

At the semester's start:

If you have 15 minutes...

- Make office hours welcoming by listing on your syllabi what types of things students might visit you to talk about.
- Learn how to use Starfish: <https://www.screencast.com/t/7tZf6i9AzD2>
- Email one support office on campus to arrange a class visit.

If you have an hour...

- Make every assignment an "assignment" in Canvas so it will show up on students' Canvas calendar (even if it isn't something they turn in online, such as a reading assignment or directions for what to bring to class).
- Review your syllabus to look for policies that might impede student success.
- Send students an anonymous survey to gauge class points of confusion (Lightner, 2017).

You might ask:

- How much prior experience do you have with the topics we will learn in this class? (No prior experience, Some prior experience, Extensive prior experience)
- How have your past educational experiences been in classes like this one? (Poor, Fair, Excellent, I have not had classes like this one before)
- What questions do you have about the syllabus, or what questions would you like me to address in class? (open-ended)

Start the next class with an overview of responses and answers to questions raised or answer questions in a brief video or a Frequently Asked Questions page on Canvas.

If you have a few hours...

- Design an early-semester assignment that will allow you to gauge student progress (and flag those at risk in Starfish) and allow students to gauge how they're doing in class.

When the semester is under way:

If you have 15 minutes...

- Familiarize yourself with Student Life offerings so you can suggest ways for students to get involved: <https://studentlife.uccs.edu/>
- Learn about meta majors so you can suggest interest areas to students unsure of a major: <https://advising.uccs.edu/metamajors>
- Plan a few check-in activities that allow you to get to know students. In small classes, have each student share with the group while you take attendance. In large classes or online, create a shared document where students post responses. You might ask: What made you choose UCCS? What's your experience on campus like? Where would you like to work? What's one question you have about UCCS?

If you have an hour...

- Email a handful of at-risk students individually or your classes as a whole with action steps students can take to be successful, such as using the Office of First year Experience and the Excel Centers.
- Reflect on assumptions you may be making about students' interest levels, abilities, or backgrounds. A student who doesn't seek you out may want extra help but be unavailable during office hours. Make a plan for shifting how you work with these students.
- Schedule 3-4 Canvas announcements to nudge students to address their wellbeing at high stress times of the semester. For example:

- Early semester: Share what exercises you do for stress relief with links to Rec Center classes students can try: <https://recwellness.uccs.edu/campus-rec>
- Early semester: Encourage students to seek out friends with a reminder that generosity and being willing to open up leads to friendships (Ryerson, 2017). Link to a video about the reality of making friends: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NMO_N2oU34
- Mid-semester: Share encouragement to sleep and eat well with a link to Gateway Guides that have tips for dealing with common student stressors: <https://recwellness.uccs.edu/mental-health-services/services/gateway>
- Mid-semester: Take a poll of students' favorite places to study on campus and include a reminder that the Excel Centers all have free coffee!
- Later semester: Share a wellness-focused resource to show the application of a course concept, like a TED talk displaying oral communication strengths, a quantitative study of health habits using a correlative analysis, or a YouTube video on an outdoor pursuits company displaying business principles. Infusing your curriculum with wellness-focused content gives students more chances to pay attention to wellbeing (EAB, 2019).

If you have a few hours...

- Invite students to open study time on Zoom or in an Excel Center when they can work on material for class or ask you questions.
- Circulate a mid-semester survey on how class is going and present the results to students. For example:
 - Keep: What's going well in this class that we should keep doing, and why?
 - Quit: What should we quit doing, and why?
 - Start: What should we start doing, and why?
- Design an assignment or activity centered on a high-impact educational practice like collaborative problem-solving, undergraduate research, or learning from diverse perspectives (Kuh et al., 2017).

References

- Burke, A. (2019). Student retention models in higher education: A literature review. *College and University*, 94(2), 12-21.
- EAB. (2019). *Expanding well-being initiatives through faculty partnerships*. Student affairs forum. [contact Ann for PDF]
- Institutional Research. (2021). *Fall 2020 first year cohort retention*. University of Colorado Colorado Springs. <https://ir.uccs.edu/sites/g/files/kjihxj1231/files/inline-files/Retention.2021.pdf>
- Koproske, C., Gfeller, H., Silverman, A., Hickman, C., & Ho, M. (2018). *Defining the faculty role in student success*. EAB. [contact Ann for PDF]
- Kuh, G., O'Donnell, K., Schneider, C. G. (2017). HIPs at ten. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 49(5), 8-16.
- Lightner, J. (2017). Culturally inclusive teaching. Kent State University Center for Teaching and Learning. <http://www.kent.edu/ctl/>
- Ryerson University Student Affairs. (2017). *Cultivate your happiness: A ThriveRU weekly workbook. Facilitator's resource manual*. <https://www.torontomu.ca/content/dam/thriveru/resources/ThriveRU-Facillitators-Web-08312017.pdf>
- Umbach, P., & Wawrzynski, M. (2005). Faculty do matter: The role of college faculty in Student learning and engagement. *Research in Higher Education*, 46(2), 153-184.
- Venit, E., & Bevevino, D. (2020). *The student success playbook*. EAB. [contact Ann for PDF]