

March 6, 2014

Lori A. Fairburn
Director of Enrollment Services
Southeastern Louisiana University
548 Western Avenue
SLU 10752
Hammond, LA 70402

Dear Lori,

It was a pleasure to spend time with members of the Southeastern Louisiana University (Southeastern) community during my on-site consultation last fall. During my time on campus, I worked with senior leadership and members of the Retention and Progression Task Force to identify immediate and future opportunities to strengthen the university's retention and completion efforts.

Based on the findings of the analysis and efforts made as a result of my recommendations for immediate action, I recommend a short-term partnership to help Southeastern faculty and staff develop and articulate a much-needed philosophy for first-year advising with particular emphasis on identifying a first-year advising model and other first-year transition initiatives. Given the multivariate nature of retention, I recommend that Southeastern consider that a future consulting partnership may be useful in developing the framework for an annual retention plan that will ensure ongoing efforts to increase student success.

Knowing that the university has limited funds remaining in this fiscal year's budget, we anticipate a total of three, two-day consultations and a one-day workshop to assist Southeastern staff in implementing new and revised strategies to improve your 63.3 percent fall-to-fall retention rate and 25.6 percent graduation rate, which fall below the 69.4 percent and 38.2 percent national averages among traditional, public institutions. In order to ensure continued operational autonomy and flexibility, significant progress must be made to meet the retention targets set by the Louisiana Board of Regents through increases in first- to second-year retention and graduation rates.

Areas of focus

We will begin this partnership by working with Southeastern to determine the specific goals and agendas for the consultations. From there, we will work with appropriate task force members to develop action plans that will help the university reach its retention and completion goals with a strong foundation for future annual planning efforts. Through a series of on-site consultations, I will focus my and Southeastern staff efforts on the following priority areas:

Strategic enrollment planning

Student recruitment and marketing

Student success and retention

Market research and communications

Innovative tools and technologies

Financial aid strategy
Predictive modeling

Web strategy and e-communications

Student satisfaction assessment

Early-alert retention programs

Higher education research and learning venues

Trend studies

Conferences and workshops

Webinars on academic advising

Online courses in enrollment management and quality service

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1. Academic advising (two-day consultation)

According to Noel-Levitz's most recent National Student Satisfaction and Priorities Report for four-year public institutions, Southeastern's students are likely to place a higher value on academic advising than your campus personnel¹. This research was reinforced during my time on campus as several students indicated a desire for more direction and encouragement during their first year.

Based on this feedback, it is crucial to the success of your advising program to communicate the values of effective advising not only to your students, but also to campus personnel, who play such key roles in the delivery of this important service.

Specific areas of focus to modify the freshman advising model will include:

- Strategies to replace siloed advising initiatives with consistent processes and procedures across colleges and departments;
- Staffing recommendations to enable advisors to develop meaningful relationships with students and allow for more proactive and intrusive advising; and
- Initiatives to regularly assess advising, professional advisors, and the Center for Student Excellence (CSE).

2. Southeastern 101 (two-day consultation)

Often seen as a discrete practice or stand-alone transition course, first-year seminar courses must be viewed and supported as a partner component of a comprehensive advising model that promotes future retention. We will work with Southeastern to suggest changes to SE 101 to include:

- Regular assessment and analytics to inform and develop more robust course content; and
- Identification of student needs that cannot be addressed in the current curriculum or outside the classroom.

3. Data collection and use (two-day consultation)

“Conventional wisdom” or “that’s the way we’ve always done it” can sometimes override any actual research or data. While data is available to Southeastern, it is not consistently or effectively used. Nor is data routinely part of conversations about or planning for retention. Although students are surveyed regularly, there are many other data elements to review that can help not only provide a more accurate assessment of retention at Southeastern, but intervene with students in a more timely fashion.

We will work with the university to identify data that are relevant to student success, including:

¹ Noel-Levitz (2011). The 2011 national student satisfaction and priorities report—four-year public colleges and universities. Coralville, Iowa: Noel-Levitz. Retrieved from www.noellevitz.com/Benchmark.

- Suggestions for milestones to track throughout the first semester and first year; and
- Strategies to take action based on the data to inform ongoing planning and program improvements.

4. **Orientation planning (one-day workshop)**

Strategies associated with the intake process should be designed to promote retention as well as impact enrollment yield. Based on conversations with Southeastern staff and students, the university's current orientation sessions and structure are designed primarily to provide information rather than encourage engagement. During my time on campus, students described the advising process as "rushed," "chaotic," and something that "some faculty seemed to regard as a hassle."

During a one-day workshop, we will discuss a philosophy and set of goals for the mid-summer registration and orientation sessions. In collaboration with student affairs, admissions, academic advising, financial aid, and faculty, recommendations will be made for:

- Strengthening affiliation with Southeastern, building early relationships with students, and establishing confidence;
- Designing new materials and a new communication flow to promote and manage the orientation registration process;
- Strategies to connect students with each other earlier in the summer; and
- Programming for parents.

To strengthen this effort, I will collaborate with the university task force to assist with planning efforts to design a required "kick-off" orientation for incoming freshmen. This event would take place immediately prior to the start of classes and meet the needs of students at this point in the transition experience.

Summarized approach

Noel-Levitz is known for the transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitudes—so we not only provide you with exceptional data and services, but also transfer the skills and understanding necessary to fully use the information. Working with and for you, I will become a member of your team and Southeast's Retention and Completion Task Force.

Following each campus visit, I will provide a summary report that outlines what was accomplished before and during the visit as well as next steps, including specific tasks and who on campus should be responsible for carrying them out. I will remain available to you via phone, email, and web conference between visits to answer questions, provide feedback, brainstorm ideas, and clarify objectives. We are truly partners with you throughout the project and base our success on our ability to help you accomplish your planning goals and initiatives.

Investment

The three, two-day consultations and one-day orientation workshop represent a total investment of \$42,500, inclusive of all expenses.

We are sensitive to the fiscal challenges and budget limitations faced by Southeastern and are committed to working with the university to develop a delivery and billing schedule that best fits the university's immediate needs and fiscal realities.

Next steps

Collaborative retention planning that moves Southeastern past institutional silos and barriers will be most successful when a conscious effort is made to approach the process as an ongoing conversation in which divisional identities recede and relevant perspectives, points of view, and expertise are allowed to influence a shared direction. With Noel-Levitz's support, I am confident in Southeastern's leadership and the university's ability to proactively respond to these identified challenges to take your retention and completion programs to the next level and develop a comprehensive, coordinated culture of student success.

I sincerely hope Noel-Levitz will have the opportunity to be of further assistance to Southeastern, and I look forward to continuing our discussions regarding these important student success initiatives. If you have questions as you review the detailed description below, please feel free to contact me at 1-800-876-1117 or email claire-berardini@noellevitz.com.

Sincerely,



Claire Berardini
Executive Consultant

Retention consulting site visits

1 message

Lori Fairburn <lfairburn@selu.edu>

Mon, Mar 10, 2014 at 7:30 AM

Reply-To: lfairburn@selu.edu

To: Karen Fontenot <kfontenot@selu.edu>, "Antoinette S. Phillips" <Antoinette.Phillips@selu.edu>, Shirley Jacob <Shirley.Jacob@selu.edu>, Ann Carruth <Ann.Carruth@selu.edu>, Dan McCarthy <dmccarthy@selu.edu>
Cc: "Dr. Bourg" <tbourg@selu.edu>, Mary McKelvy <mmckelvy@selu.edu>, Lanell Smith <Lanell.Smith@selu.edu>, Joan Penton <jpenton@selu.edu>, Sandra Williams <swilliams@selu.edu>, Sabrina Anzalone <sanzalone@selu.edu>, Renae Knight <rknight@selu.edu>

Dear Deans,

This is to confirm the dates for the Noel-Levitz retention site visits. Claire Berardini, the same consultant that conducted the two-day retention analysis in the Fall, will be one campus:

Visit One: April 1 - 3 (Tuesday - Thursday)

- two day consulting with one day Orientation-related planning workshop on the 3rd

Visit Two: May 7 - 8 (Wednesday - Thursday)

Visit Three: June 16 - 17 (Monday - Tuesday)

Areas of Focus:

Advising (two-day consultation)

Freshmen Seminar (two-day consultation)

Retention Data Collection and Use (two-day consultation)

Orientation (freshmen intake) (one day workshop on April 3rd)

Please plan to be available each day of the visits. The agenda and location of the meetings have not been set. As more information becomes available I will be sure to let you know.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please let me know.

Thanks,
Lori

Lori A. Fairburn
Director of Enrollment Services
Southeastern Louisiana University
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Hammond, LA 70402

Check out our eBrochure at www.selu.edu/ebrochure

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DATE: March 27, 2014

TO: Karen Fontenot, Interim Dean, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Toni Phillips, Interim Dean, College of Business
Shirley Jacob, Interim Dean, College of Education
Ann Carruth, Dean, College of Nursing and Health Sciences
Dan McCarthy, Dean, College of Science & Technology
Rick Simpson, Department Head, Accounting and Finance
Sebastian van Delden, Department Head, Computer Science and Industrial Technology
David Hanson, Department Head, English
Jackie Guendouzi, Department Head, Health and Human Sciences
Susan Coats, Department Head, Psychology
Cynthia Elliot, Department Head, Teaching and Learning
Chris Bentley, Associate Professor, General Studies, and Athletics Representative
Claire Procopio, Associate Professor, Languages and Communications
Connie Budden, Instructor, Management and Business Administration
Beth Berry, Instructor, Teaching and Learning
Charlotte Humphries, Associate Professor, Kinesiology and Health Studies
Mary White, Professor, Biological Sciences
Dorothy Nelson, Director, Center for Student Excellence
Mindy Notariano, Senior Academic Advisor, Center for Student Excellence
Duane Donald, Coordinator, Special Projects/TRIO Programs
Greg Crovetto, President, Student Government Association
Chase Cole, Student Representative
Michelle Hall, Director, Institutional Research and Assessment
Sam Domiano, Interim Vice President, Administration and Finance
Lori Fairburn, Director, Enrollment Services
Mike Rivault, Director, Communications and Marketing, University Advancement
Cheri Kay Thriffiley, Director, Student Engagement, Student Affairs
Robin Parker, Director, Marketing and Strategic Initiatives, Auxiliary Services
Kay Maurin, Director, University Housing
Nettie Burchfield, Director, Controller's Office
Mary Lacouir, Director, Financial Aid
Richard Beaugh, Director, Admissions
Wendy Van Dalen, Associate Director, Admissions
Keslie Smith, Assistant Director, Admissions
Amanda Hammonds, Coordinator of Recruiting and Special Events, Admissions

FROM: Tammy Bourg 
Provost

SUBJECT: Noel-Levitz Retention Consultation, April 1- 3

Retention Working Group Members:

Over the last few weeks you have been made aware of Southeastern's most recent efforts to identify areas for improving student retention. In the months ahead, you will work together to develop and implement strategies for improving student advising, our freshman success course (SE 101), retention data collection and use, and orientation.

As you know, Noel-Levitz consultant Claire Berardini will be on campus from April 1 -3 of next week to begin guiding us in the development and implementation of strategies. You will work with her from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm on April 1-3. The priority of these meetings should come second only to your time teaching classes. It is important that you be an active participant during each Noel-Levitz visit, including the meetings next week, on May 7 - 8, and on June 16 - 17.

The agenda for next week's Noel-Levitz visit is attached. The second page of the agenda indicates the membership of each working group. You are one member of a relatively small but representative group of students, faculty, and staff who Southeastern is counting on to successfully implement strategies for improvement. Your work will not end when the Noel-Levitz meetings end; it is important that you continue to be an active participant in the 'next steps' identified during the consultant's visit.

Your time and effort are appreciated, and your input and commitment to implementing strategies to improve student success is invaluable. If you have any questions or concerns, please let me know. Thank you in advance for your work on this important matter.

Tammy Bourg

Agenda – April 1-3 Retention Consulting Visit

Tuesday, April 1 (Location: New Student Union Ballroom, 3rd floor, Rm. 3505 B2)

Morning session with all participants, including April 3rd Orientation Working Group
(see page 2 for working group list)

- 8:30 – 9:00 Consultant meets with Dr. Bourg and Lori Fairburn
- 9:15 – 10:30 Presentation: Retention at Southeastern Louisiana
- 10:30 – 10:45 Break
- 10:45 – 12:00 Presentation: Advising as a Retention Strategy
- 12:00 – 12:45 Lunch on your own

Afternoon sessions with the Working Group for Advising, Freshmen Seminar, & Retention Data collection and use

- 1:00 – 2:30 Working session: First-year progression data
- 2:30 – 2:45 Break
- 2:45 – 4:00 Working session: Advising assumptions, possibilities, goals

Wednesday, April 2 (Location: TBA)

All sessions with the Working Group for Advising, Freshmen Seminar, & Retention Data collection and use

- 9:00 – 10:30 Working session: Designing a comprehensive approach to first-year advising
- 10:30 – 10:45 Break
- 10:45 – 12:00 Working session: SE 101 and First-year advising
- 12:00 – 12:45 Lunch on your own
- 1:00 – 2:30 Working session: SE 101
- 2:30 – 2:45 Break
- 2:45 – 4:00 Working session: Mobilizing for next steps

Thursday, April 3 (Location: TBA)

All sessions with Orientation Working Group

- 9:00 – 10:30 Presentation: Intake and Student Retention
- 10:30 – 12:00 Orientation working session
- 12:00 – 12:45 Lunch on your own
- 1:00 – 4:00 Orientation working session

Strategic enrollment planning

Student recruitment and marketing
Student retention and completion
Market research

Innovative tools and technologies

Financial aid management
Direct marketing
Predictive modeling
Web strategy and e-communications
Online net price calculator
Satisfaction and priorities assessment
Early-alert retention programs

Higher education research and learning venues

Trend reports
Conferences and workshops
Online courses in enrollment management

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Working Group for Advising, Freshmen Seminar, & Retention data collection and use

1. Karen Fontenot, Interim Dean, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences
2. Toni Phillips, Interim Dean, College of Business
3. Shirley Jacob, Interim Dean, College of Education
4. Ann Carruth, Dean, College of Nursing and Health Sciences
5. Dan McCarthy, Dean, College of Science and Technology
6. Rick Simpson, Department Head, Accounting and Finance
7. Sebastian van Delden, Department Head, Computer Science and Industrial Technology
8. David Hanson, Department Head, English
9. Jackie Guendouzi, Department Head, Health and Human Sciences
10. Susan Coats, Department Head, Psychology
11. Cynthia Elliot, Department Head, Teaching and Learning
12. Chris Bentley, Associate Professor, General Studies, Athletics representative
13. Claire Procopio, Associate Professor, Languages and Communications
14. Connie Budden, Instructor, Management and Business Administration
15. Beth Berry, Instructor, Teaching and Learning
16. Charlotte Humphries, Associate Professor, Kinesiology and Health Studies
17. Mary White, Professor, Biological Sciences
18. Dorothy Nelson, Director, Center for Student Excellence
19. Mindy Notariano, Senior Academic Advisor, Center for Student Excellence
20. Duane Donald, Coordinator, Special Projects/TRIO Programs
21. Greg Crovetto, President, Student Government Association
22. Chase Cole, Student Representative
23. Michelle Hall, Director, Institutional Research and Assessment
24. Sam Domiano, Interim Vice President, Administration and Finance
25. Lori Fairburn, Director, Enrollment Services

Working Group for Orientation (Freshmen Intake)

Same participants as above, and:

26. Mike Rivault, Director, Communications and Marketing, University Advancement
27. Cherie Kay Thriffiley, Director, Student Engagement, Student Affairs
28. Robin Parker, Director, Marketing and Strategic Initiatives, Auxiliary Services
29. Kay Maurin, Director, University Housing
30. Nettie Burchfield, Director, Controller's Office
31. Mary Lacour, Director, Financial Aid
32. Richard Beaugh, Director, Admissions
33. Wendy Van Dalen, Associate Director, Admissions
34. Keslie Smith, Assistant Director, Admissions
35. Amanda Hammonds, Coordinator of Recruiting and Special Events, Admissions