

An aerial photograph of a large, multi-story brick building with a prominent white portico supported by columns. The portico has a pediment with the words "SIENA COLLEGE" inscribed on it. In the background, a tall white tower with a golden dome and a cross on top rises above the roofline. The building is surrounded by green trees and a clear blue sky with some clouds. The text "Equity in Retention & Graduation Recommendations" is overlaid in large, bold, yellow letters across the middle of the image.

# Equity in Retention & Graduation Recommendations

**Student Retention and Success Committee  
Fall 2022**

## The Challenge: Achieving Equity in Retention and Graduation

Retention/Graduation Key Performance Measure	Baseline Gap
Year 2 to year 3 retention rates for female white students and female students of color	5.2% (Average gap for F12 to F18 first-time, full-time cohorts)
Year 4 graduation rates for female white students and female students of color	10.3% (Average gap for F12 to F16 first-time, full-time cohorts)
Year 2 to year 3 retention rates for male white students and male students of color	7.9% (Average gap for F12 to F18 first-time, full-time cohorts)
Year 4 graduation rates for male white students and male students of color	14.7% (Average gap for F12 to F16 first-time, full-time cohorts)

## Key takeaways from the Equity in Retention Academy

- Persistent inequities in student outcomes are caused by systemic problems that need to be addressed with comprehensive solutions
- Solutions should increase sense of belonging in every aspect of the student experience
- “The bottom line is learning. No learning, no credit, no retention”— John Gardner

## The SRSC Recommends that Siena College...

- Adopt a retention statement with a focus on equity and inclusion to guide our student retention and success initiatives.
- Review all policies to identify obstacles to equity and inclusion and revise policies as necessary to correct these issues.
- Replace “academic probation” with a name that will reduce stigma and encourage active student participation in the academic recovery process.
- Identify and promote equitable and inclusive pedagogical and curricular practices.
- Develop and implement a bridge program for future first-generation, first-year students and assess the need for continued services for rising sophomores.

## The SRSC Recommends that Siena College...

- Ensure that our faculty academic advisors are fully equipped and supported to provide effective and equitable advising services.
- Design and implement a peer mentoring program to support students in their first and second years.
- Invest in a student retention and success software system to improve our early alert, case management, and communication processes.
- Develop and implement an emergency aid fund to provide funds in unexpected, emergency situations that may cause a student to withdraw from the College.
- Redesign the withdrawal process for students who indicate that they are withdrawing for financial reasons.

## Siena College Equity in Retention Statement

*Each student brings a unique set of experiences and perspectives that strengthen our community. The diversity of the students of Siena College enriches our academic endeavors and all aspects of the Siena experience. We strive to create and develop a welcoming and inclusive culture that engenders a sense of belonging for all students and to provide comprehensive, personalized support from admission to graduation and beyond. Each individual student deserves the specific resources they need to succeed at Siena. We work to identify and eliminate systemic barriers to student retention and success and aim to achieve and maintain equity in student outcomes, reflecting the mission statement and core values of the College.* - **Approved by Cabinet, added to the SRSC charge and SASE home page, reported to the SSC of the Board**

## Policy Review

- Ensure that Siena College policies are framed with inclusive language and impact students fairly and equitably
- Adopt a framework for reviewing College policies from an equity perspective – **Will be ready for review by the first SRSC meeting in January**
- High priority policy review and recommendations in 2023
- Replace “Academic Probation” with a name that will reduce stigma and encourage active participation in the academic recovery process – **Change to “Academic Notice” approved by BOI**

## Curricular and Pedagogical Best Practices

- The SRSC recommendations are meant to inform and support the work of the Faculty Development Coordinator – **Meeting tomorrow**
- Identify and encourage utilization of best practices: identify professional development opportunities, host faculty and student workshops and forums, create online repository of resources, create a metric to track progress in adoption of inclusive teaching practices
- Identify and design solutions for barriers to participation in high impact, experiential learning opportunities – **Initial list of barriers completed by HIP group**

## Summer Bridge Program

- HEOP model as a starting point for creating an asset-based bridge program for a larger population of students
- Provide first year students and rising sophomores with support for academics, emotional wellness, social connections, and leadership skills – **Initial planning meetings with ASC, HEOP, SEED, Community Living, Athletics, Writing Center, and International Programs held in November**

## Academic Advising Practices

- Identify and deliver training on inclusive advising practices for faculty advisors in 2022 – 2023 – **“Inclusive Advising To Improve The Advising Relationship & Support Student Success” webinar in November**
- Review staffing models in the ASC and School offices to support an enhanced advising program, to include: ongoing training, balanced caseloads, assessment, tailored support for special populations, and recognition of excellence in faculty academic advising
- Review and revise faculty status guidelines and faculty handbook to increase emphasis on academic advising

## Peer Mentoring

- A group led by Fr. Bob Sandoz is working on the tactic to “Invest in a systematic approach to student mentorship that addresses pandemic-related deficiencies and improves retention, engagement and satisfaction” – **Fall 2022: Identifying current mentoring opportunities, strengths & gaps**
- The SRSC recommends the implementation of a peer mentoring program for first- and second-year students to facilitate the transition to college, reduce anxiety, and promote a sense of belonging
- Focus should be on building on success of existing peer mentoring programs and on strong matches between mentors and mentees

## Retention Software

- SKIPS and other homegrown early alert processes are limited by very basic technologies
- Contemporary retention software systems provide colleges and universities with advanced capabilities in risk analytics, early alerts and “kudos”, note-keeping and documentation, cross-functional case management, attendance tracking, and appointment scheduling
- Work with ITS to review/demo options during Fall 2022 – **EAB Navigate demo in November; initial meeting with Anthology Beacon next week**

## Emergency Aid Fund

- The fund will be used to support students with urgent financial needs related to utilities, housing, food, medical/dental, transportation, child/elder care
- Rapid disbursement of funds is critical

**Review and approval process developed within Financial Aid; Development has asked for estimated dollars/year needed**

## Withdrawal Process

- Under the current process, students can complete the withdrawal process for financial reasons without ever meeting with Financial Aid
- The process should be redesigned to ensure that 100% of students who indicate that they are withdrawing for financial reasons are invited and encouraged to meet with Financial Aid before the withdrawal process is completed – **New automated process outline sent to ITS; awaiting information on timeline for implementation**

## SRSC Next Steps

- Support for implementation of approved actions
- Completion of additional recommendations for commuter and transfer support, student social engagement, mental health support, inclusive campus culture, financial support beyond the emergency interventions, and expansion of existing programs such as HEOP and SEED.
- Monitoring of metrics such as semester-to-semester retention, withdrawals and withdrawal survey results, grade distributions, probation, and dismissals

**Proposed reporting schedule ready to discuss with OIE**