

Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE)
Meeting Minutes
May 14th, 2026

I. Call to Order

The Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE) was called to order on May 14, 2026, at 9 am. in the Witter's Conference Room in the Booth Library.

Attendees: Bobbi Kingery, Dr. Wade Smith, Dr. Ed Treadwell, Amy Odwarka, Dr. John Blue, Danny Gourley Fischer, Justin Tierney, Josh Norman, Jeremy Alexander, Vicki Phillips, Dr. Cassandra Strawser, Dr. Chris Mitchell, Dr. Michael Gillespie, Dr. Anne Flaherty, Dr. Angela Jacobs

II. Summer Meeting Schedule

- The committee confirmed the following summer CORE meeting dates:
 - June 18th, 2026
 - July 16th, 2026

III. May 1st Advising Day

- Danny recognized Brittany Tierney and the admissions team for coordinating a successful May 1st Advising Day.
- Approximately 34-35 students met with advisors and registered for classes.
- Families and students responded positively to the experience.
- The event provided valuable insight into the technical and advising processes ahead of summer orientation.

IV. PACK Advisor Position Posted

- Danny announced that the PACK advisor position has officially been posted.
- Applications will be reviewed at the end of May.
- Interviews will be conducted over the summer.
- The anticipated start date is September 4th, 2026.
- Vacancy will be for PACK advisor Don Dawson who is retiring on August 31st, 2026.

V. Final Grades Analysis

- Overall undergraduate grade distribution:
 - 48.6% of undergraduate grades were As.
 - 84.7% of undergraduate grades were passing.
- Significant disparities remain among demographic groups.
 - 27.9% of Black/African American students made an A.
- 778 withdrawals (W grades) were recorded for Spring 2026.
- Increased significantly from Fall 2025.
- Spring 2025 had approximately 550 withdrawals.
- Concerns:
 - Financial aid consequences for students.
 - Increased balance and registration holds.
 - Student disengagement and attendance concerns.
- Danny discussed improvements in psychology's retention data and the impact of departmental advising relationships between students and their academic advisors.
 - Psychology retention rate increased approximately 1.1%
 - Psychology freshman retention increased approximately 9.2%

VI. Retention and Registration Reports

- Freshman retention increased approximately 1.6% compared to the previous year around this same time.
- Continued monitoring on:
 - Registration trends.
 - Adult learner registration patterns.
 - Financial barriers that could affect enrollment.

VII. 26-27 Student Success SEP Action Plans

- Approximately 42% of current SEP initiatives focus directly on student success.
- Over 85 initiatives are currently being developed or implemented.
- Josh emphasized the increasing competitiveness of student enrollment across institutions in Illinois and the importance of student experience and retention efforts.
- Committee discussed:

- Using working groups for implementation support.
- Integration with Navigate 360.

VIII. Majors and Minors Database Redesign

- There was discussion on the development of a redesigned majors/minors database
- Project aims to:
 - Centralize academic program information.
 - Improve consistency across:
 - Departmental Websites
 - Catalogs
 - Advising Resources
- Graduate Assistant with Enrollment Management will help with the process.

IX. Residency Requirement Enforcement Update

- Jeremy gave the committee an update regarding second-year housing residency requirement enforcement.
- Students required to live on campus and fail to comply may receive housing charges added to their accounts.
- They are anticipating that there are about 100 or more students who have not signed contracts and remained noncompliant.
- Extensive communication efforts occurred through:
 - StarRes Notification.
 - Emails.
 - Staff conversations with students.

X. Recognition and Retirement Celebration for Vicki Phillips

- A surprise recognition was held honoring Vicki Phillips ahead of her retirement at the end of June 2026.
- Justin Tierney led a toast and acknowledged Vicki's extensive contributions to EIU.
- Justin emphasized that Vicki's reports have shaped many institutional decisions and student success initiatives over the years.

- Committee members expressed appreciation and congratulations for her years of service.

XI. Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, June 18th at 9 am in the Witter's Conference Room in the Booth Library.

~Minutes submitted by Brandy Verdin, Recording Secretary