

# Division of Student Affairs

Annual Report 2016–2017



Pleasantville Campus

**PACE**  
UNIVERSITY

# Annual Report 2016–2017

## Student Affairs Accomplishments

- Residential retention has increased since the consolidation of campus and new residential communities by two percentage points from fall 2014 first year cohort to 2016 cohort.
- The average spring grade point average for first year residential students increased from 3.20 for spring 2014 cohort to 3.27 for 2017.
- Increased involvement by 27% the first six weeks in the fall by calling first year students at the two-week mark that had not attended an event.
- Awarded the JED Foundation Seal for excellence in mental health services after a year review.
- The Accommodated Testing Center has been incorporated into the Office of Disability Services.
- First Family Weekend held with over 250 family members in attendance, surpassing the original goal of 100 family members.
- When compared to Resident Assistants (RAs) at other universities, Pace RA staff report a 10-20% higher score on leadership skills acquired, experience/skills related to their major, and improved ability to articulate career goals.
- The First Year Interest Groups (FIG) served as a case study through faculty partner interviews and student survey for a book on Living Learning Communities (LLC) best practices to be published spring 2018.
- First year residents in Alumni Hall noted in a study on student learning that their living environment facilitated conversations with their peers around topics shared in classes and provided a different way of thinking about what they were learning.
- From 2014 to 2017, there was a 10% increase in commuter students reporting involvement in a student organization.
- 93% of first year students in the 2014 and 2015 cohorts of the Setters Leadership and Service House as well as the Setters Leadership Program were retained for their second year.



# The Counseling Center

We were awarded the JED Foundation Seal for excellence in mental health services after a year review. The JED Foundation provides a framework that universities can use to measure how they are providing the best support services for mental health, alcohol, and drug education as well as suicide prevention.

Counseling Center utilization rate ranges approximately between 13% and 17%. This number is closely aligned with national rates for similarly sized universities and environments. Anxiety, depression, and relationship problems rank as the predominate concern of students seen.

## Assessment and Planning

This year, we used card swipe data from campus events to identify students who had not swiped into campus events during the first six weeks. The first six weeks are a crucial time during which a student assesses their campus experience and sense of belonging, thus influencing their intent to remain at the University. Any first year student or transfer student who had not swiped into any events during the first two weeks received a personal phone call from a staff volunteer caller to connect them to resources and to inquire about their experience in general. Our goal was to engage 15% of those students in campus events by the end of Week 6. We experienced a 27% increase in those students who had no engagement data from the Week 3 phone call to the Week 6 data collection point.



## Office of Disability Services (ODS)

ODS experienced an increase in the number of students registered with our office. In 2015–2016, 207 students registered for services, and in 2016–2017, 260 students registered. Of particular note, there was an increase in the percentage of students who self-identified as having a mental health disability (up from last year to a total of 69% of the population registered with the Westchester ODS).

The Accommodated Testing Center (ATC) has been incorporated into the Office of Disability Services (ODS). This change created a more streamlined service for our students with accommodated testing, as we now have staff whose job functions are 100% focused on coordinating and proctoring the accommodated exams, and there is increased collaboration and communication with the ODS staff.



## Office of Multicultural Affairs and Diversity Programs (OMADP)

With more students identifying as transgender, we responded by training over 800 community members in best practices for serving transgender students and worked with respective offices to make it easier and more comfortable for gender non-conforming and transgender students to change their name. “Pride Hoops” was a successful partnership with Pace Athletics and the LGBTQ Center to promote queer visibility and campus pride at a pair of basketball games. Athletics saw coverage on multiple media platforms for this event, as well as promotion among community partners (PFLAG, The Loft, and Center Lane). This promotion may see benefits in student athlete recruitment and general recruitment of future students who identify as LGBTQ and/or are looking for an inclusive and welcoming environment.



# Office of Residential Life and Housing (ORLH)



As planned through the Pleasantville Project, we have increased residential student retention by one percentage point from fall 2015 to fall 2016. Additionally, residential retention increased by another one percentage point from fall 2016 to fall 2017.

All other indicators such as academic achievement, frequency of engagement, and learning through the FIGs demonstrate that we have transformed the residential student experience.

The FIG and other LLCs in the residence halls designed by EYP Architects (who designed Alumni and Elm Hall) were chosen to serve as a case study for a new book that will be published spring 2018 on a model of LLCs created by Karen Inkelas, PhD, associate professor at the University of Virginia.

Enhancements to services for residential students were positively impacted by relocating the Housing Office to Elm Hall, ensuring a full-time master level staff member resides in each building, and implementing a new key system to expedite the facility work order process (allowing facilities staff to sign out a key from the centralized housing office to complete maintenance work, thus reducing student wait time and increasing access/efficiency).

The FIG program continues to help improve first year persistence. Housing first year students together (within the FIG structure) gives them the opportunity to interact with other first year students. In general our first year students self-reported higher rates of interactions with peers than their counterparts at the University, as compared to the national average (and based on the consortium in which we participated).

As self-reported in our residential survey, when we asked first year students if they would choose Pace again (if they started their college search all over again), the data shows a 7% positive increase from 2015–2016 to 2016–2017 (a jump from 56% to 63% of the students who said they would choose Pace again). In addition, there was an 11% decrease in the percentage of students who said they would not choose Pace again (31% to 20%).

In its third year, the Academic Achievement Banquet has quickly become a campus-wide tradition, celebrating excellence in our residential population. We have received feedback from parents, students, and administrators that this is an event they look forward to, with one administrator saying, “This is the best event on campus.” The attendance has grown over

25% in the last three years and we are excited to grow this tradition. In partnership with the Office of Admissions, Housing and Residential Life created late-night options during the overnight PaceBound events for perspective students to promote the first year FIG program.

FIG students reported having conversations in their residence on knowledge attained in the classroom, reference to a topic in one of their classes, and the opportunity to explore different ways to think about a topic discussed in class. This information was highlighted in EYP architects’ multi-university study on how the environment effects learning.



# Student Development and Campus Activities (SDCA)

We held the inaugural Family Weekend in October 2017 (separate from Homecoming) with over 250 family members in attendance, far surpassing the original goal of 100 family members.

Fraternity and Sorority Life adopted a new strategic plan to guide the community for the next five years. The following goals will be pursued by student leaders, advisors, and SDCA with measurable objectives included in the plan:

- 1 Establish trust and accountability amongst our individual chapters, councils, and within the fraternity and sorority community
- 2 Create a culture focused on the growth and development of our chapters and its members
- 3 Develop a re-branding initiative for the fraternity and sorority community
- 4 Create opportunities for professional interactions and internships through the fraternity and sorority community
- 5 Enhance and provide continued support to promote academic excellence amongst members
- 6 Cultivate the value of service



Since fall 2010, 3,300 faculty, staff, and students have taken the Clifton StrengthsFinder. In 2016–2017, we facilitated over 60 workshops including new student orientation, UNV101 courses, upper-class academic courses, student leader trainings, Human Resources staff development programs, and Faculty Institute. A facilitator development series was created in response to the increased demand of workshops and attended by SDCA, Residential Life, Human Resources, FYE, and Lubin Advisement. Student testimonials of the impact of Clifton StrengthsFinder continue to be positive:

*“I know this sounds corny, but [Clifton StrengthsFinder] made me feel better about who I am—it made everything seem so clear. Reading about my natural talents and strengths and the positive/negative aspects of them helped me accept that I am who I am, and I love every part of me.” —Emerald Rodriguez '19, Nursing*

*“[Clifton StrengthsFinder] is AMAZING! When you get your top five strengths, you have this ‘wow’ moment of clarity because they describe you so perfectly. Due to your top five strengths, you can learn why you react to certain things the way you do, what strengths others have that you tend to be in conflict with, and so much more. You truly embrace your natural-born talents.”—Keyshana Dupuy '18, Communications*

*“When I took the test and got my results, it was like a weight off my shoulders. [Clifton StrengthsFinder] has given me a strong and concrete foundation in which I can better understand how I function as a person. Now I know why.”—Kirk Pineda '18, Psychology*

Fraternity and sorority new members in the spring 2017 increased by 30% from last year from 57 new members (2016) to 82 new members (2017). This is excellent news, as our numbers have been trending down the past three years. Increasing the number of spring members in 2017 has the potential to increase our active numbers next year (pending recruitment results from 2017–2018).

# Student Development and Campus Activities (SDCA)

Two commuter assistants were hired to increase programming designed specifically for commuter students, send weekly communications about upcoming University deadlines and commuter-specific topics, and provide support for commuter students utilizing office hours in SDCA each week. In the biennial Commuter Student Survey Spring 2017, nearly 70% of commuter student survey respondents reported being involved in at least one student organization. This is a 10% increase from the previously administered survey in 2014–2015. Additionally, 10.3% more commuter students reported being involved in a student organization on campus.

The Setters Leadership and Service House and Setters Leadership Program are two premier leadership programs for first year students. They consist of service opportunities, mentoring, and workshops with faculty and staff focusing on self-awareness, group dynamics, and organizational/community impact. The programs continue to retain first year students at higher rates than the University average and Pleasantville campus average:

Cohort	1st to 2nd year retention
SL H Cohort Fall 2014	94%
SL H Cohort Fall 2015	87%
SL P Cohort Fall 2014	96%
SL P Cohort Fall 2015	95%



## Future Plans

With the three year strategic plan concluded in summer 2017, we will continue to be innovative in how we can use the card swipe data to improve student engagement and retention. For our work in the next two to three years, we will incorporate the practices of a new book on Engagement and Employability co-authored by Adam Peck into our work. These practices will serve as a framework for initiatives and assessment of student learning and skill-building.



**Division of Student Affairs**

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