

Anchors for Student Success: A 6-Point plan for Retention

Based on recent conversations regarding the 6 year graduation rate for African American students at EWU, currently at 28%, and the graduation rate for Hispanic/Latino students 44%, a task force was convened to address the concerns regarding all multicultural students and the issues they are experiencing, which contribute to the low rate of academic success.

Upon completion of discussions with Africana Studies, the Multicultural Advisory Council, Diverse Faculty & Administrators, CAAR, Multicultural Center, Pride Center and the Office for Diversity & Inclusion staff, a retention plan entitled: *Anchors for Student Success: A 6-Point Plan for Retention* was developed.

An anchor- is a person or thing that provides stability or confidence in an otherwise uncertain situation.

The 6-Point Plan for Student Success will serve as an anchor of stability and support, which will in turn provide the pivotal foundation needed for students to flourish. The plan is designed to eliminate disparities in graduation and retention rates among its diverse undergraduate populations, enhance support for multicultural students, and draw students into the university community through relationships with faculty, staff and students who encourage and foster success.

Eastern Washington University recognizes the importance of providing support, resources and services to guide and assist students in navigating the higher education environment.

Program Specifics:

- *Increase opportunities for multicultural students to have meaningful interactions with diverse faculty and staff beginning at Orientation and continuing throughout the academic year. Recognizing that Orientation helps chart the path for first year and transfer students, orientation for Multicultural Students serves to familiarize students from historically underrepresented groups with the resources and support infrastructure available to them at EWU. Visibility of diverse faculty and staff from the initial onset of college life will provide a sense of familiarity for diverse students who often feel like outsiders in the academy. Sensitivity to the role of the family is significant. We are requesting an orientation session be held for families provided in both English & Spanish.*

In support of the role of family, selected EWU students will serve as a Family Support Partner during the Orientation process. These students will serve to provide support, direction and explanation of the various programs and events to the families during their time on campus and to alleviate fears and concerns during this transition period into a new environment. Selected Family Support Partner's should be bilingual.

Areas of Concern:

- Sensitivity to underrepresented families
- Length of orientation
- Cost
- Timing of presentations

Lead offices – Admissions and Diversity & Inclusion

- D&I Staff and Race & Culture studies program coordinators, or a program designee, will *reach out to incoming Multicultural Students* prior to the start of the academic year providing, a welcome to campus message via e-mail, postcard or personal phone contact. This welcome to campus provides an additional touchpoint in connecting students to the campus. Students will receive information regarding available programs to negate the sense of loss and bewilderment upon arrival to campus. The welcome contact is a friendly method to introduce Diversity offices prior to the student's arrival to campus.

Lead offices – Race & Culture Studies Offices, Multicultural Center

- *Host a Meet & Greet on the Yard*-A welcome to campus social event with a focus on diverse students and interactions with the Faculty & Staff from Africana Studies, Chicano/a Studies, and American Indian Studies will be held within the first two-three weeks of the start of fall quarter. This social welcome event will provide the opportunity for connections to occur in a relaxed, informal environment. Students will meet and interact with faculty, staff and each other as they begin to build community and develop friendships. The Meet & Greet on the Yard will focus on ethnic cultures through food, music, and connections.

Lead offices – Multicultural Center and Diversity & Inclusion

- *Increase touch points with students*-Personal contact will be made with each African American, Hispanic/Latino and Native American first year and sophomore student during the 4th & 8th weeks of the quarter. This friendly check-in will provide an opportunity for the student to share any concerns they are having and enable the professional making the check-in to provide and reinforce resource information to assist the student. If students express concerns regarding academic course work or other issues, an immediate contact will occur with the student's advisor to provide the student with options and support services.

Lead Office-CAAR in partnership with the Race & Culture Studies Offices

- *Encourage students* to visit the cultural studies lounges, Multicultural Center and Pride Center for a supportive environment designed to broaden networks and strengthen interactions with the campus community. Campus, Culture, Community & Connection are the strategic themes that guide the Office for Diversity & Inclusion. These themes are incorporated in the academic support environments of the Africana Studies Lounge, Dr. Maldonado Lounge, American Indian Studies Lounge, Multicultural Center and Pride Center. Students are provided a respite in these environments from the pressures of being diverse on a predominantly white college campus. These spaces are designed to enable students to see their cultures reflected, celebrated and embraced as a part of the university experience.

Lead offices – All

- EWU faculty, staff and administration will *Increase participation at multicultural student events* to provide visibility and build connections. In an effort to enhance relationships with diverse students, administration will actively engage in multicultural program participation. We encourage the same participation from our Multicultural Partners, faculty and staff.

Lead offices – All