

# Student Success and Retention: National Context, Task Force Recommendations, EPT's Next Steps

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Educational Policy and Technology  
Report to the Faculty Senate  
8 September 2023

# Summary

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- ❑ **National context:** The pandemic and related trends exacerbated already existing problems in K-12 education, impacting performance in college classrooms across the country.
- ❑ **GW response:** EPT began discussing these trends in Fall 2022. In February 2023, Provost Bracey established the Student Success and Retention Task Force.
- ❑ **Next steps:** In August 2023, EPT established a Subcommittee on Student Success and Retention to continue the discussion.

## Student hurdles – K-12 issues:

- basic math and reading comprehension
- disengagement

**2022:** “I want to be very clear: The results in today’s nation’s report card are appalling and unacceptable,” said Miguel Cardona, the secretary of education. “This is a moment of truth for education. *How we respond to this will determine not only our recovery, but our nation’s standing in the world.*” (emphasis added, NYT, Oct. 24, 2022)

**2023:** “We are actually seeing evidence of backsliding,” said Karyn Lewis, a lead researcher on the study. (NYT, July 11, 2023)

<https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>

2022  for every child

70 per cent of 10-year-olds in 'learning poverty', unable to read and understand a simple text

COVID-19 worsens global learning crisis, risking \$21 trillion in lifetime earnings

The New York Times

## Math Scores Fell in Nearly Every State, and Reading Dipped on National Exam

The results, from what is known as the nation’s report card, offer the most definitive picture yet of the pandemic’s devastating impact on students.

2022

The Pandemic Was a ‘Wrecking Ball’ for K-12, and We’re Still Tallying the Damage

2022 

# National Context

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## Shifting metrics:

### U.S. News Announces Survey Distribution Date and Outcomes-Focused Updates to Methodology for Upcoming Best Colleges Rankings

May 19, 2023, at 8:00 a.m.

- A key academic priority for universities is improving their four- and six-year graduation rates.
- Rankings will increasingly emphasize this moving forward.

U.S. News in the coming year will remove many components of its former rankings (e.g., class size and alumni giving) and replace them with *graduation rate measures*.

# GW's Response: Shared governance timeline

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Actions taken with active participation by faculty and administration:

- EPT begins discussing national trends in the context of GW-related offices (e.g., Office of Student Success, CPS, DSS) in Fall 2022.
- The Provost establishes the Student Success and Retention Taskforce in Spring 2023.
- After receiving feedback from EPT, the Provost sends the interim report to GW schools with undergraduate instruction on Aug 2.
- EPT forms subcommittee on student success and retention during Aug 23 meeting.

# GW's Response: Task Force Recommendations

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Key Taskforce recommendations in effect for Fall 2023, including:

- Students are placed into the appropriate courses, through proctored ALEKS math placement test.
- Advisors provide critical information on alternative curricular pathways within the major (and perhaps internal transfer options) to students.
- Faculty teaching first-year introductory courses are provided with Student Success Toolkit.
- Faculty urged to provide early intervention (e.g., Faculty Feedback) by *third week* of semester.
- More targeted follow up of student progress.

# EPT Next Steps: Subcommittee

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Through its **Subcommittee on Student Success and Retention**, the committee will continue to:

- Study strategies for enhancing student success and retention at GW and other universities to address the national trends.
- Gather recommendations for best practices for first-year classes.
- Study what helps student engagement.
- Consider existing research on what key metrics to track (according to different programs, fields, departments).

EPT will provide feedback to the Provost's Office.

# Final thoughts

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***These are national trends that are affecting higher education.***

***It's essential that we are all aware of these issues and are therefore active partners in addressing them.***

Please consider:

- Volunteering for this subcommittee (if interested, email: [fosterir@gwu.edu](mailto:fosterir@gwu.edu) or [sewagner@gwu.edu](mailto:sewagner@gwu.edu)).
- Providing information, insights, and best practices regarding your own courses, or within your departments or programs.