

Student Affairs Report November 22, 2024

Agenda Item #1: Dashboard

Information
 Action
 Discussion

Table 1.A. First-to-Second Year Retention Rate

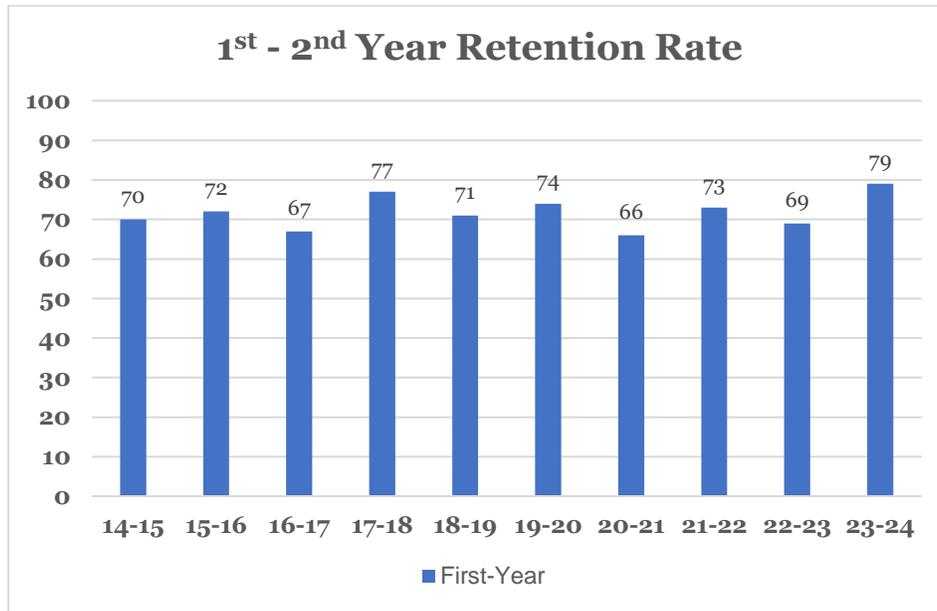


Table 1.B. Retention Rates by Demographic Characteristics

	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
1st – 2nd Year All	77%	71%	74%	66%	73%	69%	79%
Male	76.0%	68.2%	70. 5%	65.0%	71.0%	65.4%	82.4%
Female	77.8%	73.1%	77. 2%	69.8%	73.0%	73.1%	75.7%
First-Generation	71.8%	67.0%	69. 3%	**	**	**	56.4%
Not First-Generation	82.2%	74.9%	80. 7%	**	**	**	86.9%
Low-Income	68.4%	63.9%	71. 9%	57.5%	64.1%	63.7%	75%
Not Low-Income	87.4%	79.5%	77. 5%	80.2%	78.8%	75.7%	84.6
Native American	68%	69%	54. 6%	80%	100%	57.1%	*

Source: IPEDS, LSSU Institutional Research

*Census day is October 1.

Table 1.C. Housing Occupancy for Fall 2024

Hall	Capacity	Student Occupants	Staff Occupants	Empty	% Occupied
Brady	181	120		61	66.3%
Chippewa East	11	7		4	63.6%
Chippewa West	10	5		5	50%
Easterday East	7	2		5	28.6%
Easterday West	7	4		3	57.1%
Erie North	10	3		7	30%
Erie South	10	6		4	60%
Hillside North	9	0		9	0%
Hillside South	9	0		9	0%
Huron East	11	5		6	45.5%
Huron West	11	4		7	36.4%
Laker	13	11		2	84.6%
Moloney	67	26	5	36	46.3%
Neveu	39	21	2	16	59%
Ontario East	10	0		10	0%
Ontario West	12	0		12	0%
Osborn Large	171	96		79	56.1%
Osborn Small	55	0		55	0%
Student Village	268	135	1	133	50.4%
Townhouse	120	77	6	37	69.2%
TOTAL	1,031	522	14	458	52%

Source: University Housing Office

Suggested Action/Motion:

N/A

President's Recommendation:

N/A



Student Affairs Report November 22, 2024

Agenda Item #2: Retention

Information

Action

Discussion

Purpose:

This report gives an overview retention for first-to-second-year students between Fall 2023-Fall 2024.

Background:

The first-to-second-year retention rate is a key performance indicator for Lake Superior State University. Our strategic plan lists a 75% retention rate in Goal 1.3 and Strategy 3.2.8. The retention rate is the percentage of first time in any college (FTIAC) students entering the university in the summer or fall at a full-time, bachelor’s degree-seeking status return the subsequent fall semester.

Table 2.A. LSSU Retention Rates, 10-Year History

	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
1st–2nd Year	70%	72%	67%	77%	71%	74%	66%	73%	69%	79%

Table 2.A. shows the ten-year data trend for first-to-second-year retention. The most recent retention rate for the cohort that began in Fall 2023 and returned to LSSU in Fall 2024 is 79%. This retention rate marks a 10% year-over-year improvement and represents the highest retention rate at LSSU in at least the last 10 years.

There is a range of efforts across campus to boost retention, so it is difficult to pinpoint the biggest reason (or reasons) for such a jump. Among causes for the increase may be broader participation in tutoring services, a successful athletics season for Men’s Basketball, and the transition to new presidential leadership. Additional speculation beyond our control was a less harsh winter season that may have factored in students’ decisions to stay at LSSU.

The Fall 2023 cohort was the first to have the benefit of the Michigan Achievement Scholarship (MAS), which provided \$5,500 of “free” state financial support. A key stipulation of retaining this scholarship is to remain continuously enrolled.

Table 2.B. Male/ Female Retention Rates

	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
1st – 2nd Year All	77%	71%	74%	66%	73%	69%	79%
Male	76.0%	68.2%	70. 5%	65.0%	71.0%	65.4%	82.4%
Female	77.8%	73.1%	77. 2%	69.8%	73.0%	73.1%	75.7%

The gender breakdown is near parity for the Fall 2023 cohort (49.8% female, 48.4% male). The male retention rate shows a significant year-over-year increase between the Fall 2022 cohort and Fall 2023 cohort, also showing the highest retention rate of either male or female students since at least 2017. That males were retained at a higher percentage than females is also uncommon when comparing to the national trends that show female students typically being retained at higher rates. Two factors that may have prompted some of the variation for the new cohort – beyond what was noted above – is the higher prevalence of male mentors in the Laker Success program and the number of male participants outpacing female students in Laker Success support programming over the last two years (academic years 2022-23 and 2023-24).

Table 2.C. First-Generation/ Not First-Generation Retention Rates

	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
1st – 2nd Year All	77%	71%	74%	66%	73%	69%	79%
First-Generation	71.8%	67.0%	69.3%	**	**	**	56.4%
Not First-Generation	82.2%	74.9%	80.7%	**	**	**	86.9%

First-generation students are those whose parents do not have a postsecondary degree. These students may more frequently experience challenges at university because of less familiarity with processes in their family or support network (sometimes referred to as social capital). The Fall 2023 cohort consisted of 12.1% first-generation and 87.9% not first-generation students. LSSU first-generation retention rates are historically lower than not first-generation students and are also historically lower than the general first to second-year cohort retention (*cf. Table 2.C*). Though an important key performance indicator, it is important to note that, like other descriptors of students, first-generation status is not monolithic or able define all students who are considered first-generation.

Table 2.D. Low-Income/ Not Low-Income Retention Rates

	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24
1st – 2nd Year All	77%	71%	74%	66%	73%	69%	79%
Low-Income	68.4%	63.9%	71.9%	57.5%	64.1%	63.7%	75%
Not Low-Income	87.4%	79.5%	77.5%	80.2%	78.8%	75.7%	84.6

Students from first-generation and low-income backgrounds are among students at higher risk of not being retained. Data in Table 2.D show that students from low-income backgrounds (i.e., recipients of Pell Grants and federal direct subsidized loans) were retained at lower rates than students who are not low-income and the general population, though the rate of retention was notably higher than the preceding year (over 11% points) and higher than at least any year dating to the Fall 2017 cohort.

The race/ ethnicity identifier was not a usable variable in looking at the Fall 2023 FTIAC cohort. For just over 98% of the incoming population, the race/ ethnicity variable was “unknown,” and we are not able to mandate reporting of one’s race/ ethnicity. Such an absence for this variable makes race/ethnicity retention measurement impossible with this data set.

Anecdotally, self-identification among university students is often left unanswered or as not wishing to identify.

One final variable of some interest is the comparison of on-campus residents to commuting students. The rates of retention were near parity with 78% for on-campus students and 80% for off-campus students. When interpreting this comparison, it is worth noting that nearly 77% of the Fall 2023 cohort was on-campus.

Suggested Action/Motion:

N/A

President's Recommendation:

N/A



Student Affairs Report
November 22, 2024

Agenda Item #3: Student Affairs Update

Information Action Discussion

Purpose:

This item provides a general update of Student Affairs operations and programs.

Background:

The Division of Student Affairs works to create a greater sense of belonging and community among all students, faculty, and staff. Among top priorities for the Division are increasing retention from first-to-second year and promoting persistence to graduation, generating revenue through auxiliary units, boosting student engagement, and collaborating across campus to support students' needs.

Retention & Engagement

The Laker Success Program received its annual awarded \$102,796 allocation from the Michigan KCP/4S grant. In alignment with the grant's goal of improving graduation rates and improving student success, particularly among students from Michigan with lower-income backgrounds. Laker Success serves as a major driver of retention. The grant supports multiple professional and student staff members. The program employs a peer mentoring model and has demonstrated significant value to LSSU's retention efforts.

Laker Success is based in the Student Engagement Center of the Cislser Center. Weekly programming like "Donut Stress Monday," at which donuts are available for those who stop in, has become a mainstay for many students and has also raised awareness about Laker Success. Through programming consistency, increased marketing, and greater awareness of Laker Success, monthly visitors increased from an average of 130 to 268, a 106% improvement.

Each of the 11 peer mentors are responsible for planning and putting on programming during the academic year. They are also assigned mentees who refer themselves for support or who are referred as part of an early alert process. The early alert is solicited by Laker Success on a regular cadence throughout the academic year, though instructors can create an alert at any point. Early alerts typically draw attention to a student who is underperforming in a class or who is exhibiting concerning behavior. The cause of the early alert determines whether a Laker Success mentor or an Academic Success staff member works with the student.

At the writing of this report, Laker Success received 120 early alerts. This total already exceeds last year’s entire fall semester total by 35%, with half of November still to go. Early Alerts received are as follows:

Table 3.A. Early Alert Submissions

	Fall 2024	Fall 2023	Δ
August	0	0	-
September	22	25	-12%
October	67	49	36%
November	31	15	106%
December	n/a	0	-
Total	120	89	35%

An early alert triggers a process that entails Laker Success contacting the student to offer support and resources. Based on the need identified, the support and/ or resources the students can access may come from Academic Success Center or Laker Success.

The Office of Campus Life (OCL) is a primary driver of campus engagement and creates enjoyable programming that fosters a strong sense of community across campus. The work of the OCL is predicated on the belief that building a vibrant and inclusive environment is key to enriching the student experience.

The OCL participated in Great Lake State Weekend (GLSW), hosting its third annual (rubber) Duck Hunt, Community Graffiti, and Face Painting activities. The Campus Life social media campaign was a success. Community graffiti had 68 guests participate by leaving their mark on giant canvases. Face painting served approximately 58 students, community members, and out of town family members of all ages. OCL hosted Fall Fest in the Norris Center, following a women’s volleyball match and the Bedlam in Bud Cooper event. The Office also held a Halloween Costume Contest, open to all students and employees. Over the balance of the semester and into the spring, Campus Life will hold:

1. Holiday Tree Lighting and Caroling on Pleger Commons
2. Holiday Tree Decorating Contest (departments engaging in friendly competition)
3. Mini-Lakerpalooza at the beginning of the spring term
4. Snowman Burn on March 20, 2025
5. Anchors Aweigh – the final bash before students hoist anchor and depart for the summer.

Housing & Residence Life

Opening occupancy for Fall 2024 was 522 students, a delta of -89 students, or -14.6%. As seen in Table 1.C., there are several staff members occupying on-campus units. Because of the reduced number of occupants in the residence halls, multiple areas in the Housing portfolio were left vacant to create savings where possible. The locations left vacant are B Tower in the Student Village (maximum 63 beds), “small side” of Osborn Hall (maximum 55 beds), Ontario Hall (maximum 22 beds), and Hillside House (maximum 20 beds).

Ontario Hall and Hillside House have been fully winterized and are in unoccupied mode. “Small side” of Osborn and B Tower have both been used to host visiting school groups for overnight stays. Such stays generate modest revenue, though not to a level that fully offsets occupied rooms. For all the locations noted above, we anticipate savings to include custodial labor, maintenance supplies, repairs, and utilities.

Mr. Derric Knight assumed the role of Director of Housing and Residence Life in mid-October. Derric is an alumnus of LSSU and was an LSSU employee for many years. After a year away, Derric returned to the Director's role. Derric is planning to launch a Laker Residential experience and continue building Greek life in campus housing (Easterday House is currently home to seven students in Greek Life; they want to build on their population). He will be revising the policies applicable to campus housing on at least an annual basis to ensure alignment with good practice and applicability. The Learning Communities in the Row Houses will receive renewed attention to determine how best to take advantage of the unique living environment of the Houses while filling them.

Looking ahead to academic year 2025-2026, Dr. Beazley and Derric Knight plan to fill the residence halls in a way that is efficient, meets student needs, and will maximize occupancy. Moreover, they will gauge potential community interest for renting units in the housing portfolio. This could mean repeating what has been done this year with B Tower and Ontario Hall; it may also translate to merging two Row House communities into one (e.g., Chemistry with Cannabis Chemistry) if houses are not filled by the occupying programs. Additional consideration includes a potential segmenting of Townhouse units for rent with partners like MyMichigan Hospital - Sault and the US Coast Guard Sector Sault. MyMichigan already leases two units for students on rotations.

Wellness Services

Mr. Mark Senkus started in his role as Manager of Counseling Services on November 4, 2024. Mr. Senkus is an LSSU alumnus who remained in Sault Ste. Marie after graduating. With over 30 years as a clinical social worker, Mr. Senkus will supervise the Counseling Services staff and provide clinical counseling.

The Health Care Center added Abigail (Abby) Parker, FNP-BC as a new part-time provider. She sees patients two days a week. An alumna of LSSU, Abby recently obtained her Family Nurse Practitioner degree from Northern Michigan University and is pursuing a doctoral degree in Nursing, also at Northern Michigan University. Abby is an adjunct instructor in LSSU's Nursing Program and works part-time at MyMichigan Hospital Sault Emergency Department. Dr. Jon Sommers, a full-time Nursing faculty member who had been serving as a part-time practitioner, remains active in the Health Care Center on a limited basis. His time in the clinic is now in the company of nursing students who are completing their clinical rotations.

Suggested Action/Motion:

N/A

President's Recommendation:

N/A