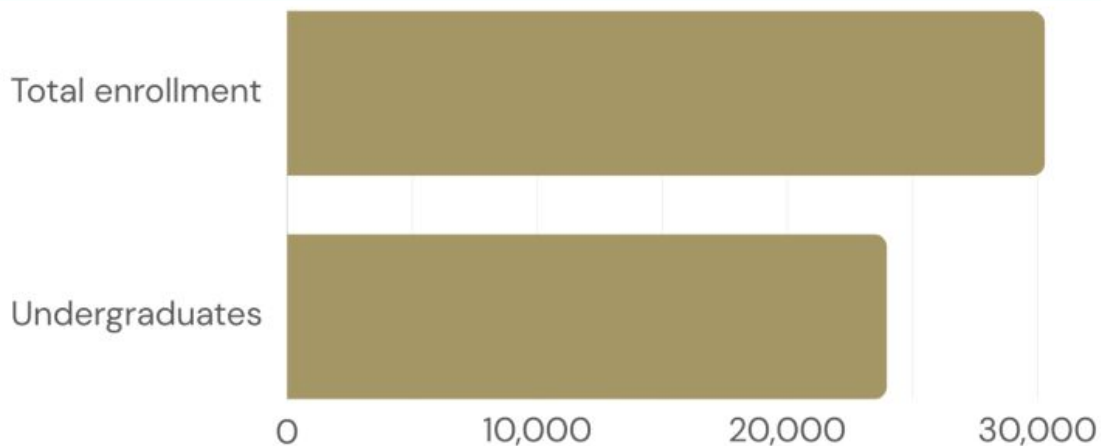# Optimizing Federal Work Study Utilization: A Transformative Approach in Academic Support

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Learning Objectives

1. Gain insight into one institution's path to optimizing Federal Work Study funding by investigating the award and utilization processes.

2. Discuss establishing successful partnerships between student support services and financial aid functions.

3. Learn strategies from a successful pilot program that resulted in considerable savings.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
CHARLOTTE

Total enrollment

Undergraduates

0   10,000   20,000   30,000

1946

Founded for veterans

44%
New Transfer Students

42%
First Generation

75%
Receive Financial Aid
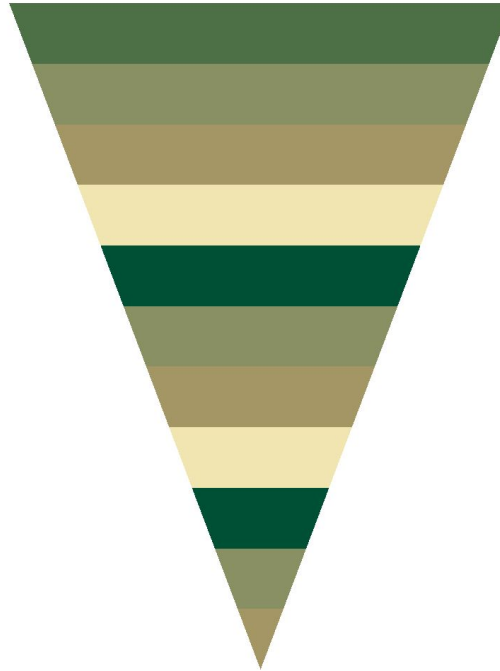
41%
Receive Pell Grant

85%
First Year Retention

Academic Affairs

Undergraduate Education
Communication Consultants
Undeclared Advising Center
Undergraduate Research
First Year Curriculum
Academic Diversity
General Education
Disability Services
Athletic Advising
Transfer Center
Career Services
Learning Center

Enrollment Management
Undergraduate Admissions
Enrollment Communication
Scholarship Office
Adult Students
Niner Central
Financial Aid
Registrar

History

How it Started: 2018

Change in the hiring procedure for Federal Work Study Students +

Drop in students utilizing aid +

Interested Program Assistant

Pilot Evolution

2018

2019

2020

FA identified new mentors who had already been awarded FWS

LC submitted all student hires to FA to be awarded FWS if eligible

Expanded student list beyond LC + Daily report to track FWS acceptance status

Results

Status	F19	S20	F20	S21	F21	S22	F22	S23	F23	S24
Awarded	28	53	15	63	50	71	86	87	80	53
	27%	21%	6%	27%	23%	30%	28%	30%	22%	28%
Eligible Not Awarded	0	37	75	1	8	0	0	0	36	10
	0%	14%	28%	0%	4%	0%	0%	0%	10%	5%
No FAFSA	52	68	108	72	70	64	108	75	142	56
	50%	27%	40%	31%	33%	27%	35%	26%	38%	30%
Not Eligible	23	98	70	98	86	104	113	128	113	70
	22%	38%	26%	42%	40%	44%	37%	44%	30%	37%
Total Students	103	256	268	234	214	239	307	290	371	189
Offices Represented	1	5	9	6	9	4	7	7	8	5

Unit	Fall 2023		Spring 2024	
Office of Student Development and Success - Engineering	14	$12,000	0	$0
Communication Consultations	11	$44,000	18	$64,000
College of Engineering Peer Mentors	3	$12,000	0	$0
Math Teaching Assistants	10	$36,000	4	$16,000
Office of Undergraduate Research	7	$28,000	0	$0
Learning Center	26	$103,000	20	$72,300
Teaching Assistants	12	$47,000	7	$26,000
WRC	8	$32,000	4	$15,000
Total	91	$314,000	53	$193,300

	Fall 2023				Spring 2024			
	FWS Students	% of Team	Hours	Amount	FWS Students	% of Team	Hours	Amount
Peer Tutoring	3	5%	297	$3,716	7	9%	404	$5,044
Peer Assisted Learning	5	18%	696	$8,703	3	11%	195	$2,472
Peer Mentors	5	20%	539	$6,731	5	17%	469	$5,877
Total	**13**	**12%**	**1,532**	**$19,150**	**15**	**11%**	**1,067**	**$13,393**

Projects Funded by this Pilot

- Outdoor furniture to create a study space outside building

- 20 laptops and a charging cart to store them

- Expanded peer leader programs

- Student raises

- Expanded summer staff

- Building maintenance projects

Verification Process

UNC Charlotte's Process

1. Peer leader programs identify students they plan to hire - both new and returning students

2. Programs add student's identifying information to a shared spreadsheet by a predetermined deadline (in the spring, only new students are added)

3. Financial Aid reviews entries and awards as many students as possible

4. Programs communicate FWS requirements to awarded students and ask them to accept their award

5. Programs confirm acceptance by a report emailed each day that has the status of all FWS students

6. The program submits the appropriate hiring paperwork for students

Implementation Suggestions

Lessons to be Shared

- Start small
    - There will be problems - this will help you find them
    - Keeps it manageable for both you and your campus partners
- Collaborate with partners
    - Ask what problems they have that you could solve through this
    - Respect their timelines and busy seasons
    - Meet each semester to refine the process and share issues and successes
- Develop clear communication channels and resources

Thank you!

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