Student success and the excitement of learning

Student success arrives whenever we experience the excitement of learning. This excitement happens often on our campus as we integrate our foundational purposes as an institution.

I recently experienced this first-hand when I visited students in our DeLaMare Science and Engineering Library. The DeLaMare is considered one of the most innovative makerspaces on any college campus in America, with a variety of 3D scanning and printing resources available to our students.

I was surprised to see how bright-eyed and genuinely enthusiastic our students were as they shared their finished 3D printer work products with me. As I learned from our students, a makerspace isn’t necessarily special just because of the technology – although it doesn’t hurt that the DeLaMare’s 3D printers can create models that are fine and gem-like in their detail and intricately complex and sophisticated in their design.

The success of the space, really, is more in how students interact with one another. What struck me was how self-directed, yet so collaborative, they were as they designed, engineered, modeled and learned together.

Student success on our campus not only occurs in our collaborative makerspaces. It happens as our students increasingly embrace an integrative approach to our three missions.

Our land-grant heritage has meant that our institutional emphases have traditionally been teaching, research and outreach. Over the past few years, as we’ve transformed as an institution into a quality, high-impact research University, we’ve refined these missions. Instead of having our three missions reside in distinct silos, we have encouraged our students to search out ways to find connectivity and commonality between them.

From the time our students enter as freshmen, they are encouraged to broaden and deepen their learning experiences by joining student competition teams, or by participating in undergraduate research settings in our laboratories, concert halls or entrepreneurial centers. And, to ensure that our students realize their success through connection with our community, our colleges, schools and programs stress internships, service learning and civic engagement opportunities at every turn.

This has created interaction and inclusiveness and builds inertia between our three missions. We have, as our ASUN President Caden Fabb put it so well recently, “constant opportunity for our students to be actively involved in all three of our missions, all at the same time.” It is no accident that student success on our campus is at an all-time high, with more students enrolling, taking more courses per semester and graduating than ever before.

As we continue to enrich the intellectual skills and competencies that our students will need in their careers and professions, I have to admit that it’s also nice to know that we are accomplishing student success on our campus in the best way possible – through the excitement of learning.

Sincerely,

Marc A. Johnson
President

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