Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE)
Meeting Minutes
October 22, 2026

I. Call to Order

The Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE) was called to order on October 22, 2026, at 9:00 am. in the Witters Conference Room in the Booth Library.

Attendees: Amy Odwarka, Jeremy Alexander, Dr. Michael Gillespie, Dr. Amber Webb, Jessie Shuemaker, Danny Gourley Fischer, Crystal Brown, Dr. Ed Treadwell, Dr. Ahmed Abou Zaid, Dr. Chris Mitchell, Josh Norman, Justin Tierney

II. Supplement/Additional Course Costs

- Dr. Michael Gillespie provided an update about supplemental and additional course fees.
- The topic has been discussed among the deans and associate deans, and the provost is supportive of moving forward with addressing the issue.
    - There are inconsistencies between the updated IGP 125 and the existing policy outlining the process instructors must follow to obtain department chair approval for supplemental course fees.
- Several Institutional Governance Policies (IGPs) were reviewed, including the most recent version of IGP 125.
- The deans have been tasked with reviewing the supplemental course fees within their respective areas to determine:
    - How many supplemental course fees currently exist.
    - Which fees have received the appropriate approvals.
    - Which fees may need to be updated to comply with the revised IGP.
- The issue is continuing to move forward through administrative discussions, and departments are working to bring existing fees into compliance with the updated policy.

III. Retention Symposium

- Dr. Michael Gillespie shared that planning for the upcoming Retention Symposium is ready to move forward.

- During the summer, Jeremy Alexander, Amy Odwarka, and Bobbi Kingery volunteered to assist with planning the symposium. Amy Rosenstein had also previously been involved but is no longer serving on the committee.
- Michael asked whether the previous volunteers were still interested in participating and whether additional committee members would be willing to assist.
- Amber Webb also volunteered to participate, bringing the planning group to five members.
- The committee discussed the importance of expanding campus involvement in retention efforts, particularly among faculty and staff who do not traditionally take part in retention initiatives.
- Members emphasized that students increasingly need additional guidance, support, and assistance navigating the university. The symposium should encourage employees across campus to recognize their role in student retention and develop ways to support students beyond their individual departmental responsibilities.
- One idea discussed was establishing a campus-wide culture in which every university employee serves as a trusted person students can approach when they need assistance.

IV. PACK Week 5 Progress Reports

- Danny Gourley Fischer presented an analysis of the Week 5 progress reports, with particular attention to outcomes for PACK students.
- The report also included student-athletes and HOPE Scholars to reduce the number of separate requests being sent to faculty.
- The overall faculty response rate was approximately 53%, compared to the typical response rate of 60–70%.
- Participation may have been affected by changes made to communication settings intended to reduce unnecessary email notifications.
- These adjustments inadvertently affected the progress-reporting process. When faculty attempted to identify a student as being at risk of failing a course, the available options only included positive indicators, such as good attendance and meaningful participation.
    - As a result, some faculty selected inaccurate positive indicators while reporting students at risk, while others chose not to submit the report.

- Danny noted that these technical issues were not the fault of faculty and should be considered when interpreting the results.
- The report included 534 faculty responses, with 455 containing an actual grade.
- Faculty did not have the option to report Credit/No Credit grades through Navigate. They were required to select an A–F grade or leave the grade unreported.
- Although this limitation may have affected the number of reported failing grades, Danny noted that only approximately 2.5% of all grades reported during Fall 2025 were No Credit.
- Danny also shared preliminary midterm grade information indicating that only 37.6% of grades reported for PACK students were passing.
- The Week 5 passing rate for Fall 2026 was 51%, compared to 59% during the previous fall.
- It was reported that approximately 40% of PACK students had not yet scheduled a meeting with advising, even if some had not yet missed an appointment.
- The program currently serves approximately 153 students with about half the staffing it had when the program served roughly 200–250 students.
- It was noted that vacancies, onboarding demands, and the loss of front-end administrative support have reduced the time available to reach students who are not engaging with services.

V. CORE Working Groups

- The committee revisited potential working groups.
    - **Person of Trust**
        - Group works to define practical ways faculty and staff can become trusted points of contact for students and connect students with campus resources.
        - Members: Amy Odwarka, Josh Norman, Crystal Brown, and Dr. Ahmed Abou Zaid
- **Executive Functioning and Student Stability**
    - Group will work to develop resources and training materials to help students strengthen their executive functioning skills.

    - Developing a guide to train student employees and graduate students to work with students on executive functioning skills.
    - Members: Jessie Shuemaker, Bobbi Kingery, and Dr. Ed Treadwell.
- **Housing Curriculum / Break-Low Programming**
    - Group will work on connecting housing-related programming with broader student success and retention initiatives.
    - Members: Jeremy Alexander and Danny Gourley Fischer

VI. Next Meeting

Our next meeting will be on Thursday, December 17 at 9:00 am in the Witters Conference Room in Booth Library.

~Minutes submitted by Brandy Verdin, Recording Secretary