ADULT STUDENT RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

2019 CONFERENCE | EVOLVING ISSUES
WELCOME TO THE 2019 ADULT STUDENT RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION CONFERENCE!

On behalf of the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh, welcome to Madison. We have assembled an information-packed agenda, filled with topics and ideas that will help you grow in the areas of recruitment, retention, policy and instruction of adult students. We hope you enjoy the variety of speakers, who bring personal experiences and engaging perspectives from the ever-evolving environment in which we work. You will return to work invigorated, enthused and prepared to share innovative strategies for engaging nontraditional learners in your community!

Conference tracks include:

- Recruitment
- Retention
- Policy and Instruction

Select the tracks that best meet your personal and professional interests. Have you come with a group? Split up and compare notes. Take advantage of opportunities to network and share ideas throughout the conference.

Conference Agenda

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2019

8–9:30 a.m.  Registration and Breakfast Buffet  (Capitol Ballroom B)
9:30–10:45 a.m.  Welcome and Keynote Presentation
   Capitol Ballroom B
   Searching for What Matters Most — John Gardner, Chief Executive Officer, John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education
   While we may have some differences, we can safely assume we all want Wisconsin to preserve its “progressive” tradition(s) and for other Midwestern states to continue their marches forward in progressive directions. Of course we all want to contribute to that as well as to the welfare of our students and institutions, but this becomes difficult in an increasingly polarized country—the fallout from which finds its way onto our college and university campuses. Gardner will argue that in this context we need to focus on “what matters most,” a vision on which he will expound. For us to answer that question in our own respective spheres of influence, we need to think about our own legacy, which each of us is building, intentionally or unintentionally. This talk is intended to be a reflective and values-based message to set the stage for all the good, helpful, practical strategies and empowering information to follow in the conference.

10:45–11 a.m.  Networking Break

11 a.m.–Noon  Sectional Presentations
   University Room CD
   1. Recruiting and Retaining Professional Cohort Students: A Case Study of DePaul University’s Work with the Chicago Police Department — Scott Gabbert, Senior Academic Advisor; Chicago Police Department Cohort Advisor, and Shirley Bono, Assistant Dean, Academic Advising and Student Service; Director of Onsite Cohorts, DePaul University School for New Learning
   In 2016, the School for New Learning at DePaul University partnered with the Chicago Police Department and the Fraternal Order of Police to begin offering undergraduate degree completion cohort programs for Chicago police officers. As of Autumn 2018, four separate cohorts have commenced with officers in the first two cohorts now beginning to reach the graduation threshold. The unique nature of the recruitment activities required, lessons learned from retention and advising strategies implemented, and an overview of the academic program delivery—which maximizes tuition reimbursement availability and includes on-site course offerings at the Chicago Police Academy facility—will be reviewed in detail during this session.
2. Picking Up Where We Left Off and Looking Forward to EAA: Excellence in Academic Advising — John Gardner, Chief Executive Officer, John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education

Didn’t get to raise your question, make a comment or engage in dialogue with John Gardner at the end of his keynote? Here’s your chance. This will be both a “conversation session” to explore ideas that arose from our keynote and an opportunity to learn more about a new process: EAA—Excellence in Academic Advising. Some 39 years after the National Academic Advising Association was founded, many campuses still struggle to raise the status of academic advising. Finally, a set of aspirational standards for defining and attaining excellence in academic advising has been developed, and they are ready for you to use right now.

3. Building a Successful Adult Marketing Campaign from Start to Finish! — Katie Glass, Marketing Specialist and PIO, and Kim Maier, Director of Alternative Delivery, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College

Developing a marketing campaign that is unique, on trend and well-received can be difficult and expensive. Getting buy-in from leadership and other campus units can be even more difficult. This session will walk through the steps taken by Southwest Wisconsin Technical College to create the college’s adult marketing campaign and leave you with easy to implement, actionable tools to take your adult marketing efforts to a whole new level. Among other things, you will learn:

- Strategic Planning
- Goal-Setting
- Audience Development
- Campaign Cadence and Sequencing
- Multichannel Targeting Allocation
- Much more

4. How to Lose a Student in 10 days — Brooke Sumner, Academic and Resource Advisor, Fox Valley Technical College

This interactive presentation provides an opportunity for advisors to look at the student experience through a new lens—challenge assumptions, revisit student and advisor expectations, and promote growth while having some fun. Highlighted are some of the most important touchpoints we can use to help students reach their academic, career and personal goals. Since the student experience begins at the initial point of contact with an institution, we have included opportunities beginning with the admissions stage throughout the entire college experience.

5. Introducing an Online Navigator Position and the Impact — Heather Ringberg, Online Navigator, and Kim Maier, Director of Alternative Delivery, Southwest Wisconsin Technical College

Learn how an online navigator, a position created in July 2017 through the Strengthening Career and Technical Education Program Grant, has increased academic and technical online course completion rates and reduced the drop rate of online students. See how this position serves as an online student liaison and proactively reaches out to students during critical points of a semester to monitor student activity and coursework progression and to initiate referral to campus services to intervene as needed to ensure online students receive support to be successful. Examine the challenges that came with introducing such a position on campus and learn how instructors and students have responded.

6. Lions and Tigers, and Bears...Oh My! — Amy Foley, Advising, Enrollment, and Retention Manager, University of Wisconsin-Platteville

Take a walk on the yellow brick road to learn how professional development, long-term career goals and wellness have a positive impact on your life. Professional development can be challenging to obtain, but that doesn’t have to stop you from learning. As promoters of lifelong learning, we need to practice this model. Long-term career goals can be difficult to define. In this session, you will learn how to set short- and long-term career goals. In order to take care of others, you have to take care of yourself first. Learn how to love yourself and know when it is time to take a break, pause, reflect, regroup and rejoin.
7. Creating an Effective Online Orientation Program for the Adult CBE Learner — Jan Ford, Director of Student Success, and Patrick Wirth, Director of Creative Media Services, University of Wisconsin-Extension

Prior to May 2018, a formal online orientation experience for our University of Wisconsin Flexible Option students did not exist. In the absence of a formal program, information for onboarding and enrollment had been shared through manual and individual practices. Though highly personalized, this created inconsistencies and gaps, with students arriving unprepared and sometimes facing preventable consequences as they began their studies.

Developing an effective orientation program is a challenging endeavor. Designing an experience aimed at online adult learners in a competency-based modality adds a new level of complexity. This session will provide a high-level overview of the creative and collaborative process of three talented teams as they worked together to address these challenges, highlight key project goals and learning outcomes and the approach used to achieve them, and offer an inside peek at the resulting orientation itself.

8. Welcome Back: How Higher Education Institutions Successfully Collaborate to Bring Back Adults — Barry Nickerson, Higher Education Services, Council for Adult and Experiential Learning

Across the U.S., higher education is undergoing radical changes. As attention shifts to the advent of promise programs, we must also consider the 37 million adults with some college credits but no degree. Learn how some institutions, regions and states are overcoming barriers to reenrollment to help adult students who have stepped out of higher education. We will discuss how unlikely partners have joined to welcome “comebackers” so they can persist to completion. The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) will present best practices from the field, utilizing CAEL’s ten principles for effectively serving adults.

9. Library Services for Adult Learners: Improving Information Literacy and Preventing Plagiarism — Erin McArthur, MLIS, Online Learning Librarian, and Ted Mulvey, MLIS, Information Literacy Librarian, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh

Adult learners are often surprised by and unprepared for the ways the library and its services have changed since they were last in school. (No more card catalogs!) Time pressure and anxiety about their academic performance can cause students to take shortcuts and plagiarize, often unintentionally. While librarians can help these students navigate this new landscape, students are often unaware of our services, or are unable to access them at times that would fit into their busy schedules. In this presentation, we will offer insights into adult learners’ challenges with information literacy and plagiarism, share our experiences as librarians working with this population, suggest solutions and highlight best practices.

10. “If You Build It, Will They Come?” Strategies for Targeting Nontraditional and Adult Students — Anthony Hooker, Adult Reentry Admissions Advisor, Parkland College

This presentation will go in-depth and showcase our recruitment and communication to adult prospective students. The group will discuss different modalities, initiatives and strategies that have been used to recruit students, such as:

- Create a newsletter that is sent to both current and prospective students
- Make regular visits to businesses, factories and community events
- Develop and maintain a prospect database
- Develop and maintain area Human Resource professionals database
- Join local Human Resources Group
- Develop outreach events for area Human Resource Groups
- Create an adult student club for recruitment and retention of nontraditional students
- Participate in a local radio station’s holiday fundraising project

In higher education, we experience changes that redefine our roles, organizational structures, professional and student relationships. As advisors, we face challenges navigating this landscape with the expectation that we maintain a high quality of service to retain our students. When the University of Wisconsin Flexible Option launched an online competency-based degree in business administration, this change brought a number of challenges to student services. Two challenges we faced included a lack of a reliable degree-audit tool and changing academic policies after the program launched. In a large-group discussion, we will review case studies and explore factors to consider and potential solutions if ever faced with these challenges.

12. Best Practices: Serving LGBTQ+ Students — Katherine Charek Briggs, Assistant Director, Gender and Sexuality Campus Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison

LGBTQ+ student services often center on the needs of traditional-age students. What about the voices and experiences of adult learners? After a brief “gender and sexuality 101,” this workshop will help participants identify interventions in their own work, including building curricula, making online spaces more welcoming, modeling bystander behavior and providing appropriate resources.

TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2019

7:15–8:15 a.m. Breakfast Buffet (Capitol Ballroom B)

8:15–9:15 a.m. Sectional Presentations

13. Using Effective Orientation Practices to Increase Retention — Heidi Hawk, Advisor, and Nicole Ruchotzke, Advisor, University of Wisconsin-Platteville Center for Distance Learning

While many campuses offer orientation programs, have you considered what makes an orientation program effective? The University of Wisconsin-Platteville’s Center for Distance Learning researched what elements make an orientation program effective, specifically for adult learners, online learners, undergraduate and graduate students. In this session, we will share what we learned and how we’ve implemented our findings. Come ready to share and discuss your orientation programs as well!


Research shows that students who connect with their campus are more likely to graduate, but how do we connect with online students who never set foot on campus? We understand that adult students who are busy, working and are often parents need different strategies to assist them with their education. Using low-cost efforts to serve these students has proven to increase retention and create a strong rapport between students and the university. Coaches use data to assist students with class selections. While keeping the focus on the student, coaches also utilize technology to increase engagement with a personal touch and build a trusting bond.
15. We Don’t Care about Homecoming Committees: Effective Onboarding and Orientation Practices for Nontraditional Students — Brandon Pannier, Associate Director of Advising and Recruitment, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Division of Online and Continuing Education

Deciding to come back to school after a long absence is a difficult decision for nontraditional students. The time and financial commitments can be burdensome for those who are already juggling work, family and other obstacles. The period between application and the first day of class is crucial for retention. Too often onboarding practices are geared towards traditional students and fail to serve adult learners who have their own concerns and challenges to overcome. This session focuses on orientation and onboarding strategies for nontraditional students that cut through the overwhelming paperwork and bureaucratic procedures of starting school while building and maintaining enthusiasm for a student’s academic experience.

9:15–9:30 a.m. Networking Break

9:30–10:30 a.m. Sectional Presentations

16. Serving Student Veterans—Transitioning from a Help Desk Approach to a Student Care Culture — Michelle Munns, Education Benefit Coordinator, and Timber Smith, Veterans Resource Coordinator, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh Veterans Resource Center

For a number of years, the Veterans Resource Center (VRC) used a reactive “help desk approach” for veterans’ benefits and focused on problem solving as issues arose. To take a more proactive approach, the VRC has created a more welcoming environment by transitioning to a “student care culture.” The VRC assists students from the application process through graduation, helping to create the total student veteran experience.

In this session, participants will follow the steps taken to streamline processes, establish technology-focused communications, track student interactions, analyze data and extend professional and community outreach, which enabled the VRC to become a “full service” destination for student veterans.

17. Who’s My Advisor and What Does He Do? Creating Connection and Rapport with Busy Students in a Busy World (Repeat of #14) — Blake Bishop, Senior Academic Success Coach, and Jane Schimmel, Academic Success Coach, University of Wisconsin-Extension

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18. Appreciative Education — Benjamin Forche, Director of Student Affairs, Ohio University Patton College of Education

Higher education is increasingly becoming more complex for both university employees and students. University faculty and staff contend with declining enrollments, changes to policies and procedures and an ever-evolving political climate. Students that come to the university are a more diverse population than ever before, requiring all faculty and staff to have the skills and abilities to support them on their unique educational journeys.

Appreciative education fosters greater student persistence for degree completion. We will discuss how the appreciative mindset focuses on generative interactions, yielding deeper connections with students. We will learn how using this mindset in all facets of higher education will create a greater sense of community for the student population.

10:30–10:45 a.m. Networking Break

10:45 a.m.–Noon Keynote Presentation and Closing
KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

**John Gardner** is chief executive officer and chair of the non-profit John N. Gardner Institute for Excellence in Undergraduate Education, co-founded by him and his wife, Betsy O. Barefoot, in 1999. Gardner is also a distinguished professor emeritus and senior fellow at the University of South Carolina at Columbia. During his three plus decades of service to the University of South Carolina, he was also the founding executive director of the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition program as well as the University 101 program.

Gardner’s name is synonymous with leadership in student success and retention in American higher education. He is the founder of the international reform movement to improve what he coined as “the first-year experience” in 1982. Over his career he has worked with hundreds of institutions in the U.S. and abroad to increase student success in the transitions of the first year, sophomore year, senior year and transfer experiences.

He is a prolific writer of seven books on undergraduate student transitions and the recipient of a dozen honorary degrees recognizing his contributions and other awards for teaching excellence and service. As a first-year college student he was described by his academic advisor as “the stupidest kid I have ever advised!” Nevertheless, in 1999 Gardner was awarded by the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) the Virginia N. Gordon Award for Excellence in the Field of Advising, to recognize his contributions toward the enhancement of academic advisement in American higher education.

**Benjamin Forche** is very passionate about the role appreciative advising plays in the relationship between a student and advisor. He is an advocate of technology in advising and the positive relationship effects; specifically the use of virtual advising, mass communication, social media and automated systems. Combining these two practices has enabled Forche to connect with his students on a deeper, more meaningful and intentional level. His incorporation of technology stems from his undergraduate work in visual communication technology. While technology innovations typically require a certain level of expertise and funding, Forche possesses the ability to find simple and inexpensive ways to implement technology that can be started immediately on your campus.

Forche currently serves as the director of student affairs for the Patton College of Education at Ohio University. In this role he supervises six professional academic advisors who utilize appreciative advising as their advising philosophy. He is responsible for many college initiatives, rooted in appreciative advising, which focus on recruitment and retention. He began furthering his education in fall 2017, in the higher education doctoral program at Ohio University. Early research interests include social media, appreciative advising, first-generation students and student-athletes, to name a few. Forche previously served at The Ohio State University as the coordinator for advising communication in the College of Education and Human Ecology.

Forche serves as a member of a national task force aimed at advancing the concept of appreciative advising. He has adapted the framework for use in offices within student affairs—student involvement, orientation, registration, residence life, athletic success and academic coaching. Since 2012, he has taught the appreciative advising model at the annual summer institute and has provided multiple training workshops and retreats to various audiences.

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**Improving Advising and Customer Support in a Digital World — Benjamin Forche, Director of Student Affairs, Ohio University Patton College of Education**

More and more, our initial and ongoing engagement with students is in a digital environment or via telephone. This workshop provides an overview of the theoretical framework of appreciative advising in a digital environment. The theory-to-practice framework, published by Dr. Jennifer Bloom and colleagues in 2008, aids academic advisors and other higher education professionals in fostering overall success and retention of students. The framework is rooted in positive psychology and appreciative inquiry, by focusing on student’s strengths and interests. Viewing them as our most important resource, we can greatly influence a positive transition in and out of the university. Opposed to a deficit mindset, this framework seeks to build on student success to foster greater success. The workshop will expand our ability to be developmental, intrusive and appreciative when we are not face-to-face with students.
Looking for additional professional development opportunities?
Visit uwosh.edu/go/certificates for a list of UW Oshkosh online certificate programs. Earn a certificate online in as little as three months!