USU’s One-Year Retention Rates Rising with New Initiative

Office of Student Retention & Completion

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Nine students are working as outreach specialists to help those who aren’t registered for fall.

The Office of Student Retention & Completion hired nine students to work as outreach specialists to call those who are not yet registered for fall semester. Through their efforts, one-year retention rates are increasing. The outreach specialists spend the majority of their time contacting the students and working with them to help them resolve any issues that may be preventing them from registering.

Through phone calls and emails, the outreach specialists are able to answer any questions the students have. Some of the more common issues they run into include completing the FAFSA, making appointments with academic advisors, and helping them complete the leave of absence form if they are stepping away from USU for a time.

“Nationally, the majority of attrition occurs between the first and second years of college. We want these students to know that they are an important part of the Aggie family and that we want them to return,” said Heidi Kesler, director of the Office of Student Retention & Completion. “Our outreach specialists do a great job of connecting with the students and helping them so they don’t have to feel alone or lost.”

One of the major benefits of having current students work as outreach specialists is their ability empathize with what most of the students are going through. They are able to point the students to resources and solutions that they have used themselves. As of July 15, these efforts have resulted in an additional 55 freshmen registered, moving the one-year retention rate from 67.5% to 73.2%. Starting the end of July, they will begin calling students who have registered but have not paid, hoping to curtail the number of students dropped for non-payment on August 15.

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