

# Stetson University

*“From Florida Gem to National Treasure”*

*The Premier Small University Where Learning and Values Meet*

Where Have We Been?

Where Are We Now?

Where Do We Want to Go?

Faculty Meeting  
October, 2022

Christopher Roellke, President  
Professor of American Studies and Education

# Stetson University Faculty Meeting

## October, 2022

### *Who Are Our Students and How Can We Best Promote Their Success?*

- Declining Enrollment with National Demographic Cliff Projected
- Students Postponing College, Engaging with Online Only Providers, Choosing Much Larger and Less Expensive Universities
- Steady Decline in Student Selectivity at Stetson Resulting in Poor Retention, Persistence and Graduation Rates
- Stagnant Net Tuition Revenue with Increasing Discount
- Widespread Public Scrutiny on the Cost of Higher Education
- Low Cost Alternatives in Central Florida and Statewide
- Lost Secondary School Learning During COVID-19
- Pre-existing Mental Health Crisis Exacerbated Among Youth During Pandemic (3/4 of college age students report worsening brain health during the pandemic)
- Dramatic Teacher Shortages in K-12 Education (Florida and Georgia Among Most Acute)
- Curricular and Financial Barriers to Efficient College Completion

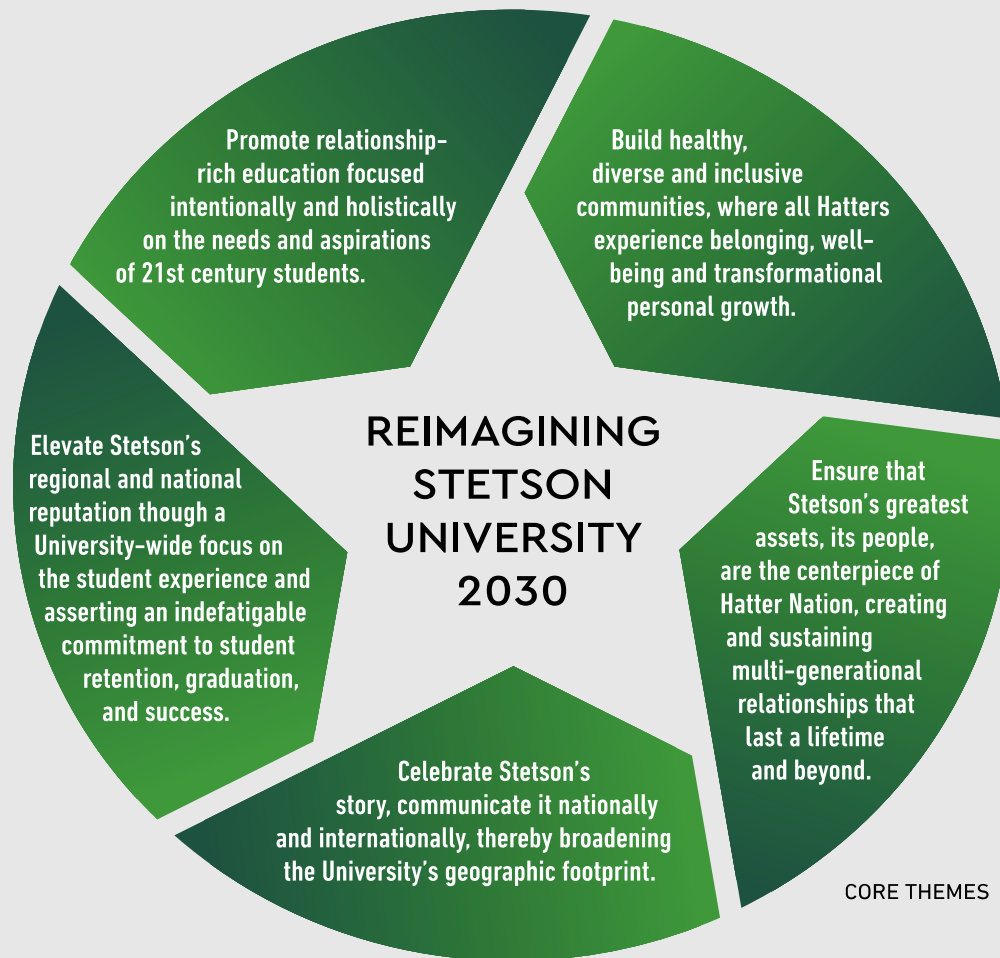
Stetson University Values Day (10/18/2022)  
Keynote Speaker, Ed Freeman, Philosopher and  
Business Ethics Expert

- “Leaders create conversations. If you can figure out how to create the right conversations for your organization, you really don’t need to make many decisions. Leadership is about ideas and people. Leadership without ideas is just the exercise of authority. Leadership without ethics is tyranny...”

At Stetson, it is all about the **people**. As we embark on making Stetson as “**relationship-rich**” as possible, let us remember that building a lifelong relationship with an institution requires kindness, empathy and shared ownership over this magnificent enterprise.







Note: "The most efficient method for dramatically improving college education is basically to help the right students and teachers get together." Chambliss and Takacs, How College Works.

# STUDENT RETENTION AND SUCCESS STRATEGY

## FINANCIAL

Tuition and Room and Board Increases  
Must Not Disproportionately Impact Those  
Most at Risk of Dropping Out/Transferring



## EARLY ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLE

*Expectancy of Success*  
*X Value of the Activity = MOTIVATION*



## RETENTION LEADERSHIP

Must be Empowered to Leverage  
and Coordinate Resources for  
Immediate Impact



CURRICULAR PATHWAYS  
Must be Clear and Attainable  
with Safety Nets



## UNIVERSITY-WIDE EFFORT

With Special Emphasis on the  
Role of Faculty in Advising and  
Relationship-Rich Education



FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE  
Must be Exceptionally Welcoming



## ENROLLMENT

Recalibration of Enrollment Goals  
Focus on Characteristics of Students  
We Enroll



STUDENT SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION  
Must be Immediate, Consistent & Free of  
Bureaucracy



# STUDENT SUCCESS AND RETENTION STRATEGY--FINANCIAL

- **Current tuition and fee increases disproportionately impact those most at risk of dropping out/transferring**

## ***Immediate Intervention in 22-23:***

**Additional aid to targeted students to help defray the cost of the increase.**

- Given the prior strategy of increasing student enrollment, the \$19,000 in accumulated tuition increases over the past decade have only yielded a \$2,000 net tuition increase per student, which is less than 1% compounded annual growth. Over that same time period, the percentage of Pell eligible students at Stetson has increased by over 10% (most recent entering class is 43.2% Pell eligible).

## ***Intervention:***

**Deeper analysis of Stetson's price point and discounting model is essential for market competitiveness and financial sustainability. Need Board of Trustees guidance.**

**Stetson must contemplate what level of Pell eligibility (generally--family income under \$40K and expected family contribution under \$7K) we can afford to serve these students well. Need Board of Trustees guidance.**

# Student Retention and Success Strategy: Enrollment

## *Recalibration of Enrollment Goals*

### *Greater focus on the CHARACTERISTICS of the students we enroll*

- Over the last decade, selectivity has steadily declined (now accepting 80% of applicants).
- Unrealistic FTIC enrollment targets (950 FTIC/175 transfer to balance budget and to anticipate attrition) resulting in annual disappointment, budget uncertainty, and poor retention.

## *Immediate Intervention*

(not sufficient longer term without retention gains) is to set more realistic enrollment goals (825 FTIC/125 Transfer). These goals are based on 10-year averages at Stetson (2012-2022).

# Student Retention and Success Strategy: Enrollment--continued

## *Immediate Intervention*

Co-locate enrollment and marketing operations in Rinker Welcome Center (this move is being orchestrated immediately with a complete integration no later than January 1, 2023).

Reimagined enrollment and marketing leadership with a single **Senior Vice President for Enrollment, Marketing and University Communications**.

Napier Executive Search has been hired and position advertised. Krista Bofill and Elizabeth Skomp, Co-Chairs of Search Committee. January 1, 2023 start date is ambitious but this search is moving forward with all deliberate speed.

Launch “**Stetson Entourage Program**” designed to recruit and matriculate “groups” of 3-5 students from targeted high schools.

First target schools selected for this initiative:

- Northern Florida (Jacksonville) – Episcopal School of Jacksonville
- Southern Florida (Miami) – Christopher Columbus High School
- Southern Florida (Palm Beach) – The Benjamin School
- New England (Rhode Island) – Bishop Hendricken High School
- New England (Connecticut) – Cheshire Academy
- New England (Connecticut)--Avon Old Farms School
- Southeast Region (Georgia) – Mount Pisgah Christian School
- Mid-Atlantic (Maryland) – St. Anthony’s

# Student Retention and Success Strategy: University-Wide Effort

New Vice President for Campus Life and Student Success (CLaSS)

**John Downey** (January 1, 2023 start date) is a proven leader in retention. John was a key architect/leader in Queens University moving its retention by well over 10% in six years to a high of 82%. John is especially skilled at fostering collaboration across areas (academic, student support, campus activities) to promote retention.

**Collaboration with (and Leadership by) Faculty is Essential!**

# Student Retention and Success Strategy: Early Academic Engagement

## ***Expectancy of Success X Value of the Activity= MOTIVATION***

Student orientation activities will be advanced to the summer months to promote meaningful engagement upon the time of deposit starting with next Fall's incoming class.

Faculty reimagining the First Year Seminar Experience (FSEM) to ensure early opportunities for student success and "meeting students where they are." Early academic success leads to both retention and longer term academic success.

Incentivize full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty to teach both FSEMS and other introductory level courses so that incoming students are immediately immersed with the most significant investment we make (our faculty).

Invest in Stetson faculty to create up to ten "asynchronous" half-unit courses across disciplines that can be deployed throughout breaks in student schedules. This not only promotes early academic engagement, but also affords students the opportunity to make academic progress if they fall behind, have to drop a course, or have stalled in their progress toward the degree.

# Student Retention and Success Strategy: Curricular Pathways

## ***Must Be Clear and Attainable--Must Include Safety Nets***

Data Point: A full 1/2 of undergraduate degree earners moving forward will have some community college or junior college transfer credit on their transcripts.

Data Point: A full 1/3 of undergraduate students are expected to transfer from one four-year college/university to another four-year college/university.

- **Promote Close Mentoring of Students and Innovative Curricular and Advising Approaches (particular emphasis on the first year student experience)**
- **“3-2 Plus One” Workload Reform**
- **These workload reforms must be coupled with faculty driven movement on General Education Requirements, Requirements within Each Academic Major, and Transfer Rules.**
- **Again, Curricular Pathways Must Be Clear and Attainable, With Safety Nets.**



# Student Retention and Success Strategy: First Year Experience

## ***Must be Exceptionally Welcoming***

This is already a demonstrable strength of Stetson University (student commentary from Roellke FSEM on American Higher Education, Fall, 2022).

Investments are needed in Residential Living and Learning (Chaudoin renewal already underway @ \$5.6 million)

Complete residential audit of every single "bed" on campus. EYP Consultants have been hired with report ready for Board review in Spring, 2023.

Amplify the voices of our students and our faculty. This is where the "rubber hits the road." Listen and quickly respond to these voices.

A sense of **belonging** must be established and **nourished throughout**.

# Investments—capital projects

## **Board/community consideration of competing demands for capital projects and other investments**

- Academic Spaces (Advocacy Institute, Tampa Law Center, Elizabeth Hall, ADA accessibility, technology, etc.)
- Performance Space (SOM and across disciplines)
- Residential Living and Learning (Complete Residential Audit Ready in Spring, 2023)
- Environmental Sustainability, Conservation & Education (Sandra Stetson Aquatic Center, Matt's Point, STAR Report). Stetson has already committed to carbon neutrality by 2040—can we accelerate this goal?
- Community Gathering Space (Edmunds Center, Hulley Tower—Soul of Stetson, 145 Michigan Avenue)
- Athletic Competition Spaces (Melching Field, Edmunds Center, Beach Volleyball, etc.). Two of these facilities are shared with the City of DeLand (Melching and Spec Martin).