

GENESE0

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT GENESE0

Office of the Provost

Student Retention WIG Update

October 30, 2018

Dear Colleagues:

One year ago, we formed our [WIG](#) team with the goal of increasing the percentage of first-year, first-time Geneseo students who return for a second year from 86% to 88% by October 2019.

Three things we've accomplished in the last month:

- We collaborated with faculty to increase the number of [classes offered in the upcoming intercession](#); 15 online and seven study abroad/study away courses are now offered.
- We increased our efforts to communicate the importance of student health and well-being through greater collaboration with the Mental Health Task Force and the President's Commission on Diversity and Community. The Commission initiated the pilot launch of the [Advancing Cultural Competency Certificate](#) Oct. 9, which involves 20 members from across the College.
- We provided funding to support innovative pedagogy in the Department of Biology to help students succeed in their introductory classes. A new workshop program designed and led by faculty members – assisted by student peer mentors – aims to make abstract ideas more concrete, which is challenging in large lecture classes. Previously, students could use supplementary instructors or tutors which are still available; the workshops are offered four times a week, with six different topics featured thus far. Department project leaders are Assistant Professor Suann Yang, Professor Susan Bandoni Muench, Associate Professor Jani Lewis, and Lecturer Rob Feissner.

One thing you can do:

Many of our students experience anxiety following mid-terms, but we can play a small part to make a big difference. Especially this time of year, one of the easiest – and most helpful – actions is best described as “just being there.” For faculty, remind students of office hours and demonstrate a welcoming environment with an open door. For staff, ask students how their mid-terms went, offer support, and encourage them to talk to their professors. Sometimes, just taking time to listen is what matters most.

“My Geneseo Moment”

Assistant Professor of Geological Sciences Nick Warner is also a proud Geneseo alumnus, Class of 2000. He currently serves as geology theme leader on NASA’s Insight mission team which is directing the Mars robotic lander scheduled to touch down on Nov. 26.

“I was a geology major, but what I’ve always wanted to do is study the planets. It wasn’t until my time at Geneseo that I really solidified that as a career option. Dick Young, now professor emeritus in the Department of Geological Sciences, actually introduced me to this concept of planetary geology – the study of rocks, materials, and surfaces on other worlds. In his classes, he showed us amazing images of the moon, Mars, and Apollo era stuff – and even talked about his research using some of the Apollo era data. It was during that time in his classes that I started to gain an appreciation for geology’s role in exploring our solar system. I’ve really made that my career path since then, working on multiple Mars missions and teaching many of the same classes that Young taught me all those years ago here. Being in his classes was one of the most impactful moments of my entire career.”

From Geneseo ... to Mars! Thanks to all of you for your commitment to make a Geneseo education an out-of-this-world experience for our students.

All my best,

Stacey

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