COFS)
Evaluations of faculty members must be based upon the documentation available in the Professional Review File, including material that the faculty member has provided to clarify any documents placed in the Professional Review File. In addition, letters of reference for which the faculty member has waived access shall be considered in the evaluation. Approved academic unit and college/school criteria will provide the basis for college based measures of effectiveness and judgment of faculty performance. These criteria shall include measures that focus
on the effectiveness of faculty efforts to facilitate student learning and success, rather than focusing on measures, such as DFW rates, that are affected by factors not under the control of the faculty member.

4.2.3.1 Definition of Teaching and Student Related Activities (Faculty Handbook)

It is the expectation of all faculty members at NAU that they teach in an effective manner to facilitate student learning and success. Effective teaching requires that faculty members are aware of current trends and research in their discipline.

Teaching activities include curriculum development and planning, and modifying programs and courses in order to meet the needs of contemporary students and to reflect current knowledge, research, and trends in the discipline, as well as awareness of gender and diversity issues. Faculty members are expected to establish challenging goals and provide students with appropriate learning experiences. In doing so, faculty members are expected to be receptive to new ideas and new methods, and to listen and to give serious consideration to proposals that students and colleagues make for changes.

Faculty members are expected to be knowledgeable in course organization and to assess learning in a fair and responsible manner. Faculty members collectively are responsible for assisting in the development of students’ essential academic skills including:

- critical thinking
- effective writing
- effective oral communication
- quantitative reasoning
- scientific reasoning

A faculty member’s success in fulfilling these responsibilities is one measure of the University’s success in meeting its educational mission.

Best Practices

Institutional Best practices for Student Success

Although the following comes from a national report, NAU as an institution is making progress on some of the following.

- High and clear expectations for students
- Use of active and engaging pedagogies, including learning communities and collaborative approaches (Chickering and Gamson 1987)
- Proactive early warning and intervention strategies for students with academic deficiencies – mandatory intervention is recommended
- Mandatory assessment of basic skills and placing students in need in appropriate programs for skill development
- Electronic learning portfolios documenting students’ best work organized around clearly stated achievement expectations
- More sophisticated and carefully targeted financial aid strategies that discourage students from enrolling in classes simply to obtain financial assistance (issues: student failure to attend; asking faculty to identify the last date a student was an active participant in the class)


Faculty Best Practices for Student Success

The following is a set of principles of learning by the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence of Carnegie Mellon University.
Principles of Learning
Created by the Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence of Carnegie Mellon University

Theory and Research-based Principles of Learning
The following list presents the basic principles that underlie effective learning. These principles are distilled from research from a variety of disciplines.

1. **Students’ prior knowledge can help or hinder learning.** Students come into our courses with knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes gained in other courses and through daily life. As students bring this knowledge to bear in our classrooms, it influences how they filter and interpret what they are learning. If students’ prior knowledge is robust and accurate and activated at the appropriate time, it provides a strong foundation for building new knowledge. However, when knowledge is inert, insufficient for the task, activated inappropriately, or inaccurate, it can interfere with or impede new learning.

2. **How students organize knowledge influences how they learn and apply what they know.** Students naturally make connections between pieces of knowledge. When those connections form knowledge structures that are accurately and meaningfully organized, students are better able to retrieve and apply their knowledge effectively and efficiently. In contrast, when knowledge is connected in inaccurate or random ways, students can fail to retrieve or apply it appropriately.

3. **Students’ motivation determines, directs, and sustains what they do to learn.** As students enter college and gain greater autonomy over what, when, and how they study and learn, motivation plays a critical role in guiding the direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of the learning behaviors in which they engage. When students find positive value in a learning goal or activity, expect to successfully achieve a desired learning outcome, and perceive support from their environment, they are likely to be strongly motivated to learn.

4. **To develop mastery, students must acquire component skills, practice integrating them, and know when to apply what they have learned.** Students must develop not only the component skills and knowledge necessary to perform complex tasks, they must also practice combining and integrating them to develop greater fluency and automaticity. Finally, students must learn when and how to apply the skills and knowledge they learn. As instructors, it is important that we develop conscious awareness of these elements of mastery so as to help our students learn more effectively.

5. **Goal-directed practice coupled with targeted feedback enhances the quality of students’ learning.** Learning and performance are best fostered when students engage in practice that focuses on a specific goal or criterion, targets an appropriate level of challenge, and is of sufficient quantity and frequency to meet the performance criteria. Practice must be coupled with feedback that explicitly communicates about some aspect(s) of students’ performance relative to specific target criteria, provides information to help students progress in meeting those criteria, and is given at a time and frequency that allows it to be useful.

6. **Students’ current level of development interacts with the social, emotional, and intellectual climate of the course to impact learning.** Students are not only intellectual but also social and emotional beings, and they are still developing the full range of intellectual, social, and emotional skills. While we cannot control the developmental process, we can shape the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical aspects of classroom climate in developmentally appropriate ways. In fact, many studies have shown that the climate we create has implications for our students. A negative climate may impede learning and performance, but a positive
climate can energize students’ learning.

7. **To become self-directed learners, students must learn to monitor and adjust their approaches to learning.** Learners may engage in a variety of metacognitive processes to monitor and control their learning—assessing the task at hand, evaluating their own strengths and weaknesses, planning their approach, applying and monitoring various strategies, and reflecting on the degree to which their current approach is working. Unfortunately, students tend not to engage in these processes naturally. When students develop the skills to engage these processes, they gain intellectual habits that not only improve their performance but also their effectiveness as learners.

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**What Can NAU Faculty Do or Continue to Do to Promote Student Success?**

1. **Create opportunities to develop positive relationships with students.** The research suggests that connectedness between students and faculty, peers, and the university increases retention. Therefore, require attendance and encourage participation in class. Recognizing that students “are not only intellectual beings, faculty can get to know students through office hours and/or outside of class. In addition, by acknowledging the wide range of interests and experiences of individual students, faculty can engage students in meaningful ways and enhance the classroom environment. First generation college students would benefit from faculty reaching out to students first.

2. **Establish high and clear expectations for students and provide appropriate supports for students to be successful.** The course syllabus must provide students with a clear understanding of the course objectives, activities and assessments, and learning outcomes. Coursework should be relevant to real world contexts. Design assignments that require students to use readings and lecture information to actively solve problems or consider other perspectives. Faculty must be flexible to accommodate the diverse learners in each classroom. Teach students various study skills and learning strategies, and encourage them to monitor and reflect on their own progress. Be available to guide and support students through the learning process.

3. **Use active and engaging pedagogies.** Information must be accessible to all students. Consider ways to organize the learning environment and deliver content that respects the diverse learning needs of students. Short, concise lectures can be followed by discussions, group work activities, or independent practice to promote actively engaged learning. Faculty can monitor learning, clarify misunderstandings, and encourage deeper thinking by asking questions. Enthusiastic delivery of course content using varied modalities and techniques keeps students engaged.

4. **Develop background knowledge needed for mastery of discipline.** First year students may need to learn strategies to master reading material. Teach students pre-reading strategies to preview text. Use advanced organizers, concept maps, and scaffolding during instruction so students develop foundational knowledge. Consider the diverse backgrounds of students in the class and incorporate ways to help all students gain experience and understanding of essential background knowledge.

5. **Activate prior knowledge.** Understanding what students already know is essential to designing instruction. A culturally-responsive curriculum takes students from what they know to what they need to know by connecting prior knowledge to new knowledge. Have students talk about their varied backgrounds and experiences, and encourage others to consider similarities and differences. Ask students to relate what they are learning to what they know verbally or in writing.

6. **Focus on culturally relevant teaching.** In order to serve all students, recognize the different cultural backgrounds of students and how you can acknowledge these differences in positive ways. Draw on the experiences of the diverse groups of students in the class by using varied
examples and/or connecting to current events that may be relevant to the discipline and the students in the class. Cultural relevant teaching focuses on two components:  

a) Cultural competence: Use students’ culture as a vehicle for learning; inform your content and pedagogy with their cultural knowledge so you can challenge them to learn more through building off what they already know; 

b) Sociopolitical awareness: acknowledge the differences of the students in the class.

7. **Provide regular feedback and connect students to university resources.** In the first week or two of class, consider ways to assess students’ understanding of course content and learning strategies. Give regular verbal and written feedback regarding students’ progress in your class. Encourage, acknowledge, and reinforce student participation. Critically evaluate students’ work and provide timely, specific recommendations. Review information from formative assessments to decide how to guide students towards appropriate university resources. Use early warning and intervention strategies (e.g., GPS) to assist students experiencing learning difficulties.

4. **Identify existing or the need for new university resources to assist faculty and chairs in promoting student success.**

Faculty best contribute to student success when provided with rich, diverse, and current resources supporting their own development as teachers and mentors. To that end, the University shall create a centralized online resource (“Student Success Central”) that draws together relevant student information, faculty development opportunities, and assessment strategies focused on student success. Additionally, the University shall provide a faculty evaluation process that acknowledges and values faculty efforts toward student success.

**University Resources**

The University shall create a centralized online resource (“Student Success Central”) that draws together relevant student information, faculty development opportunities, and assessment strategies focused on student success. Additionally, the University shall provide a faculty evaluation process that acknowledges and values faculty efforts toward student success.

1. **Information**—recent enrollment data, student profiles, and current perspectives on the issue of student success, at both the NAU and national levels, that inform faculty responsiveness and innovation.

   **Existing:**
   
   * Quick Facts (http://www4.nau.edu/pair/quickFact.asp). Enrollment, student characteristics, faculty and staff, academic programs, accreditation, etc.
   * Institutional Data and Analysis (http://www4.nau.edu/pair/Institution.asp). Detailed reporting on enrollment, student characteristics, faculty and staff, retention and graduation, special reports and surveys, Common Data Set, and peer data.
   * Enterprise Reporting (http://my.nau.edu < Faculty/Staff links < Please Select a Service). Various reports, particular valuable at the unit level.

   **Recommended:**
   
   * Annual Report on Factors Related to Retention. Summary report from the most recently completed academic year. Admission characteristics, academic preparedness, academic performance, student characteristics, retention rates.
   * Annual National and/or Peer Report. Summary report comparing NAU to national and peer-group data.
2. Faculty Development—webinars, live workshops, and static resources such as articles reflecting recent research on student success, PowerPoint presentations, transcriptions of speeches/presentations, and other documentation.

Existing:
* Faculty Development Program ([http://home.nau.edu/facdev/default.asp](http://home.nau.edu/facdev/default.asp)).
* Assessment Research Results, e-Learning Center ([http://www2.nau.edu/~d-elearn/assessment/research.php](http://www2.nau.edu/~d-elearn/assessment/research.php))
* Assessment Resources, Office of Academic Assessment ([https://www4.nau.edu/assessment/resources/](https://www4.nau.edu/assessment/resources/))
* Student Success in Undergraduate Courses ([http://home.nau.edu/facdev/success.asp](http://home.nau.edu/facdev/success.asp)). One article/abstract and one report/abstract.
* New Chair Orientation, Academic Chairs’ Council.
* New Faculty Orientation
* Faculty Development daylong session each August entitled “Productive Beginnings” focusing on best practices for syllabi, discussion and course design

Recommended:
* Expansion of recent research/bibliography in the Student Success in Undergraduate Courses section.
* Greater documentation (e.g., video recording) of on-campus seminars, such as video recordings, PowerPoint presentations, and transcriptions of speeches/presentation, for faculty unable to attend live sessions or who wish to review materials at a later date.

3. Faculty Evaluation

Existing:
* Inconsistent policies across campus relating to the documentation and value of faculty efforts toward student success.
* Quantitative data, such as retention, graduation, and DFW rates; not always interpreted or informed by qualitative data.

Recommended:
* Revisions to Conditions of Faculty Service (COFS) and Faculty Handbook that articulate minimum standards campus-wide for the documentation and evaluation of faculty efforts toward student success.
* Faculty Activity and Achievement Reporting (Data180). The addition of a separate section beneath “Teaching” where faculty can highlight their efforts toward improving/enhancing student success.
* Committees and individuals involved in faculty evaluation will consider the student information housed on “Student Success Central” and the faculty member’s participation in development activities when judging faculty efforts toward student success.

5. Recommend language for faculty evaluation for those engaged in the University College

University College

The mandate around student success and the language suggested in this document for faculty evaluation is applicable to all university faculty including those engaged in the University College.
Additional Resources


See also the reports of the President’s Task Force on the First Year: http://www2.nau.edu/~d-ugstdy/_source/docs/fresh-year-report.pdf (Interim Report 2004) and http://www2.nau.edu/~d-ugstdy/_source/docs/fresh-year-report-final.pdf (Full Report 2006).

Analysis of Factors Related to Retention for Fall 06 and Fall 07 Cohorts. Office of the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs. NAU. October 2009.

Comparative National data

College Results Online (Education Trust): http://www.collegeresults.org/search_group.aspx. The PAIR website also shows comparative data for our ABOR approved and high research peer institutions: http://www4.nau.edu/pair/PeerInstitutions/PeerInstitution.asp.

References

