

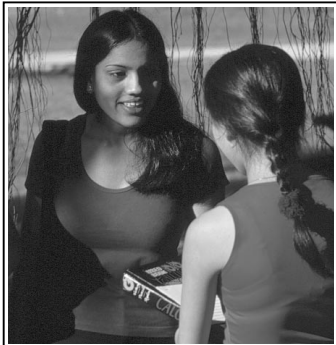
STAY@FAU

OFFICE OF STUDENT RETENTION NEWSLETTER • DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Involving Parents in Student Retention

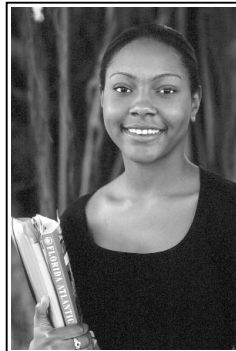
Parents are considered a key for student retention. Research shows that students who have the greatest family support are more likely to stay in school.

Additionally, current events such as high school shootings and the events of 9-11 have created a need for parents to be more involved with their children's lives. Marjorie Savage, author of *You're on Your Own (But I'm Here if You Need Me): Mentoring Your Child During the College Years*, states that students have a closer relationship with their parents now than 10 to 20 years ago, and they regard their parents as their best advisors. "When questions come up, they're on the phone to their parents, they're sending



emails to their parents," Savage claims. "Parents will reinforce our messages."

Therefore, we provide several programs and services to encourage family involvement. From parent orientation programs to the annual **Parent and Family Weekend**, parents are invited to be a partner in student success. This fall we created a new parent list-serve to keep parents of freshmen up-to-date with what is happening on campus as well as offer practical advice to address the different issues and concerns that students face. Nearly 600 parents are on the list-serve, and the Office of Retention has received over 50 email questions from parents in the first six weeks that the list-serve was available. Parent emails address a variety of issues and concerns. "We believe that parents, like faculty, are the ones who see or speak to our students on a regular basis. They can provide important information to students on our behalf, while being our partners in making sure that students are doing all



that they can to be successful at Florida Atlantic University," says Jennifer Bebergal, the creator of the **Parents as Partners** program. If you have any information that you would like passed on to parents of freshmen, contact Jennifer at

Bebergal@fau.edu.

Save a Student

The **Save a Student** program was established in January 2003 as a way to recognize faculty and staff who go "above the call of duty" to help retain a student. We all know that retention is a university-wide effort; however, these recipients have truly taken that to heart and work with our students to ensure their success. In the first 10 months of the program, nine individuals have been recognized across many areas, from Academic and Student Affairs to University Advancement and Financial Affairs. The recipients are always willing to listen to students' issues and concerns, and try to help them resolve their issues in order to maintain their academic and personal

endeavors. If you know of a faculty or staff member who has helped a particular student in an extraordinary manner, please nominate them for the **Save a Student** award by contacting Director Jennifer Bebergal at Stay@fau.edu.

2003 Save a Student Recipients

Stacy Volnick,
University Center

David Lowe,
University Advancement

Carla Martens,
Financial Aid

Derek Phillips,
Financial Aid, Davie

Mikki Minney,
Freshman Academic Advising

Jill Winland-Brown,
Christine E. Lynn College of Nursing

Tracy Boulukos,
Financial Aid

Deborah Gondol,
Controllers Office

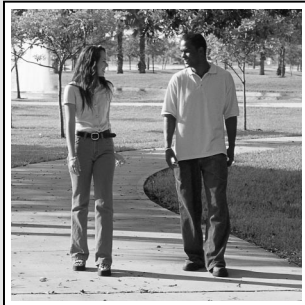
Marie Petrie,
College of Engineering

FLC Update

This fall, 279 incoming students registered for the **Freshman Learning Community (FLC)** program, a 25% increase over fall 2002. New additions for this year included the creation of an Engineering and a Pre-Professional learning community, as well as the return of the Arts and Letters, Business, Criminal Justice, Education, Nursing, Pre-Med, and Undecided learning communities. Students participating in the FLC are paired in a full-time schedule of courses with others in their major. For the first time, students are being offered an opportunity to continue the FLC involvement into the second semester with optional spring FLC courses. For more information about the FLC program or to teach the SLS course, please contact Director Jennifer Bebergal at stay@fau.edu.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: Victim Advocate

Although the crime statistics for Florida Atlantic University are very low, our students do not always remain on campus. Most of our students who become crime victims are impacted off campus. The effect of victimization on students can be multifaceted. Reactions to crime vary from person to person. Some victims are worried about the effect of the crime on others: "What will my mother do when she hears about this?" Some worry they will be blamed for their own victimization: "My roommate will say 'I told you not to go out with him.'" Some victims maintain complete silence about the crime.



A major problem of crime victims is often physical injuries. Hospitalization means time away from school and studies. Students who are struggling with health issues find it difficult to concentrate in class or study at home. Other physical reactions to victimization may include headaches, sleep disturbances, forgetfulness, mood swings and lowered immunity. Financial damages can include loss of wages/income, transportation costs, emergency medical care costs, child care expenses and replacement of lost property.

Physical and financial injuries often create emotional injuries:

Crime and Student Retention

Angie Gifford

**Victim Services Coordinator
(561) 297-0247**

terror, anger, guilt, grief, anxiety, depression and helplessness. A less known aspect of becoming a crime victim is resultant social injuries. These are often caused by law enforcement, social agencies, family and friends, albeit unknowingly. Victims are traumatized when: they are not believed, their behavior is questioned or they are blamed for the victimization. Victims need to be listened to patiently, without judgment, and allowed to express feelings without concern about the listeners' sensibilities. (Victims often use profanity, offensive descriptions and threats when telling and retelling the event.) Media coverage can embarrass or anger the victim and cause concern for safety when identifying information is revealed.

Parents of students who are crime victims often have the same first response: to remove their child from school. This can be devastating to a student. The very nature of crime is that it takes control away from the victim. Students who are adjusting to the freedom of college life, struggling with making their own decisions and learning about adult responsibilities are just beginning to take control of their lives. Crime makes the victim question the choices he/she made. "If choosing to go to this bar resulted in a beating, I must not be capable of making good decisions." "If my choice of a date resulted in rape, I must not be capable of making good decisions." And the confidence in one's ability

to make decisions on just about anything is eroded. To have the parents remove their child from school further erodes the student's confidence in his/her ability to make decisions. Victims must be told, over and over again, that their victimization was a result of someone else's behavior, and they are not responsible for becoming a victim. Teaching crime prevention may seem at odds with teaching

the victims that they are not responsible for becoming victims; but although crime prevention is meant to teach people how to reduce the odds of becoming a victim, it does not eliminate the possibility. You can do everything right, follow all the rules for staying safe and still become a victim of crime. Victims need to be reminded of this.

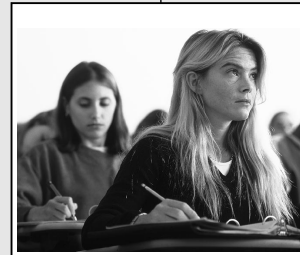
"How Can I Help?"

A question that we regularly hear in the office of retention is "What can I do as a member of the FAU community to enhance student satisfaction and retention?" Therefore, each Retention newsletter contains "how can I help" tips for faculty and staff—little things that you can do to help to retain students.

How can you help crime victims? Reach out to them and share concern. Crime victims are often lonely and isolated by the belief that no one will understand. Believe what you are told; false reporting of crime is about four percent. Listen and allow the victim to talk; this is not the time to offer your own experiences. Be calm and don't put the victim in the position of having to deal with your emotions too. Work out options with the victim; do not take control away from the

victim (remember, this is what crime does) by telling him/her what to do. Remind parents that this is a safe environment, there is free counseling available and the routine of school can be comforting. Suggest they discuss options and long-term strategies with their child.

Anyone who discloses a crime to you can be directed to Victim Services at the



University Police. Victim Services at FAU is for any student, staff or faculty member who has become the victim of a crime on any of the campuses or elsewhere.

Contacting Victim Services is not making a police report. Information is given about what happens if a crime is reported. In spite of television and books, most people are unaware of police procedures. Sometimes victims choose not to report a crime but still need referrals for counseling, medical testing, legal aid. Sometimes a person is not even sure if what happened to them was a crime. Often victims do not know that some forms of compensation are available for reported crimes. Students may need an advocate to contact professors to document the crime and assist in making arrangements for makeup exams or extensions. The student can decide to turn to the dean of student affairs for on-campus resolutions. Employers may need to be contacted to arrange work schedules around court appearances or health appointments. The victim may need a liaison with police to find out information on the case or to remind police officers of the victim's statutory rights. Contact Angie Gifford at X70247 for more information.



STAY@FAU,

the University's Retention newsletter, is published bi-annually. Please look for future issues that will provide in-depth coverage of some of the key services that enhance student persistence and how YOU can help increase the retention rates of our students.