



## Enrollment Management & Student Success Report May 15, 2026

### Agenda Item #1: Admissions & Marketing Updates

Information

Action

Discussion

#### Purpose:

The purpose of this information is to present an integrated update on student recruitment and pre-college programs, admissions conversion and yield efforts, and marketing initiatives that build awareness and move prospects from inquiry to application to enrollment for Fall 2026 and beyond. It summarizes current activities, early results, and next steps across outreach, pre-college pipelines, communication and referral strategies, and branded content and media so leadership can monitor progress and align resources.

#### Background:

##### Admissions Comparison Overview: Fall 2026

As of February 3, 2026, Fall 2026 undergraduate applications total 1,816, reflecting a 12.4% decrease from the same time last year (2,072). The majority of the decline is among First-Time in College (FTIC) applicants, down from 1,916 in 2025 to 1,686 in 2026. The number of admitted students for Fall 2026 stands at 1,288, which is slightly below the 1,640 admits at this time last year.

#### Notably:

- Incomplete applications have increased to 505 in 2026, up from 404 in 2025.
- Graduate and non-degree applicants remain minimal, with FTIC and transfer students comprising over 98% of the applicant pool.
- The percentage of admitted students remains strong, particularly among FTIC applicants (73%), though transfer admits have dropped from 55 to 42.

These data reinforce the importance of continued communication, yield strategies, and scholarship incentives to move admits to enrolled students in the coming weeks

#### Recruiting & Pre-College Programs:

Since the last Board meeting, significant progress has been made in strengthening the recruiting team. Cory Walters has been hired as the Southwest Michigan recruiter, bringing extensive experience and strong connections within the engineering and FIRST Robotics community. Since starting, Cory has logged the highest number of high school visits across all territories, demonstrating immediate impact and momentum in his region.

Momentum in outreach and engagement continues to build. Since the last update, the team has completed:

- 81 high school visits
- 38 fairs and community events

- 2,000+ combined student outreach touchpoints (emails and texts)
- 150+ counselor touchpoints

The recruitment strategy has expanded through participation in both long-standing and new high-impact events, including Business Professionals of America (BPA), HOSA, SkillsUSA, History Day, and FIRST Robotics Competitions. These events provide strong engagement opportunities and allow for connections with students in interactive and meaningful ways.

An AI sourcing and recruitment agent will be beta tested with 100 name-buy seniors from Michigan. After a week of testing, a larger group of name buys from ICP1 will be sent to the AI Agent.

A key focus at this stage in the cycle has been converting admitted students into enrolled students. The team is intentionally prioritizing orientation and housing registrations as the next critical step in the enrollment funnel. As of April 30, 89 students are registered for Fall Orientation, with continued efforts underway to grow that number.

Additionally, Laker Decision Day on April 11 was a success, with over 30 students in attendance, plus guests. The event resulted in strong engagement and yielded immediate conversions, particularly in orientation and housing sign-ups.

#### **Pre-College Update:**

The team is actively wrapping up the Spring semester and shifting focus toward Fall enrollment. Staff have been visiting schools to assist with applications and registrations, anticipating a strong turnout of students.

Currently, approximately 70 students are enrolled for the upcoming Fall semester. Recent outreach efforts have included:

- Brimley Parent Night (April 26)
- Sault High School (two visits), plus one more registration day and Sault High Decision Day on May 1st
- Rudyard High School

Additional school visits and program outreach efforts are planned in the coming weeks to continue building enrollment and the pipeline for future full-time Lakers.

#### **Admissions, Outreach, & Yield:**

Multiple high-engagement events were hosted, including:

- Canadian Showcase at GFL Memorial Gardens with strong reception from students, families, and educators
- Basketball Academic Showcase connecting with local attendees at LSSU games
- Hockey Academic Showcase (25 attendees) featuring academics, tours, and access with Coach Damon Whitten
- Upcoming events include the Spring Open House on May 16, with 9 registered and ongoing promotion.

Orientation development and early engagement:

- Fall orientations launched (on-campus + virtual options in June, July, and August)
- 89 student registrations to date

Campus visits:

- 274 group tour visitors
- Rudyard HS – 15 Students
- Lakeview HS – 15 students
- Trenton Prep – 54 students
- Forrest Park HS – 25 students
- Bay Area/Saginaw Robotics – 26 students
- Grand Traverse Academy – 56 students
- Momentum Academy – 25 students
- Inland Lakes HS – 43 students
- JKL Career Readiness – 15 students
- 90 individual visitors (with families)
- Community and pipeline development:
- Hosted History Day for EUP students on campus with the EUPISD

Strategic communications:

- Focused campaigns for housing applications and orientation registration
- Implementation of AI-driven ICPs (Individualized Communication Plans)
- Financial Aid/Scholarship campaigns created and sent to students

**University Marketing:**

Social Media:

- Facebook:
  - KPIs Since last BOT meeting:
    - 907,604 Views (down 3%)
    - 434 1-minute views (UP 2,613%!)
      - People are staying on the page longer!
    - 16,845 Followers (up 1.3% past period)
- Instagram:
  - KPIs Since last BOT meeting:
    - 442,100 Views (down 0.8%)
    - 63.2k Reach (up 37.6%)
    - 9,900 Interactions (up 51.2%)
    - 1.7k Link Clicks (up 330.4%)
    - 5.6k Visits (up 7.1%)
  - Followers are shown to be most active at 3pm according to IG insights, signifying positive reach to current and prospective students.
  - Stand-Out Stats:
    - Content Interactions up 35.5% YOY
    - Published Content up 11.2% YOY
    - Reach up 62.4% YOY
- TikTok:
  - Since last BOT meeting:
  - Video Views: 29,873 (up 39.55% YOY)
  - Reach: 22,350 (up 54.94% YOY)

Online Request Forms:

- Requests completed since the last BOT meeting:

- Graphics: 79
- Photography: 18
- Social media: 6
- Established two new online requests forms:
  - Headshot Request Form: Available for faculty, staff, and students. Ensures studio access and efficiency.
  - Laker Lens: UGC incentivization project. Form established and available online. Monthly highlights and prizes to follow.

#### Public Relations:

- Media Outreach:
  - 1,794 messages sent throughout period
  - KPIs:
    - 44% Open Rate (national average 29.5%, high-performing targeted PR outreach averages 40-50%, LSSU average 25%). Signifies positive targeting and media list curation.
    - 4.9% Click-To-Open Rate (National average 6.1%, LSSU historic average 0.8%). Shows engaging outreach.
    - 0.3% Unsubscribe Rate

#### Stand-Out Events:

- LSSU Ren Faire
- Snowman Burn
- Laker Decision Day
- Professional Simulation
- Music Department Concerts
- Senior Symposium
- Nursing Pinning
- Engineering Senior Projects
- Golden Grads Brunch
- LSB Senior Night
- Commencement

#### Additional Projects:

- Implementing our new family communication tool “Laker Family Hub” powered by CampusESP, which will launch May 20 and provide parents/guardians/families with important information through the admissions process and for current students.
- Updated imagery across the site
- Revised marketing webpage for ease of use
- Public announcement assurance
- Revised Scholarship materials and web pages
- Career Readiness & Networking Class Headshots Visit
- Creation of a shared drive featuring up-to-date materials and visuals for recruiting staff to utilize
- Laker Family Hub development and page creation
- Ongoing conversations with vendors for virtual tour, digital marketing, and updated campus map
- **CLC Collaboration:** Analysis of current branding and licenses, creation of updated artsheet for licensed product variation, creation of mascot logo.
- Recruitment Materials Update: Print materials for each school and tabling banners

- **Equipment Refresh:** Updated camera body, lens, and accessories; improved headshot lighting; smaller branded backdrop for headshots and general use.
- **360 Camera:** Utilized to create panoramic or 360 content, which can be interactive. This style of content is required to facilitate the creation of a virtual tour.
- **Lake State Bound:** Continued marketing efforts behind the 'Lake State Bound' initiative. Signage dispensed during Laker Decision Day. Individual logos created and printed onto shirts for general students and each EUPISD school. SAHS are completed and were given out during their decision day event 5/1/26. Remaining shirts are actively in production for use during upcoming orientations. Not tied just to prospective students. Once a Laker, you are always 'Lake State Bound'.

**Suggested Action/Motion:**

N/A

**President's Recommendation:**

N/A



## Enrollment Management & Student Success Report May 15, 2026

### Agenda Item #1: Update to Proof of English Proficiency Standards for International Undergraduate Admission

Information

Action

Discussion

#### Purpose:

The purpose of this agenda item is to formally update Proof of English Proficiency for international undergraduate admission to Lake Superior State University so that changes in international placement scores be tied to national equivalences, with the Registrar serving as the final decision-maker. This change ensures alignment between Duolingo, IELTS, TOEFL and other Proof of English Proficiency exams while also creating a more nimble approval process for future testing changes.

#### Background:

As part of its international undergraduate admissions process, Lake Superior State University accepts several standardized English proficiency exams, including the TOEFL iBT, IELTS, and Duolingo English Test (DET). These scores help ensure that admitted students possess sufficient English proficiency to succeed academically.

Until now, the minimum DET score for admission has been 85, based on a previous concordance scale that equated this score with a TOEFL iBT score of approximately 61. However, in 2024, Duolingo released a revised scoring scale. According to the updated conversion matrix, a DET score of 85 now corresponds to a TOEFL iBT score of just 47–52, well below the university's accepted TOEFL threshold of 61.

In addition, in January 2026, TOEFL completely revamped their English proficiency exam. With these quick changes across testing platforms, a nimbler approval process for international student admissions is needed. Tying future score requirements to national equivalences and empowering the Registrar as the final decision maker will allow the university to adapt quickly to standardized testing updates.

#### Suggested Action/Motion:

The President recommends that the Board approve updated admissions policy tying changes in international placement scores to national equivalences, with the Registrar serving as the final decision maker.

#### President's Recommendation:

Approval of the presented motion.



## Enrollment Management & Student Success Report May 15, 2026

### Agenda Item #3: Financial Aid Updates

Information

Action

Discussion

#### Purpose:

The purpose of this information is to provide an update on financial aid operations, compliance activities, and staffing.

#### Background:

The Financial Aid Office has operated while working through ongoing staffing changes. For a period of time, the office has had only a director and a temporary staff member available to manage processing and daily operations. In addition, Financial Aid has partnered with College Aid Services (CAS) with two consultants to support technology and improvements. This partnership is being extended for

Recruitment efforts for two Financial Aid Advisors is wrapping up, with two offers extended for open positions, One candidate has accepted, and a second candidate is expected to provide a decision by Friday.

Summer financial aid has been successfully processed for approximately 150 students, supporting continued enrollment and academic progress during the summer term.

#### Scholarship Updates:

- **Departmental Scholarships:** Materials were distributed to faculty committees on April 2, with selections requested by April 15. Departments have been submitting nominations to the Financial Aid Office, and awarding is currently in process.
- **Non-Departmental Scholarships (Current Students):** The application cycle ran from April 2 through April 24 at 11:59 p.m. Awarding is currently in progress.
- **New Student Scholarships:** Applications are currently open and will close on May 17 at 11:59 p.m.

The office continues to focus on timely processing, clear communication, and supporting student access to financial resources.

#### Suggested Action/Motion:

N/A

#### President's Recommendation:

N/A



## Enrollment Management & Student Success Report May 15, 2026

### Agenda Item # 4: Dining Service Vendor and Dining Base Rate – FY 2027

Information

Action

Discussion

#### Purpose:

The purpose is to approve the selection of a new dining services provider and establish the base Food rate for fiscal year 2027.

#### Background:

Lake Superior State University recently conducted a comprehensive Request for Proposal (RFP) process for enhanced dining services. Three qualified vendors participated in the RFP for full-service campus dining operations: Sodexo (our current provider since 1981), Upper Crust Food Service, and Elior Collegiate Dining.

The evaluation process was thorough and highly collaborative. All three vendors attended pre-bid on-campus meetings and tours, each presented their RFP in person, and each met virtually with the Lake Superior State University team on follow-up questions. A dedicated selection committee, featuring the:

1. Vice President of Enrollment Management & Student Success
2. President of Finance & Operations/Chief Financial Officer
3. Senior Director, Student Affairs,
4. Controller
5. Budget Analysis

The selection committee utilized standardized rubrics to evaluate the proposals and make a final recommendation.

After completing the review process, the committee recommended Elior Collegiate Dining to provide campus dining services for the upcoming contract period. Elior was selected based on a comprehensive evaluation of several key factors:

- **Operational Excellence:** Demonstrated ability to manage campus dining operations with consistency, quality, and reliability.
- **Student Experience:** A student-centered approach focused on menu variety, dietary accommodations, dining engagement, and support for student belonging.
- **Financial Stewardship:** A clear financial structure that supports responsible management of University resources.
- **Contract Alignment & Risk Management:** Favorable contract terms that align with the University's operational needs, protect the University's interests, and support a stable dining operation.

#### *Proposed Food Base Rate*

With the selection of Elixir Collegiate Dining, LSSU is in final negotiations on the contract and a final base rate from the vendor has not been negotiated. LSSU proposes moving to a “Platinum,” “Gold,” and “Silver” tiered plan with a maximum base rate for the “Platinum Plan” of \$7,100 for the 2026-2027 academic year. This base rate corresponds to the standard "Seamore Select" meal plan, which includes 19 meals per week plus \$225 in Laker Bucks.

This rate reflects the new contract's pricing structure while ensuring that LSSU continues to provide high-quality, student-centered dining options. When combined with the previously proposed Housing Base Rate of \$7,100, LSSU maintains its strong price advantage and commitment to affordability within the Michigan public university market.

Administrators at Lake Superior State University annually propose a base rate for Housing and Food (H&F) for the Board of Trustees to consider and approve. The H&F base rate refers to the standard price that students are charged for their accommodations and meals. This rate covers a year of occupancy in a double occupancy room (or split quadruple) in Brady Hall, a traditional residence hall, and a meal plan that covers regular meals throughout the academic year. It serves as a starting point for calculating the total cost of attendance for students, which can vary based on factors like room type and meal plan choices. Below is the recommended base rate for only Housing for fiscal year 2026. Base food rates will be presented in the next Board of Trustee meeting.

### **Suggested Action/Motion:**

The President recommends that the Board gives approval to negotiate and sign the final contract with Elixir Collegiate Dining as its next dining services vendor. Board requested amendments that include a) ensuring student organizations and small gatherings within the Cislser Student Center are excluded from utilizing Elixir-only food options for events under a budget cap of \$500, and b) a meal plan opt-out option for students living in one or more residence areas with full service kitchens. If negotiations are successful, the Board authorizes the President, or the President’s designee, to execute the final dining services contract on behalf of the University. The President also recommends that the Board approve a base dining rate not to exceed \$7,100 for the 2026-2027 academic year.

### **President’s Recommendation:**

The President recommends that the Board approve a base dining rate not to exceed \$7,100 for the 2026-2027 academic year and approve the negotiations with Elixir Collegiate Dining as Lake Superior State University’s dining services provider. This recommendation follows a comprehensive dining services RFP process that included proposal reviews, presentations, campus engagement, follow-up discussions, financial analysis, and committee evaluation. Elixir Collegiate Dining was recommended based on its operational capacity, student-centered approach, financial structure, contract alignment, and ability to support a high-quality campus dining experience. The Board gives approval to negotiate and sign the final contract with amendments that include greater flexibility in excluding student organizations from utilizing only Elixir food options (events under a budget cap of ~\$500 dining costs), and a plan opt-out option for students who live in designated residential areas on-campus. Once negotiations are complete, the President, or the President’s designee, will have authority to sign the final agreement on behalf of the University.



## Enrollment Management & Student Success Report May 15, 2026

### Agenda Item #5: Student Affairs Updates

Information

Action

Discussion

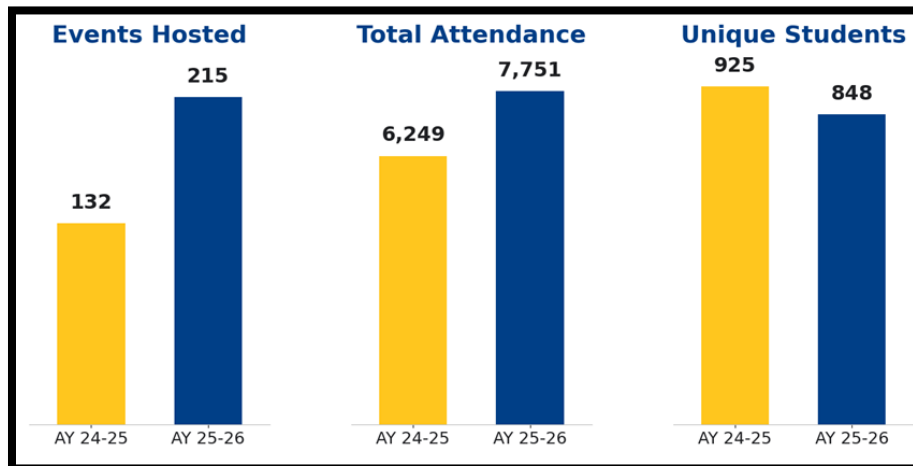
#### Purpose:

The purpose of this information is to provide an integrated update on Student Affairs priorities, Housing and Residence Life, Dining Services, Student Life and Engagement, Conduct and Restorative Practices, Laker Success, and recent student engagement highlights. This update demonstrates how these units work together to support belonging, retention, and engagement across the student experience.

#### Background:

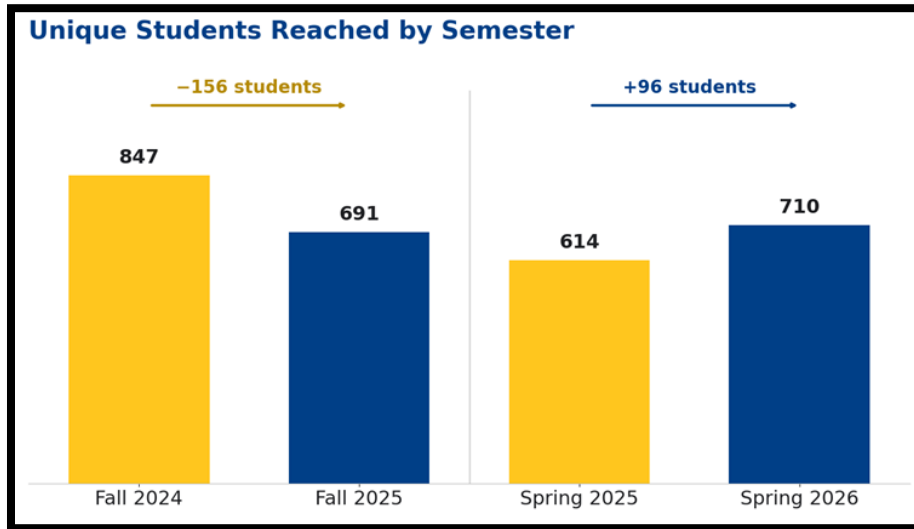
##### Student Life Update:

This report directly refutes the claim that there is nothing to do on campus. In AY 2025-26, the four areas under Student Affairs hosted 215 tracked events, and that figure does not include the dozens of weekly programs run by clubs, athletics, Greek life, and academic departments that are not yet captured in our reporting systems. Students at LSSU have something to do every week of the academic year.



**The Year at a Glance:** The four areas under Student Affairs (Housing and Residence Life, Student Life, Laker Success, and the University Activity Board) hosted 215 events this year, up from 132 last year, a 63 percent increase. Total tracked attendance grew from 6,249 to 7,751, up 24 percent. Unique students reached dipped slightly, from 925 to 848, due to a difficult Fall that Spring growth could not fully offset.

Total Attendance counts every student check-in across every event, so a student attending ten events counts ten times. Unique Students counts each individual once. The dip in unique students is real but small, and is driven entirely by Fall.



**A Tale of Two Semesters:** The annual numbers hide a sharp split between Fall and Spring. Spring 2026 was the strongest semester in recent memory. Tracked attendance grew 87 percent over Spring 2025, the number of unique students reached grew by 96 (up 16 percent), and the number of events more than doubled. Fall 2025 was harder. We reached 156 fewer unique students than the prior Fall. That single Fall gap is the reason full-year unique attendance dipped from 925 to 848. Recovering Fall reach, with focused attention on Welcome Week and early September, is our top priority for AY 2026-27.

**Important Context for Reading the Numbers:**

- UAB attendance looks lower than reality: The data shows the University Activity Board’s attendance dropping from 2,200 last year to 996 this year. That decline is not real. UAB ran a program every Thursday in Fall 2025, from late August through early December, with only Thanksgiving week off. Many of those programs had no attendance taken at the door. When attendance is not taken, the event does not appear in our tracking systems and does not count toward the 7,751 total. Tracking for these UAB events is a priority for Student Life this summer.
- Laker Success rebounded in Spring: Laker Success lost the full-time staff member who oversaw the program early in the Fall semester. Programming continued, but the loss limited the team’s reach. For Spring, we adjusted the model and gave the Laker Success Coaches more freedom to design creative programs. Engagement rebounded sharply, and the Spring lineup grew to 10 events and 602 attendees. Counting Exam Slam in both Laker Success and Student Life, since the two areas co-sponsored the event and Laker Success funded the food, brings full-year Laker Success totals to 15 events and 1,001 attendees.
- The 7,751 figure understates total student engagement on campus: This figure captures only events run by the four areas under Student Affairs and only when attendance was logged. It does not include the dozens of programs run every week by student clubs, athletics, Greek life, academic departments, the library, faith-based and or identity-based groups.
- Student Life growth: Student Life grew from 10 events and 794 attendees last year to 80 events and 3,005 attendees this year. That represents a major increase in events and nearly four times the attendance, marking the largest growth of any area in the Division.

- Housing and Residence Life growth: Housing and Residence Life saw its own programming nearly double, from 56 to 100 events, with attendance up 54 percent.

### **Conduct and CARE Update:**

**Student Conduct:** In Spring 2026, Student Affairs adjudicated 28 student conduct cases. Conduct cases cover violations of the Student Code of Conduct, including residential policy violations, alcohol and substance policy, and behavioral concerns. Each case follows a structured process that includes notice, an opportunity to respond, a determination, and where appropriate, educational sanctions designed to support student growth and accountability. All 28 cases were resolved within the semester. The volume is consistent with normal semester patterns at LSSU and reflects active enforcement of community standards.

**CARE Team:** The Campus Assessment, Response, and Evaluation (CARE) Team identifies and supports students experiencing personal or behavioral challenges through early outreach, coordinated care, and connection to campus resources. The team operates separately from student conduct and focuses on student well-being rather than discipline.

**Spring 2026 Caseload:** The CARE Team received 18 referrals in Spring 2026. This is a decrease from 25 referrals in Fall 2025. The case mix is summarized below:

- Mental health related: 13 (72%)
- Verbal or emotional escalation in class: 3 (17%)
- On-campus escalations: 2 (11%)
- Total: 18 (100%)

**What the Data Shows:** Mental health concerns drove the majority of CARE cases this semester, accounting for 13 of the 18 referrals. This is consistent with national trends in higher education, where college and university CARES and Behavioral Intervention Teams continue to report mental health as the leading category of student need. The remaining cases involved classroom or campus-based behavioral escalation.

The decrease in total CARE referrals from 25 in Fall to 18 in Spring is not a clear signal in either direction. Spring caseloads typically run lower than Fall at most institutions because students are more settled, and a smaller spring number can reflect either reduced student need or reduced referrals from faculty and staff. Continued tracking across multiple years will help establish what is normal at LSSU.

**How Conduct and CARE Work Together:** Student Conduct and CARE serve different but complementary roles in supporting students.

- Conduct addresses behavior that violates community standards. The focus is accountability, education, and restoring the campus community.
- CARE addresses well-being concerns before they become conduct issues, with a focus on early outreach, support, and connection to resources.

When a case has both behavioral and well-being dimensions, the two processes coordinate. A student facing a conduct sanction may also receive a CARE referral for support. A CARE case that escalates into a policy violation may move into the conduct process. This dual structure allows the Division to hold students accountable while also providing the support they need to succeed.

**Looking Ahead:** Three priorities for the next reporting period:

- Continue building multi-year baselines for both Conduct and CARE so trends become visible. AY 2025-26 is the first year of consistent CARE data, and the patterns we see now will become more meaningful as additional years are added.

- Strengthen faculty and staff training on when and how to refer to CARE, with the goal of identifying students earlier in their period of distress.
- Continue close coordination between Conduct, CARE, Counseling, and Residence Life so students experiencing mental health concerns receive consistent support across touchpoints.

**Housing and Residential Life:**

Fall 2026 Application and Placement Update (as of May 5, 2026): The 2026-2027 housing application cycle is tracking strong. Total applications received for the academic year stand at 409. Fall 2026 room reservations currently total 228 students. The volume reflects sustained demand and gives Housing a working pipeline for capacity planning, room assignments, and revenue forecasting.

Application volume: 409 students have submitted housing applications for the 2026-2027 academic year. The application window opened in November 2025 and remains open. None of the 409 applications are marked complete in the report extract, which indicates students are progressing through the application stages rather than finalizing the full process at submission. This is consistent with normal cycle behavior at this point in the year.

Submissions of housing applications has steadily increased since opening. March was the peak month and produced 42 percent of total volume. February and March together account for 66 percent of the cycle to date. The drop from March to April reflects the post-housing-selection slowdown rather than weakening demand. We expect a smaller but steady stream of applications through the summer melt period.

Fall 2026 placements: 228 students are currently reserved in a Fall 2026 room space. Apartment-style options at Student Village and the Townhouses lead placements with 127 residents combined, or 56 percent of all reservations. Traditional residence halls account for 99 residents. The pattern matches the upper-class preference for apartment living and confirms continued draw for Student Village as the flagship residential community.

**Suggested Action/Motion:**

N/A

**President's Recommendation:**

N/A



## Enrollment Management & Student Success Report May 15, 2026

### Agenda Item #6: Counseling Services Updates

Information

Action

Discussion

#### Purpose:

The purpose of this information is to provide an update on Counseling Services, including utilization and campus wellness activities.

#### Background:

- Total unique client contacts: 99
- Total appointments: 396
- Utilization increase from previous academic year: 11.24%
- Reduction in number of individual appointments scheduled from previous academic year: 23.99%

No students were placed on a waitlist this year even with only 1 FTE Clinician/Manager due to the Manager implementing a standardized University & College Counseling Center national best practice triage model. This triage model allowed Counseling Services to serve more students more efficiently and adequately refer students to campus and community resources when appropriate.

#### Campus Wellness activities:

- Tabling at the Ren Faire (3/13/2026): Provided evidence-based screenings for anxiety and depression and referrals for mental health services.
- Tabling at Stonewater Rapture and Talk Back (3/27/2026): 30 audience members participated in behavioral health discussion after the show.
- Facilitated Grief Workshop including Grounding Techniques & Suicide and Crisis Awareness for End of Life Simulation for 17 Nursing students (4/13/2026).
- Tabling for LSSU Cannabis Club at Elevated Awareness for Harm Reduction (4/20/2026) for 17 attendees including dissemination of harm reduction kits and drink covers.
- Tabling at Exam Slam (4/26/2026).
- Tabling for Student Life at De-Stress Event (4/28/2026).

#### Suggested Action/Motion:

N/A

#### President's Recommendation:

N/A