

Ginger Ambler  
Vice President for Student Affairs  
Board of Visitors Presentation, February 2010

# Supporting Students' Academic Success

# It's What We Do!

- “One of the world’s great liberal arts universities”
- Academics – teaching and learning – is the **heart of our mission**
- **Incredible Students** – Intelligent, ambitious, passionate
- **Outstanding Faculty**, dedicated to our student and to teaching
- **Wealth of Opportunities** for Research, Honors, Interdisciplinary Studies
- **Excellent facilities** – libraries, labs, etc.

“Who comes here belongs here . . .”  
1949 Student Handbook

All Students Can  
Succeed Academically  
at William and Mary



# Not in High School Anymore . . .

- New levels of academic rigor
- College schedules, college time
- Autonomy
- Autonomy
- Autonomy



# In Student Affairs, particularly . . .

- Orientation Programs and Staff
- Printed and Web Resources
- Needs of special populations – transfer, co-enrolled, international, students with disabilities
- Workshops throughout the year
- Collaboration with Academic Advising, Reeves Center, Athletics, and members of the faculty

# Teaching Project Lunch and Workshop

Monday, February 8, 2010  
The Charles Center



## Assisting Diverse Groups of Students

### Presenters:

**John Baltes, Government:** "Teaching Writing to Transfer Students and Freshmen"

**Ben Boone, Dean of Students Office:** "Resources on Campus for Transfer Students"

**Nancy Everson, Dean of Students Office:** "Students and Anxiety"

### Faculty Moderators:

Stacey Pelika, Cheryl Dickter, Molly Swetnam-Burland, Catherine Forestell, Christy Porter

**Description:** Our panel addresses several issues associated with academic success, with a focus on particular groups of students, including freshmen, transfers, and students with anxiety. Our speakers will highlight specific strategies that can be useful for faculty and describe resources available on campus.

# Dual Focus in Student Affairs

Focus on the Individual, Focus on the Campus Environment



# Unique Nature of W&M

- Heavily residential – 75% of undergraduates live on campus
- Predominantly full-time – almost all undergraduates, and 70% of graduate students
- Low 11:1 Student-faculty ratio
- Students are accustomed to achieving at very high levels
- Creates an environment with greater pressures to be successful



# Understanding Expectations

- Academic Requirements
- Academic standards for continuance
- Grade calculation (credit hours, quality points, GPA)
- Continuance Standards
- Academic Integrity, Proper Documentation
- Honor societies and other recognition

# Helping the Individual

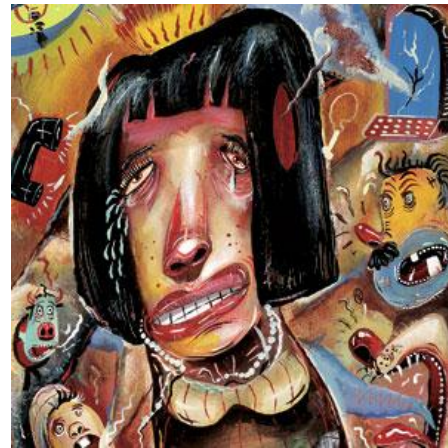
- Time Management
- Memory and Concentration
- Attention Span and Taking Breaks
- Note-Taking Strategies
- Textbook Reading Techniques
- Test-Taking Strategies
- Minimizing Test Anxiety
- Specific Skills – by discipline, writing, oral presentation
- Career Development from Day 1

# Academic Interventions

- Mid-Semester Progress Reports
- Required Workshops for Students on Academic Probation
- Working with Students Experiencing Personal Issues and/or Life Disruptions
- Dean of Students Office, Counseling Center, Health Center

# What are the TOP 3 things that most negatively affect students academically?

- #3 Sleep (lack of!)
- #2 Cold, flu, illness
- #1 STRESS



# The Residential Experience

- Self-Determination – Students create their own community agreements in which they designate lounge space or study hours and set quiet hours for their halls
- Most residence halls have lounges that are used for social or recreational purposes, and, sometimes exclusively for study
- Work with roommates as they create roommate agreements – room environment important
- All residence halls have wireless access throughout the buildings



# Residential Living



- Creating a "home" where students feel they belong and where sometimes relaxation and socialization are stress reducers and are often the best recipes for success
- Events and activities supporting the academic mission. These include professors speaking on topics of expertise or interest, college staff speaking on things like careers and majors, RAs planning events around topical issues
- Extended orientation sessions address topical issues (alcohol, sexual assault, diversity, community standards) linked to student success

# Focus on Health and Wellness

“Create a community that values a life in balance . . .” (W&M Strategic Plan, Grand Challenge #3)

- Campus Recreation
- Counseling Center
- Health Education
- Healthy Choices, Coping Strategies
- Student Health Center
- Student Activities
- Civic Engagement



**“Success doesn’t come to you – you go to it.”**

*Marva Collins, educator*