

Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE)
Meeting Minutes
July 16th, 2026

I. Call to Order

The Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE) was called to order on July 16, 2026, at 9 am. in the Witter's Conference Room in the Booth Library.

Attendees: Bobbi Kingery, Dr. Wade Smith, Amy Odwarka, Dr. John Blue, Justin Tierney, Josh Norman, Jeremy Alexander, Dr. Cassondra Strawser, Dr. Chris Mitchell, Dr. Michael Gillespie, Dr. Jill Rennels-Hutti, Dr. Amber Webb, Jessie Shuemaker, Dr. Amy Rosenstein

II. FY Retention Outlook

- The June CORE meeting was canceled due to the tornado on June 17th, 2026, making this the first retention update in several weeks.
- Daily monitoring of first-year retention continues throughout the summer semester.
- Current first-year retention is ahead, tracking approximately .80% higher than the same time last year.
- Current retention reached 68.5%, surpassing last year's 68.3%.
- The long-term goal is to reach 70% first-year retention.
- Navigate360 will allow more targeted intervention with students who have not registered.
- Transfer retention decreased from 76.7% to 69.3%.

III. Navigate360 Update and Lunch & Learn

- Weekly Lunch & Learn sessions continue throughout the summer.
- Sessions are held via Teams.
- Topics focus on Navigate360 functions and office implementations strategies.
- An internal Navigate360 resource site has been created featuring:
 - Recorded Lunch & Learn sessions
 - Video transcription
 - Step-by-step guides using Scribe subscription
- Academic alerts will launch campus-wide on Navigate360 in August.

- Plan to reintroduce faculty into the new system with Lunch & Learns and training during new faculty orientation.
- Non-teaching staff will have the ability to submit alerts.
- Positive alerts recognizing student success will also be available.
- Offices in Navigate360 as care units:
 - Career Services
 - Dean of Students
 - Academic Support Center
 - Financial Aid
 - Counseling Center
- Additional offices will continue onboarding throughout the academic year.

IV. Retention Symposium

- Dr. Gillespie and Provost Farley discussed moving the annual Retention Symposium from September to late January 2027.
- Current focus on creating a vision and mission for what a Retention Symposium could be for EIU.
- Dr. Gillespie asked committee member for help to develop:
 - Mission
 - Purpose
 - Desired outcomes
 - Long-term vision
- Committee members who volunteered included:
 - Dr. Amy Rosenstein
 - Jeremy Alexander
 - Amy Odwarka
 - Bobbi Kingery

V. Final SEP and Associated Themes

- Josh reviewed the 42 Student Success Initiatives currently included within the Strategic Enrollment Plan.
- It was noted that:

- Several initiatives from previous cycle were never started.
- The committee should prioritize initiatives with the greatest instructional impact.
- Four strategic themes identified:
 - 1. Navigate360 Implementation**
 - Campus-wide redesign of student success processes.
 - Integration across departments
 - Expansion on academic alerts
 - 2. Early Move In & New Student Orientation**
 - Extend onboarding
 - Improved student engagement
 - Additional educational programming before classes starts
 - 3. Career Aspirations & Competencies**
 - Helping students understand career pathways
 - Connecting undergraduate experiences with graduate school preparation
 - 4. Financial Aid Initiatives**
 - Better guidance with SAP requirements and process
 - Enhanced communication with students
 - Summer financial aid improvements
- Some challenges that were presented with New Student Orientation and Early Move-In, including:
 - Housing and Dining operations
 - Staff training schedules
 - Additional student housing cost
- Josh emphasized that while all initiatives are important, these four themes provide the greatest opportunity to improve student success.

VI. Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, August 13th at 9 am in the Witter's Conference Room in the Booth Library.

~Minutes submitted by Brandy Verdin, Recording Secretary

