

The Top Ten Strategies for Supporting Students

The majority of interaction that a student has with National Louis occurs in the classroom and in online work with faculty. For at-risk college students the extent to which they are academically engaged in the classroom plays a critical role in academic and intellectual development and in turn students that are more highly engaged in the classroom are more likely to be retained. As a National Louis faculty member, you play a key role in supporting students and helping them to stay on track to completing their educational goals.

The following strategies are suggestions for faculty on how they can support NLU students:

1. Make Class Engaging

Engaged students will be more likely to do well in class and apply what they learn to their professional lives. Students will be more eager to attend and participate in engaging classes and look forward to class each week. A few tips to make your class engaging are:

- Always be well-prepared and well-organized for class
- Be accessible, enthusiastic, warm, and caring
- Set high expectations for all students
- Develop clear and concise course objectives
- Keep students engaged and get them to look at issues in a variety of ways
- Be passionate about what you teach and eagerly share knowledge and experiences with your students

2. Have your class ready in D2L two weeks prior to the term start

NLU requests that faculty have the course content in D2L built and activated two weeks prior to the term start. At minimum, you should have an accurate course syllabus, gradebook and drop box by this date. NLU's quarter system of 10 weeks, or less, for classes means that the course will move quickly. Students are encouraged to plan ahead and check D2L in advance so that they can get off to a good start in courses. By activating your course two weeks in advance, you can help students engage earlier.

3. Welcome students adding a course late to your class

NLU policy allows students to add courses through the end of week one of the term. For students that add a class after it has started, it is especially important that they engage quickly with the class to catch up and have a chance at success. As you notice students adding your course after it has started, take some time to welcome them by email, send them any materials they may have missed, and offer assistance in getting caught up.

4. Use Starfish for Early Alerts

NLU uses Starfish as an Early Alert system so that faculty can identify students that are having trouble early in a class and easily notify academic advisors to contact the student

for assistance. During the second week of the course, faculty will be asked to complete a Starfish Progress Survey. You will receive notification of the survey via your NLU email. Progress Surveys are designed to provide quick feedback on what you have observed to date in your course. You can learn more about Starfish at <http://www.nl.edu/student-services/academic-advising/using-starfish/>.

5. Get to know your students

Form strong relationships with your students and show them that you care about them as a whole person.

- Academically
 - Maintain open communication throughout the course(s)
 - As often as possible, relate coursework to student's life purpose
 - Create an engaging classroom, learning experience, and community
- Personally
 - Let students know how to contact you
 - Make students feel that they are valued
 - Demonstrate to your students that you care about them individually
- Professionally
 - Actively encourage and support career goals
 - Share pertinent information about career opportunities

6. Notice when students display warning signs that they may be having trouble in your class and take action

As a faculty member, you will be the first to notice if a student stops attending class or seems frustrated or overwhelmed with their coursework. When a student stops attending in the middle of the term or is not turning in work on time, here are some steps you can take:

- Contact the student and ask how you can help. Many times just the fact that a faculty member notices that the student is having trouble and offers help will make the student feel cared for and encouraged.
- Raise a flag in Starfish for In Danger of Failing so that the academic advisor is aware that the student is struggling and can also contact the student to offer assistance.
- Make a referral to Learning Support in Starfish so that the student is aware of options for academic support.

7. Connect students with their academic advisor when they need assistance

Every NLU student has an assigned academic advisor that is their first line of support at the institution. If a student asks you a question about the university that you are not sure how to answer, refer them to their academic advisor. If you know the student's advisor, let the advisor know that the student could use some help with some questions. So if you get a student question about billing, university resources, graduation requirements or anything else, encourage them to talk to their advisor.

8. Use Let us Know

If a student's behavior in class is cause for concern, use NLU's Let Us Know system to report concerns so that NLU staff can help the student. You can access this at <http://www.nl.edu/legalpages/letusknow/>.

9. Be aware of university resources and encourage students to utilize them

NLU offers a variety of resources to help students succeed. Often times, an encouraging referral from a faculty member is much more likely to cause a student to take action. Among the resources you should be familiar with are:

- Learning Support: NLU offers tutoring in person and through online resources. Encourage students that need extra assistance to contact lls@nl.edu for an appointment, or take the time to walk with a student to the library on campus to make an appointment.
- Career Services: NLU Career Services provides a full range of assistance for students including career exploration, assistance with resumes and cover letters, and connecting students to job opportunities. Students can contact careerdevelopment@nl.edu for an appointment. You can also request a presentation from career development in your class by contacting the department. Go to <http://www.nl.edu/student-services/careerdevelopment/facultyresources/> for more information.

10. Provide timely feedback to students throughout the term and post grades on time

Your feedback throughout the term is critical in helping students to understand how they are doing in your class and how well they understand key concepts and information. Provide frequent feedback in D2L and in class so that students understand how they are progressing. At the end of the term, be sure to post your grades by the university deadline. Students may need grades quickly to provide to an employer, to ensure graduation, so that their financial aid can be packaged for the next term, and just to know that they are achieving success at NLU.