

Student Success Guide for Faculty

“Learning results from what the student does and thinks and only from what the student does and thinks. The teacher (and the college) can advance learning only by influencing what the student does to learn.”

–Peter Felten et al., *The Undergraduate Experience: Focusing Institutions on What Matters Most*

Each term 25 – 30 percent of our undergraduate students receive a grade of D or F, or withdraw from a course. Students who receive these grades leave the university in higher percentages, and have a much lower 4-year graduation rate. Impacts can be particularly pronounced for students who receive such a grade in their first term. For instance, students who received an “F” in the first term are much more likely to struggle in subsequent terms, and currently have an 18 percent 4-year graduation rate.

Faculty have a critical role in student success. Teaching and learning research shows that faculty are well positioned to make a difference in these outcomes. Consider these simple actions you can take in your courses to help students succeed:

1. **Provide Feedback, Early & Often** – First-year students making the transition from high school to meeting expectations in a college class can benefit from feedback, early and often in the term. A student who must wait for a midterm grade to get a sense of how she’s doing in the course might have trouble catching up to her peers. (Note: Feedback is not the same as graded work.)

It’s highly recommended that courses include an **early (no later than Week 3) low-stakes assessment** as a signal of performance. This will give students time to seek academic support. You may already be incorporating this best practice into your courses. If not then we encourage you to do so, as this will give students time to seek academic support.

2. **Post grades to Canvas.** We often hear from frustrated students who don’t know how they are doing in their courses. A simple way to make sure students have a running record of their performance is to post grades to Canvas. UO Libraries provides [Canvas Support for Instructors](#).
3. **Normalize struggle and seeking help.** Students often think they are the only ones struggling and see seeking help as a weakness, especially first-year students. Emphasize to students that learning often involves struggling with material, and that seeking help is a normal part of learning. Make clear to students that learning is not accidental – there are proven and effective strategies for improving academic performance. Encourage students to learn about learning, and share your own struggles, challenges, and strategies. Provide links to resources on Canvas. Encourage students to take advantage of office hours, and provide guidance on best practices for doing so.

The [Teaching and Learning Center](#) and [Braddock Tutoring Center](#) at the Lundquist College of Business are excellent first-stop resources for your students.

4. Familiarize yourself with evidence-based teaching practices and **begin incorporating proven teaching strategies into your courses.** For example, researchers have found that students perform better and feel more connected to the work of the course when they are told the purpose, process, and evaluation

criteria of an assignment before they begin any work. Using a “transparent assignment template” can be a simple way to help students succeed.

Start with the [Teaching Engagement Program](#). The TEP’s [Faculty Self-Assessment Guide](#) is an excellent tool to help you reflect on and assess your teaching methods and their effectiveness.

5. **Let students know that you believe they are capable**, especially those who are struggling in your course. If a student is struggling to believe in themselves and their ability to successfully complete your course, then hearing from you that you believe they are capable can give them the boost they need. Helping students understand the hurdles and challenges unique to your course, and sharing tips on how students can prepare to be successful early in the term, provides valuable context for students who may feel like they are the only ones struggling with the material. Simply knowing that other students have faced these same challenges before, and successfully surmounted them, can give them confidence in their own ability to succeed.

6. **Participate in early alert** efforts. Beginning Fall 2017, the student success team will be conducting early alert efforts in key gateway courses with high non-complete rates (>20%). Faculty in those courses will receive an email in week 3 or 4 asking them to indicate which students are at risk of underperforming in their course. Those students will then be referred to advising and academic support services. Faculty participation in this effort is critical to its success.