

## April 2018 Update: Integrated Student Experience

Hello NECC Community,

The Integrated Student Experience **April Update**: The ISE is Coming Lots Faster than Spring.

The Buzz: Early Lessons from the Center for Business and Accounting

**Registration for summer and fall courses began on Monday April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Compared to the first day of registration LAST spring, 3.8 percent fewer students signed up** for courses overall. **The number of students in the Business Management and Transfer Programs registering on that first day**, however, **was up by over 20 percent**. There are many possible reasons that Business registration got off to such a fast start this year, but almost certainly a big one is the ability to sign up for courses in the Center for Business and Accounting in the Spurk Building. Continuing students there appreciated registering near their classrooms and avoiding the walk and lines at the Career Planning and Advising Center in Behrakis.

This is a hint of the potential that Meta Major Centers, and the other aspects of the Integrated Student Experience (ISE) such as advising reform, offer to improve the student experience and ultimately other important factors like enrollment. But it did not come easily. We are all steeped in practices (and locations) related to academic advising, registration, and other key parts of the student experience that have been in place for years. **We have built whole systems, employee workloads, and mindsets around those practices and they are not simple to change**. Great credit goes to the Business faculty—particularly the **Business Center faculty leader Judi Ciampi**—their supervisor Kelly Sullivan, Dean Grace Young and the professional advising staff, and Assistant Vice President Tina Favara’s enrollment team who worked together to get this experiment off the ground.

Although there were bumps, this cross-functional collaboration allowed faculty, professional advisors, enrollment staff, and student helpers to deliver all the steps needed to register in Spurk.

And this is just one of the lessons that the Business Center’s experience over the last eight months has to offer. For instance, **a student forum on March 28<sup>th</sup> revealed a great deal about student ideas for what we can do better at NECC, particularly in the Meta Major Centers**. They helped a group of Business faculty, Dean Sullivan, and I to understand that they really care about:

- **the cost and time lost associated with taking courses not required** in their degree program
- **academic advising sessions focused on deeper challenges** than just which courses to sign up for next semester
- **more coordination among our support services** (financial aid, tutoring, etc.) in fewer places, reducing the need to run from office to office.

I explained how the ISE is meant to address these and other challenges to student success. The students at the forum also helped us to understand **how to make a Center feel like home** (murals or other wall decorations, comfortable chairs, coffee) and also **how they like to communicate**: every method EXCEPT email! Professor Ciampi has taken a first step by designing *The Business Connector*, a regular newsletter with information about upcoming events, support services, and Center hours.

**The faculty, staff, and students living this pilot in the Center for Business and Accounting deserve tremendous applause** for what they have accomplished this year without an instruction manual and on

a mostly imaginary budget. I urge the faculty planning for Centers for Liberal Arts, Professional Studies, and STEM this fall to talk with the Business faculty and benefit from these lessons.

The crucial importance of this faculty leadership was also brought home during a recent visit to Bentley University's ACELab, which is a cousin of our Meta Major Center concept. ACELab serves the academic and support needs of Bentley's Accounting majors. Our faculty host has worked with the lab for two decades and pointed out that the details in the well-appointed space were carefully designed for Accounting students and instructors. For instance, the height of the tables in the lab was calculated precisely so tutors and faculty could look at student work (on paper or laptop screens) without having to bend over. The details really matter in Accounting and there is extended staring at student work!

**Business Department Chair Kristen Quinn, Tutoring Coordinator Jennifer Levesque and I observed that the academic disciplines involved and the faculty and staff experts that know them so well are the key to designing an effective center.** So, please get involved so all our centers are designed to be comfortable and effective! I will do all that I can to provide the resources to fulfill that promise.

### What's Happening

Within the ISE Implementation Alliance, we can report the following progress in the last month:

- Conversations about the layout for a **Center for Student Success in Lawrence** have begun even as the first ground is being broken on the renovation of the Dimitry Building. We are working to align this planning with improvements in the Lawrence Campus Library: both projects are **priorities of the Capital Campaign**. The benefits of **cross-functional collaboration in the Haverhill Center for Student Success** were on display in the Spurr lobby the week before registration began as a team representing all the relevant offices involved in holds on student records worked to help over 100 students get them cleared so they could sign up for courses.
- Faculty and administrators in each of the five Meta Majors are **designing models of faculty leadership for their Meta Major Centers**. Budgets to support each of the Centers have been included in the Academic and Student Affairs Fiscal Year 2019 budget request, which is making its way through the approval process. **Efforts to tap student input about the Centers continue**. A second Business Student Forum was held with Assistant Vice President Tina Favara on April 10<sup>th</sup> and the Health faculty are distributing a student survey in their classes.
- Faculty in many programs used the dedicated time provided on **Professional Day** to make progress on program learning outcomes, curriculum maps, and clear course sequences to support **development of Guided Curriculum Pathways**.
- The EAB Navigate platform demonstrated to faculty on March 23<sup>rd</sup> has the potential to automate the Guided Curriculum Pathways and **vastly ease the academic planning and course registration process** so professional and faculty advisors can focus on other topics, such as academic support and career preparation, during meetings with students. Procurement of such a student lifecycle management system was a recommendation of the **Advising Reform Team** and approved by the ISE Strategic Goal Team in February.
- The ISE Implementation Alliance is working closely with Institutional Research to **develop meaningful metrics** to assess student progress under the ISE. The college's new data warehouse **Zogotech** is being rolled out and offers improvements in both the power and speed of analysis we will be able to do going forward.

In short, we are making progress in each of the priorities of the Integrated Student Experience this semester. **Kudos to the many students, faculty, staff and administrators who are contributing.** If you would like to get involved, please email me at [wheineman@necc.mass.edu](mailto:wheineman@necc.mass.edu).