

GENESE0

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT GENESE0

Office of the Provost

Student Retention WIG Update

August 29, 2018

Dear Colleagues:

Last fall, the Academic Affairs Division began a new initiative – dubbed our [Wildly Important Goal](#) (WIG) – to address student retention. Our team aims to increase the percentage of first-year, first-time Geneseo students who return for a second year from 86% to 88% by October 2019. You may have heard President Denise Battles discuss the importance of retention in her opening convocation address, calling it “a goal which we all must embrace.”

To keep you informed and also to invite your support, I'll send a monthly email highlighting our progress and the impact you have on our students' Geneseo experience and their success.

Three things we've accomplished:

- Registration 2.0 debuted in the spring with encouraging results. The registrar and enrollment services contact current students who haven't registered; advisors help with course registration, financial aid, and other concerns. It will be held again this fall.
- The Open Education Resources (OER) program provided both access and affordability, yielding more than \$260,000 in textbook cost savings for students in 2017. SUNY gave each campus \$20,000 to promote OER; Geneseo used its share to provide stipends to faculty members who incorporated OER into their courses and to fund specific initiatives and training. Last year, 29 faculty members taught 56 OER courses to more than 1,600 students, excluding summer enrollment. SUNY will fund the program again this year.
- We supported College Senate's initiative to revise Geneseo's academic policy to require electronic posting of class syllabi in the Canvas learning management system. Research indicated that students welcomed an electronic version to help keep their class requirements in one place instead of managing paper or email versions. CIT is offering support to help faculty post their syllabi in Canvas this fall.

One thing you can do:

Offer a friendly hello or extend an invitation to assist our first-year, transfer, and returning students as they begin a new academic year. Your support can be reassuring — and reminds them why they chose Geneseo! Making a connection with a faculty or staff member is a key indicator of student success, and even a small gesture that demonstrates your concern for our students' well-being can help reinforce that they are a valued part of our community.

“My Geneseo Moment”

The following excerpt has been edited for brevity from Presidential Scholar and Phi Beta Kappa member Justen Geddes’ letter in support of Distinguished Teaching Professor of Mathematics Olympia Nicodemi, who was awarded the Drs. Carol and Michael Harter Endowment for Faculty Mentoring Award at the 2018 Opening Convocation. Justen graduated summa cum laude in May 2018 and received the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Student Excellence. He is now pursuing a Ph.D. in applied mathematics at North Carolina State University.

“I was able to accomplish a lot at Geneseo, and none of those accolades would have been possible without Dr. Olympia Nicodemi. The biggest impact she had on my life came in my second year, when I had decided to drop out of college. I told Dr. Nicodemi before I went to Erwin to fill out the paperwork. She closed her office door, and we talked for over an hour. **That single hour that she took out of her busy schedule is, without a doubt, the reason I earned those accolades, and why I will be attending graduate school.** I can’t thank her enough.”

I am so grateful that Geneseo did not lose this talented student. Thank you, Olympia, and all of you for the work that you do to help our students succeed. Together, we can make a real and lasting difference in our student retention efforts.

Welcome back, and let’s have a wonderful year!

All my best,

Stacey

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