

# CAMPUS ENGAGEMENT

wednesday  
february 5<sup>th</sup>

88% of <sup>first-year</sup> students who agree to attending campus events on campus in the first six weeks of the fall semester have higher retention rate!

There is a chicken or egg question - are students who are more <sup>likely to get</sup> involved more likely to stay, or does involvement appear to make them stay? Regardless, a student's connection to/engagement with campus seems to matter to retention.

## RACHEL DEMOTTS, Politics + Govt & EPDM

- speaker series course; 0.25 academic unit  
Topics in environmental justice
  - talks given 8x per semester by someone in the community. open to all campus, but students in the class required to attend.
  - write reflective piece after each talk (reflection, blog post), then final reflection about what they learned.
- projects where students did interviews with campus members about a sustainability issue on campus + then create something - a documentary, a proposal to change a program, etc.

## LATOYA BRACKETT African American studies & RPI

- giving students space to talk about something that matters is a huge part of getting students to engage.

EX: photographer in residence

- workshop w/ students to learn skills
- dinner/lunch w/ speaker.

Do they have time to actually interact meaningfully?

- once students do something, they are more likely to go again... so can you try to involve folks outside of your discipline.
- create space for students, not just to be talked out by speakers
  - EX: Tan Lines (Vivie Nguyen)
    - ↳ Panel of women of color, faculty + students, talking together, not being talked at.
- Invest in students to help plan events, create programming (ex: Brave Series was a program asst.)
- Public scholarship class: part of what we do to engage is not only attend an event, ~~but~~ but bring others with us to events!
- we also have to be willing to attend events + engage. we model this

## PETER WIMBERGER, Biology & Slater Museum

- Slater Museum
  - run by volunteer docents
    - informal science teaching: 3 times semester
    - do research
    - meet once a week as a team
    - Night at Museum events
    - ~~also~~
  - not just a community of biologists, but natural history needs across the disciplines. Find a community of like-minded people; offers a space even for some students who may not connect socially.
  - created a community of people who are really invested in something "non-academic"

- I give students extra credit for attending campus talks + doing a write-up. Up to 3 events, 1% per talk. Can shift their grade.
- One thing that is really successful is actually having students plan the events in a ~~substantive~~ substantive way... they pick the topics, they do the logistics.

## DISCUSSION

- One theme seems to be reflection - all these activities invites/require students to reflect on + connect their learning.
- For students who are more introverted, this also seems to create community.
  - going as a part of class gives students ~~an~~ an excuse to go to events! A reason, if you're more introverted.
  - can unite common interest in a context where students aren't being evaluated.
  - can build rapport w/faculty - you have a connection or conversation with them no one else gets to have. Can make students feel special + seen.
  - can show expertise in front of class mates
- Students need to hear "this is why we're doing this"! They need to hear it from us, we need to make it visible, but they need to be able/invited to think about it themselves.