

Board of Trustees
Committee on Academic and Student Affairs
November 11, 2024
3:00 - 5:00 PM

Committee Report

UW Trustees: Michelle Sullivan (Chair), Laura Schmidt-Pizzato, Brad Bonner, Jim Mathis, Tom Walters

1. Information and Discussion– Provost Update

1. Information/Discussion: Interim Provost Turpen updated the committee on the activities and efforts taken since November 2024 to address university processes and mechanisms affecting enrollment. The administration had previously identified several “bottom of the funnel” processes that were negatively impacting student enrollment, and this report outlined the actions that have been implemented to address those issues.
 - i. Notable actions include the reduction of steps required for student enrollment, such as the automatic acceptance of UW Foundation Scholarships, the relocation of academic preparation requirements to New Student Days (NSD), such as Navigate, and the shifting of campus access and community steps to NSD and SaddleUp, including WyoOne, MMR, parking permits, and StartRight+.
 - ii. Other New Student Day enhancements include offering one-on-one advising, registering students for 15 credit hours, providing peer mentoring through Cowboy Coaches, guaranteeing summer advising appointment follow-ups, and partnering with UW Libraries to create a unified and consistent registration experience.
 - iii. Additionally, enhancements have been made to “bottom of the funnel” processes, such as our Housing colleagues reaching out to incomplete and non-completing applicants to assist them in submitting their housing applications, which resulted in an increase of more than 60 applications compared to last year. The Student Financial Aid (SFA) office is also actively engaging with confirmed students to help them understand their bills and complete their FAFSA. They are inviting all admitted students to virtual one-on-one meetings to discuss aid awards and packaging. To ease the scheduling of appointments, SFA has implemented Microsoft Bookings.
 - iv. Individual colleges are utilizing the enrollment reports (UBER) to enhance outreach efforts once a student declares interest in a particular major.
 - v. In terms of advising, the university has created consistent positive messaging during high-volume advising periods, with the expectation that students will receive responses within one business day. Updates and communication processes with advising managers and advisors have been streamlined, and the advising council has been reinstituted to make policy-level decisions. These combined efforts aim to streamline and improve the enrollment experience for incoming students.
2. Action:
3. Next Steps:

2. Information and Discussion – Test Optional

1. Information/Discussion: Beginning in the fall of 2020, the University of Wyoming implemented a test-optional admissions policy as part of a 5-year pilot program approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT). The goal of the pilot was to assess the impact of this policy on recruitment and retention. From the assessment, over the past five years, UW has seen a 12% increase in undergraduate applications, with notable growth among first-generation and rural students. Applications from non-resident students grew by 18%, making up 45% of the incoming class. Additionally, retention rates for students admitted under

this policy have increased from 76.5% to 78%, and high school GPA has proven to be nearly as predictive of first-year retention as standardized test scores. While no immediate action is requested at the March meeting, UW will review and consider relevant policy changes. Notably, the Hathaway scholarship still requires an ACT score for eligibility, and UW has been proactive in communicating this requirement to Wyoming high school students.

2. Action:

3. Next Steps:

3. Information and Discussion– Annual Student Success Data

1. Information/Discussion: The Interim Vice President for Student Affairs provided annual data focusing on student retention for both first-time, full-time students, and transfer students in Spring 2025. It included retention rates for both Fall-to-Spring and Fall-to-Fall periods. The Cowboy Coaching program has a strong impact on retention, with an 87.1% retention rate for students who met with a coach at least twice. The program had over 1,000 appointments in Fall 2024, engaged with nearly 900 students, and averaged 273 hours of outreach per month. Future efforts include improving probation and suspension notifications, providing support for students recovering from difficult semesters, and continuing outreach campaigns to encourage registration, especially among students who have not yet registered for the next semester. Additionally, initiatives like Readiness Rallies and community-building events for transfer students, such as Transfer Saddle Up and Winter Welcome, will continue to be implemented to boost retention. The materials aim to examine retention data to assess trends and explore strategies for further improving student retention and academic success.

2. Action:

3. Next Steps:

- i. Trustees recommend further review and evaluation of retention data from the five years leading up to the implementation of the Saddle Up program.
- ii. Trustees recommend assessing data comparing Pell and non-Pell recipients, broken down by program.