Retention 10/24/2106 M. Kinney

 The new First Year Adventure program at UW-River Falls is halfway through its first semester, and seems to be going well. Molly Kinney has the story.

MP3 RUNS: 1:34 O/C: STD.

MOLLY KINNEY: THE FIRST YEAR ADVENTURE PROGRAM WAS DEVELOPED FIRST AND FOREMOST TO HELP RETAIN STUDENTS. CYNDI KERNAHAN, ASSISTANT DEAN FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING, SAID CLASSES LIKE THIS ARE PROVEN TO HELP WITH RETENTION.

CYNDI KERNAHAN: WHAT WE’RE INTERESTED IN IS STUDENTS BEING RETAINED FROM FRESHMAN TO SOPHOMORE YEAR THAT’S AN IMPORTANT INITIATIVE FOR US, MAKING SURE STUDENTS STAY. MOST STUDENTS WHO COME WANT TO STAY AND WON’T DROP OUT, AND ONE THING THAT’S BEEN SHOWN TO IMPROVE RETENTION IS A CLASS LIKE THIS, A FIRST YEAR CLASS, AN INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE, BUT ALSO WITH INTERESTING CONTENT.

MOLLY KINNEY: CASEY MAUDE (MAWD) IS ONE PROFESSOR WORKING IN THE PROGRAM, TEACHING A CLASS CALLED "99 PROBLEMS BUT THIS CLASS AIN’T ONE," CENTERED AROUND CRITICAL THINKING AND TEAMWORK. HE WENT THROUGH THE COMPETITIVE APPLICATION PROCESS TO GET ONE OF THESE COURSES.

CASEY MAUDE: AS I ACTUALLY STARTED GOING THROUGH THE PROCESS, IT BECAME MORE ABOUT THINGS I WANTED TO DO IN MY ENGLISH CLASSES THAT JUST DIDN’T QUITE FIT. THEY WERE EITHER TOO COMPLICATED OR I JUST COULDN’T JUSTIFY THEM BECAUSE THEY WEREN’T SPECIFIC.

MOLLY KINNEY: STUDENTS IN HIS CLASS ARE DOING TUTORIAL-STYLE LEARNING AND PROJECTS, WHERE STUDENTS COLLABORATE AND END UP BEING THE TEACHER AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER.

CASEY MAUDE: SO THEY’RE SEPARATE TOPICS, SEPARATE RESEARCH, BUT THAT HAS ENOUGH IN COMMON THAT THEY CAN COME TOGETHER AND DISCUSS WITH ME IN THE END , AND I CAN ASK OK WHAT DID YOU LEARN. THE NAME COMES FROM THEM KIND OF BECOMING THE TEACHERS AND ME THE LEARNER.

MOLLY KINNEY: MOST STUDENTS INTERVIEWED ABOUT THE PROGRAM SEEMED TO BE ENJOYING THEIR PROJECTS, AND KERNAHAN SAID THAT THE PROGRAM WILL DEFINITELY CONTINUE NEXT YEAR.

FOR FALCON NEWS SERVICE, I’M MOLLY KINNEY.

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