

Retention Committee Report 2023-2024

Faculty Members: Melissa Partyka (Chair), Leslie Cordie, William Schaefer, Ralph Kington, Jinyan Fan, Mehmet Arik

Ex-officio Members: Jaime Miller, Amy Douglas, Katherine Hettinger, JuWan Robinson, Ruthie Spiers (non-voting), Charles Bringardner (non-voting, replacing Norman Godwin)

Student Members: Gunner Smith, Carsyn Sieb

Invited Regular Guest(s): Judith Sanders—Retention Programming Coordinator

Date of meeting (Zoom—Chair based in Mobile)	Attendees
October 11, 2023 230-4 PM	Members: Melissa Partyka, William Schaffer, Mehmet Arik, Amy Douglas, Jaime Miller, Katherine Hettinger, Jinyan Fan, Ruthie Spiers, Students: Gunner Smith, Carsyn Sieb (both absent) Guest: Judy Sanders Absent: : Leslie Cordie, Ralph Kingston, JuWan Robinson
February 16, 2024 130-3 PM	Members: Melissa Partyka, William Schaffer, Leslie Cordie, Ralph Kington, Amy Douglas, Jaime Miller, Katherine Hettinger, Jinyan Fan, Ruthie Spiers, Students: Gunner Smith, Carsyn Sieb (both absent) Guest: Judy Sanders Absent: JuWan Robinson, Charles Brindgardner
May 2024 Rescheduled TBD	

Main Issues, Tasks, and Accomplishments

The general charge of the committee, which according to the Senate Constitution is as follows:

- **General:** The committee shall be responsible for continuous monitoring of the retention of undergraduate students and for recommending retention initiatives and working with the appropriate deans and student affairs to establish them.

The Faculty Senate Retention Committee (Committee) met twice during this academic year (2023-2e) in via Zoom to discuss on-going campus initiatives and new needs in retention for Auburn undergraduates, with a focus on race, academic standing, and financial support (among others). The Committee continued to work on engagement with multiple student support services and academic units along with data gathering and analysis in collaboration with Institutional Research (IR).

Accomplishments/Outcomes for 2023-24:

- Worked closely with Academic Advising on the Fall and Spring campaigns for the Advise Assit program
 - Contributed to the approaches and questions used by Academic Advising when communicating to students about enrollment.
 - Communication with non-enrolled students led to majority (>76%) enrolling.
- Data analysis on retention statistics at AU
 - Held separate meetings with IR to address Committee-generate questions about enrollment/retention
 - Worked with IR to expand the committee's understanding of additional data resources, data collection/sharing limitations, and effective question formulation to ensure efficient data analysis.
 - Worked with IR data to draft additional findings. Some results of potential interest include:
 - Minority students, first generation, non-residents, and male students are, on average, less likely to graduate than their counterparts.
 - Students that are Pell eligible are less likely to graduate than counterparts, indicating potential financial reason for attrition.
 - Though Covid had impact on graduation rate, average stopout rates are lower for the 2019-2022 cohorts (~12% after 2 years) than previous cohorts 2011-2018 (~15% after 2 years).
 - Continue to use University benchmarks for data points on comparison
- Continued discussions on exit and withdrawal surveys to assist with data on student retention and methods for assigning responsibility for contact
- Continued discussion on access to disparate data sets with different permission requirements

As a result of our work this year, we are suggesting several future tasks for the committee and recommendations for actions that may be pursued by other entities at the university.

Suggested Committee Tasks for 2024-25:

- Continue to explore Advise Assist tools to identify student separation and support retention efforts
- Continue research into institutional statistics related to retention and graduation rates of underrepresented student populations to focus on the student experience across AU
- Determine impact of anti-DEI legislation on future enrollment/retention
- Explore the impact of financial burden on retention using additional data resources

Committee Strategic Recommendations (related to but outside committee's prevue):

- Continue to develop advising information and support for students at the time of withdrawal
- Survey non-returning undergraduate students to collect historical and institutional data to add to the dashboard
- Address US Supreme Court ruling on striking down affirmative action in higher education and its implications in relation to recruitment and retention; address impact of Alabama legislation banning DEI programs beginning Fall 2024

AU Senate Retention Committee

Wednesday October 11, 2023

Location: Virtual

Zoom Link: <https://auburn.zoom.us/j/87283475591>

Video recording: <https://auburn.box.com/s/bkz8owrf2awrvsnwil8s1nmlvflbdlfp>

Attendees: Melissa Partyka (chair), William Schaffer, Mehmet Arik, Amy Douglas, Jaime Miller, Katherine Hettinger, Jinyan Fan, Ruthie Spiers, Judy Sanders (invited speaker)

Absent: Leslie Cordie, Ralph Kingston, JuWan Robinson, Gunner Smith (student), Carsyn Sieb (student)

- 1) Welcome back and introductions for new members—Missy Partyka
- 2) Overview of final report from last year, next steps—Discussion led by Missy Partyka
 - a) [Link to Final Report for 2022-2023](#)
 - b) Focus this year on continued analyses and increased data integration
- 3) Advise Assist—Judy Sanders ([see recording in Box](#))
 - a) Enrollment campaign being launched as pilot this fall (drafted timeline/approach document in Box)
 - b) Potential for interventions at several points during campaign, but unclear what happens on February 1st (day after final add/drop day for Spring)
 - i) Ongoing discussion about how to reach non-enrolled students at that point, JuWan and Judy have been discussing ways to automate this
 - ii) Auburn Cares works with some of these students, Judy to work with Katherine on ensuring Auburn Cares students not included in this pilot
 - iii) Potential to use technology (e.g., chat bots) to interact with students that have been flagged by Advise Assist for enrollment intervention
 - c) Need to see how other universities are intervening when students fail to enroll—example of Georgia using chat bots
 - d) Determine ways RC can help to monitor results coming out of efforts around campus (like Advise Assist) to determine success
- 4) Next steps
 - a) Missy to ensure all committee members have access to RC Box account
 - b) Missy will place [running document in Box](#) for RC to place specific questions about retention statistics. These questions will be used to place another data request to IR
 - i) RC members to populate their questions
 - c) Missy to send meeting poll for either late fall or early spring

AU Senate Retention Committee

Wednesday February 16, 2024

Location: Virtual

Zoom Link: <https://auburn.zoom.us/j/87283475591>

Video recording: <https://auburn.box.com/s/vt9gd4jkbmkz8hraj0xa362uh4ka1c1n>

AI generated meeting summary: <https://auburn.box.com/s/uznox089l53k79exmp9lsxvyclc87w8w>

Attendees: Melissa Partyka (chair), William Schaffer, Leslie Cordie, Ralph Kingston, Amy Douglas, Jaime Miller, Katherine Hettinger, Jinyan Fan, Ruthie Spiers, Judy Sanders (invited speaker)

Absent: JuWan Robinson, Charles Bringardner, Gunner Smith (student), Carsyn Sieb (student)

- 1) Greetings and —Missy Partyka
- 2) Advise Assist—Judy Sanders and Ruthie Spiers
 - a) Enrollment communication results were shared from the Fall 2023 campaign
 - i) Of 1,887 students that had not registered in the Fall, 1,413 registered after communication from the campaign. 385 did not register though eligible.
 - (1) 74 not registered had received academic warning, indicating potential for attrition.
 - ii) Ongoing discussion about how to reach non-enrolled students and which campus resources may be leveraged. E.g., using the Parent Portal (for financial deadlines), zoom drop-ins with the registrar, and SmartSheet automation between students and the registrar (among others).
 - iii) May need to work on approach students that are disenrolling for financial reasons differently than those that are struggling academically.
- 3) Working with IR data—Missy Partyka
 - a) Shared long discussion had with IR data managers about current data access, data definitions, and more tightly focusing the questions RC is asking of the data.
 - i) Discussion on what is meant by “unmet needs” in the IR data stream and how this might not reflect a student’s ability to pay their living expenses.
 - (1) Further understanding needed on scholarships, outside grants, etc. to be able to fully assess the impact of financial stress on a student’s likelihood of success.
 - ii) Need to define what we mean by student success. Graduation? GPA? Campus engagement?
 - iii) Worked to define people in charge of data access outside of IR.
 - b) Results from analyses in Qlik
 - i) Impact of transfer students and changing majors.
 - ii) IR data suggests that students changing majors multiple times have higher graduation rate, but this could be a product of a small sample size. Students may change to something less challenging or something they enjoy more; working to remove the stigma associated with major changes to be considered.
 - iii) Need to understand different data sets and who needs to be reached to grant permission for access (e.g., scholarships, athletic programs, student activities, etc.)
- 4) Next steps
 - a) Ruthie and Judy with repeat Advise Assist campaign for Spring, report out next meeting.
 - b) Amy to communicate with Michelle Hart about scholarships and Pell eligibility.
 - c) Missy will reach out to Rachel Whitman-Rotch for more information on student suspension appeals and their outcomes.

- d) Amy will also contact Beth Hatcher and Cary Curtiss for insights on Pathway to the Plains program