

Top 10 Ways to Support Student Success



NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
College of Education

10

Be a Resource for Resources

- Address the stigma of asking for help and normalize their needs.
- Talk about social resources in class (food bank, student success office, local agencies, cultural resource centers, etc.).

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Be an Over-Communicator

- Send reminder emails for due dates. Always include a “How are you doing?” or “Do you need any help?” message.
- Communicate the same information using multiple mediums. Ask each student the best method (email, text, Blackboard, etc.).
- Be responsive to concerns and address recurring themes with all students.

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Be a Check-In Surveyor

- Conduct in-class anonymous “check-in” surveys so students can let you know how they are doing.
- Start classes by asking if there is any new news or if anything exciting happened since the last class.
- Send a Google or Qualtrics survey to ask students to share how they are doing. Follow up based on individual responses.

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Be Encouraging

- Provide feedback on assignments and allow revisions and resubmission of assignments.
- Encourage performance-based learning and alternate ways to complete assignments (e.g., record a podcast vs write a paper).

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Be Aware of Mental Health Needs

- Prioritize students' wellness first, communicate your commitment in class and let them know you are here to help.
- Give examples of strategies that other students have found helpful.
- Add Mental Health Days to the course syllabus, especially in courses where attendance plays a role in the grade.

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Be a Role Model

- Devote time to self-care and remember kindness for self.
- Build in Mental Health Days for yourself.
- Acknowledge your personal challenges and connect on a human level. Be open and honest that these are challenging times.

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Be Flexible

- Establish due dates but be flexible with personal requests or consider class-wide extensions.
- Record in-person or synchronous sessions so students who cannot attend can watch and not fall behind.

3

Be Empathetic and Understanding

- Stay aware of each students' needs and remember that we are dealing with another human being. Connect with empathy.
- Be kind and understanding of family issues and individual situations.
- Issues manifest in different ways; always try to have a private conversation and work at uncovering the underlying cause.
- Validate their feelings and needs with empathy.

2

Be a Relationship Builder

- Proactively work on 1:1 relationships with students ask: “Is there anything else that you would like me to know about you?”
- Proactively work on group relationships. Students can share anonymous written reflections as a large group to understand each other and their experiences.

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Be Available

- Vary office hours, locations and modalities to accommodate students' family, jobs and other obligations.
- Schedule one-on-one, check-in meetings with students every semester.
- Offer virtual study sessions to come together without expectation of interaction, offering time to just be online together.
- Post the “Student Success Champion” sign on your office door; add the “I Support Student Success” image to your email signature, syllabus and classroom documents so students feel that you are approachable.