

# ISE NEWS



Hello NECC Community,

This is the **first monthly update** on the Integrated Student Experience (ISE) initiative.

These updates will include two parts. The first will be an effort to address the current “buzz” on campus about the ISE. The second part will be the more traditional list of bullet points reporting what is happening currently with the initiative.

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## **The Buzz: Breathe Everyone**

Presentations at Convocation and other recent forums certainly seem to have achieved our goal of increasing awareness of the ISE on campus. They raised a lot of questions, many of which have not been answered yet. This is by design. Many of the details of the Integrated Student Experience are yet to be determined. Many of those details will be developed by all of you rather than by me or other administrators. This is logical because a different approach to serving our students will only work if all of you own it. But of course this also means it will take longer and be messier than just being handed a plan. **Uncertainty will be our companion in these early phases.** Personally, I hate uncertainty. For those of you that feel the same, I sympathize with any angst you are experiencing.

The uncertainty and anxiety, however, are unavoidable if we are going to change our approach. And for me the one thing worse than uncertainty is the confidence I feel that things will be tougher for the students and the college—all of us—if we do *not* change our approach. How do we know that? Because we are already experiencing the pain. Forty-six percent of students that started here in Fall 2016 did not return in Fall 2017 and not for good reasons like transfer or graduation. We did not help them reach their goals. And, our own financial situation worsened. **Every year we are leaving vacant positions unfilled or, worse, retrenching more positions. That isn't going to stop until more of our students succeed.** And more of our students aren't going to succeed if we keep doing things the same way.

So we need to change. I am confident in the ISE plan because it is a logical answer to many of the challenges we see our students struggling with. The plan, however, is only a skeleton right now. **My deepest confidence is in all of you: your ability to put muscle and flesh on that plan to make it actually deliver better results for students.** The process of fleshing out the plan is just beginning (see below). Open minds will aid that process. Not everything in the plan may work as we hope. That is normal. The first way we try to implement something in the plan may fail...maybe spectacularly. That's pretty typical too. But as long as our minds are open and we learn from the failures they will be valuable, not tragic.

So, my advice is to **breathe and get involved in the work!** Ask questions, raise concerns, but also make suggestions that turn raw ideas into workable plans. Encourage those that are staying quiet to speak up. “Do your work and the skies will clear,” a wise person once told me. She was right.

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## **What's Happening**

The ISE is one of four goals in NECC's 2020 Strategic Plan and is the only focus of our current Academic Master Plan. To learn more about the ISE, check out this [video](#).

The governing body for the Integrated Student Experience is the **ISE Goal Team**, which is co-chaired by Professor Barbara Stachniewicz, Lawrence Library Coordinator Jenny Fielding, and Director of Library Services Mike Hearn. The team has representatives from all parts of the college and all employee groups and has met since August 2016. It provides oversight and decision making for the ISE. **The next meeting of the goal team is Tuesday February 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 pm in TC103A/LC301 and is open to all.**

In January, we launched a smaller **ISE Implementation Alliance**, which will focus on actually delivering the Integrated Student Experience. At this time, the Alliance includes Professor Amy Callahan, Dean of Health Professions Mary Farrell, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs Tina Favara, Coordinator of Academic Coaching Linda Giampa, Director of Library Services Mike Hearn, Assistant Dean of STEM Carolyn Knoepfler, Assistant Dean of Liberal Arts Janice Rogers, Dean of Academic and Career Advising, Articulation, and Transfer Grace Young, Dean of Liberal Arts Judy Zubrow, and is chaired by Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs Bill Heineman.

Within the Implementation Alliance, we are working on the following activities:

- Beginning the planning for the creation of a **Center for Student Success** on both campuses that will serve new and undeclared students. Tina Favara is leading this effort and we hope to launch the Haverhill Center by September 2018 and the Lawrence Center by September 2019, once the Dimitry Building reopens. For questions and ideas related to these Centers, email Tina at [tfavara@necc.mass.edu](mailto:tfavara@necc.mass.edu)
- Planning has begun for the creation of **five Meta Major Centers**, which will serve students that have chosen their broad area of curricular interest. These centers will help students narrow their goals to choose a specific academic program, host events related to the meta major, feature services for students in those disciplines, and be a gathering space for faculty and students with similar academic interests. Kelly Sullivan is leading the broad meta major effort, but the relevant academic administrators will work with the faculty and staff in each area to define their centers. A Center for Business and Accounting has already been operating since last September and we hope to launch Centers for Liberal Arts, Professional Studies, and STEM by September 2018 and Health Professions in the year following that. Contact your direct supervisor with questions and ideas.
- Department Chairs and Program Coordinators are leading the effort to create **Guided Curriculum Pathways** over the next year for each academic program at the college. These pathways will provide a clearer structure for student choice of major and courses and minimize the accumulation of credits that do not count toward a credential. Judy Zubrow is coordinating this effort and Professor Scott Joubert is available for assistance in this work. We have been asked for examples of other colleges using our ISE strategies: here is a link on [pathways](#).
- Faculty and professional advisors will be able to pursue experiments in how we conduct academic advising over the next year as we move toward a system in the 2019-2020 academic year that features advising for all new and undeclared students in the Center for Student

Success and advising for all other students in the Meta Major Centers. An **Advising Reform Team** has been meeting since June 2017 and will present recommendations at the ISE Goal Team meeting on February 14<sup>th</sup>. Grace Young will lead the advising reform effort. Any and all **experiments related to advising over the next year will follow the language of the MCCC Day Contract**. Please contact Grace with ideas and questions at [gyoung@necc.mass.edu](mailto:gyoung@necc.mass.edu)

- **Lance Hidy** will work on developing icons for the Meta Majors and each academic program at the college as well as templates for academic maps of the curriculum pathways and associated career/transfer information sheets.