Student Ready: Faculty Quick Guide

Our Commitment: We pledge to be "student ready" by supporting our students from the moment they arrive, and shifting our focus from expecting them to be "college-ready" to proactively equipping ourselves to *meet them* with the competencies and practices needed for success.

Why act early?

- **Instructor-initiated early alerts**, personal communication, and follow-through significantly impacts persistence.
- **Developing classroom community and a sense of belonging** helps students (especially first generation) remain engaged and succeed.
- **Active learning**, beginning with the first class meeting, increases interest, motivation, and improves learning (explain syllabus near the end of class 1).

Core messages to deliver early and often

- **"You belong here."** We admitted you because we believe you can succeed. Everyone starts with questions, and we'll tackle them together.
- **"Skills grow with practice."** Learning takes effort, it is necessary to put in the time; mistakes are data that lead to improved learning, not verdicts on self-worth.
- **"Help-seeking = strength."** Tutoring, coaching, advising, and office hours (student hours) are what successful students use.
- **"We move fast."** Missing a week puts you two weeks behind—show up, stay current by preparing for class. Communicate when you are struggling or have questions. Here is how to prepare for class... (be specific).

Early-Alert Checklist (Week 0–3)

- Administer diagnostic writing sample, math quiz, bio pre-test (insert your content here) ...ungraded or very low stakes...in the first week or two.
- Log names of students scoring in bottom 25%. Crosscheck with attendance to prioritize your outreach.
- Send "You can do this—let's plan" message & recommend support session.
- Flag to advisor and success coaches on the day of the behavior if two absences **or** two zeros. Use Starfish and be specific in notes.

High-Impact Touchpoints

- **First Class** – Begin with something on topic and engaging to create interest (e.g., a question or problem), *then* explain syllabus in plain language; invite questions about policies and time demands. *Engage early & make the "hidden rules" explicit.*
- **Week 2 -** Collect one-paragraph (100 words?) "goal statement"; hand back with individualized "wise feedback." *Build growth mindset & rapport.*

- **Just before first mid-term -** 10-min study skills mini-lesson: share how top students pre-test themselves. *Shift study habits to evidence-based practices.*
- **Last week -** Share data on class improvement; ask students to write advice to next cohort. *Close loop, reinforce mastery narratives.*

High Impact Classroom Behaviors That Boost Persistence and Learning

- **Name & notice.** *Learn student's names!* Stand in the hall as they enter to greet them, share brief conversation; email/DM any student after *one absence or missed assignment.* ... "we missed you in class today, here is what you need to do..."
- **Activity in every class.** Think-pair-share, quick write, poll, problem-solving... engage students with content and with each other to the greatest extent possible.
- **Frequent low-stakes checks.** Problems every week; short quizzes every 2 or 3 weeks; review together; drop the lowest score(s).
- **Fast feedback.** Return work in a week or less when possible; invite revision for partial credit. Timely feedback is critical for learning.
- **Normalize resources.** Build "visit the Writing Center or use tutoring services" into an assignment...ditch "participation points" and replace with points for office hours visit.

Learning Strategies to Model & Require

- **Retrieval over rereading:** Start and end classes with retrieval practice activities. Suggest that students create 5–7 self-test questions after each study session.
- **Spaced practice:** Small, daily sets beat marathon cram sessions. Share a sample schedule. Model in class by including one question from yesterday, last week, last month at the beginning or end of class.
- **Concrete note-making:** Two-column notes or concept maps; review with a 1-minute summary. *Be explicit about exactly what is to be learned.*
- **Exam wrappers:** After each test, reflect with students on preparation: *What worked? What should I change?*
- **Group problem-solving:** Require at least one shared solution (whiteboard, Google Doc, in person) weekly, build group interaction into each class.

Rapid Response Phrases for Common Moments

- "I want to be sure I'm saying your name correctly, can you teach me?" (belonging)
- "I see you're stuck. Let's work one step back." (scaffolding)
- "Tell me out loud how you tried that problem." (metacognition)
- "Office hours aren't for emergencies; pick a slot now so we meet before the exam." (normalizes help)
- "Let's turn that mistake into a practice question for the class." (uses error as learning opportunity)

"Learning results from what the student does and thinks, *and only* from what the student does and thinks." -- Elliott Dunlap Smith, late provost and professor, Carnegie-Mellon University