December 2024

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Barnard College

HELPING STUDENTS COME BACK

OUTLINE

BARNARD COLLEGE

- Located in New York, NY
- Private Women's Liberal Arts College
- 3,500 undergraduate students
- Intercorporate agreement allows cross-registration and participation between Barnard College and the Columbia University colleges

STAFF INVOLVED WITH LEAVES OF ABSENCE

- Dean's Office of Advising and Student Success
  - Class Dean
    - Advises students who are struggling on academic options, such as course withdrawal, Pass/D/Fail, and leave of absence
    - Helps students update degree plan upon return from leave
  - College Case Manager
    - Meets with all students planning to withdraw or take a leave of absence
    - Guides students through Slate form process for going on leave and returning
- Office of The Registrar
  - Processes and reports all leaves, withdrawals, and returns
  - Updates grading for students withdrawing or going on leave
  - Prepares returning students for registration
- International Student Services, Health Services, and Financial Aid
  - Participates in Slate form review

REGISTRATION AND RETURN PROCESSES

- Registration
  - Early Registration occurs for a week in April for Fall and November for Spring
  - Registration during that week is based on completed credits/class level
  - Additional registration periods monthly, aligned with Columbia undergraduate colleges
  - First two weeks of classes is shopping period, which is very active with many students changing schedules and testing out courses
- Request to Return
  - During the semester prior to their return, students are contacted by Case Manager regarding submitting their Request to Return
  - Deadline for RTR is June 1 for Fall returns and November 1 for Spring Returns
  - Students are required to have a meeting with Case Manager
  - Students on Medical leave must provide documentation and may need to meet with Health Services
  - Students on required academic leaves must submit unofficial transcript for coursework completed

CHALLENGES FACES BY RETURNING STUDENTS

- Returning students had their first registration opportunity either during the shopping period or with incoming transfer and visiting students (December/August)
- At the point registration was available, many courses students needed for their degree were filled and getting back on track towards the degree became more difficult
- For students returning in the Fall, registration began prior to the deadline for them to apply to return
- Students on required academic leaves do not usually receive final approval until a few weeks before the start of the term
- Students on medical leaves can be delayed by the timeline to get approval/documentation from their doctor and Barnard Health Services

NEW RETURN INITIATIVE

- In the Spring of 2022. Barnard College began seeking a process that could be implemented that would help to ease the transition for returning students
- A survey was distributed to students who had recently returned from leave, or were currently on leave to ask what obstacles or challenges they felt they faced in returning to their studies at Barnard
- Concerns about being able to register for the courses students need was causing a significant amount of stress for students
- Registrar Office wanted to find a way to balance compliance/having a clear a process with student experience

CHANGE TO REGISTRAR PROCESS

- Beginning with students returning for Spring 2023, a new form called the Intent to Return was created.
- This form allowed students to indicate that they plan to return for a particular term and therefore would like to be eligible for early registration, even if their official Request to Return would not be complete and processed in time
- Students who submitted the Intent to Return were granted permission to register as long as they were on a voluntary personal leave
- Once the deadline for the Request to Return has passed, students who had submitted the Intent to Return but not the Request to Return were dropped from their enrolled classes

CHANGE TO REGISTRAR PROCESS

- Barnard began seeing success and positive feedback from allowing returning students to register during Early Registration
- However, our advising colleagues pointed out that having a separate "Intent to Return" and "Request to Return" was causing communication issues
- In addition, students on required academic leaves or those on medical leaves were not initially eligible for the Intent to Return
- Starting with students returning in Fall 2024, the Intent to Return was replaced with a form for reactivation of account credentials
- All students who submit their Request to Return by the deadline before early registration are given the opportunity to register during early registration.
- College Case Manager keeps Registrar informed as students are approved to Return and those that are not approved by deadline are dropped from their classes

EFFECTS NOTED BY STUDENTS

- Students are surveyed a month after they have returned so that the college case manager and advising team can see where there may be successes and pain points in the process
- Since the Registrar's registration changes were made, students have consistently noted that the ability to register early had a significant impact on their comfort level with returning and their confidence that they will be able to get back on track towards graduation
- Other aspects of the return process noted by students
  - Communication issues with Housing
  - International Student Services
  - Clarity around external credits while on leave

QUESTIONS?

PLEASE SUBMIT EVALUATION ON WHOVA

BARNARD