



Write a note to a first-year or transfer student

Dear _____, I hope you're having a great first year on campus. I'm glad you're here.

- Louis Epstein (I teach music history)

Dear _____, So glad you joined the St. Olaf community. Have a great day!

- Chris George (Admissions)

Retention Committee 24-25





Improved Retention

92.2% First-Year Retention Rate (90.5%)

87.2% Second-Year Retention Rate (85.1%)

83.9% Third-Year Retention Rate (82.8%)

% as of fall 2024 (% in 2023)

During one-on-one meetings with SOAR leaders this year,
first-year students identified

223 Staff and Faculty

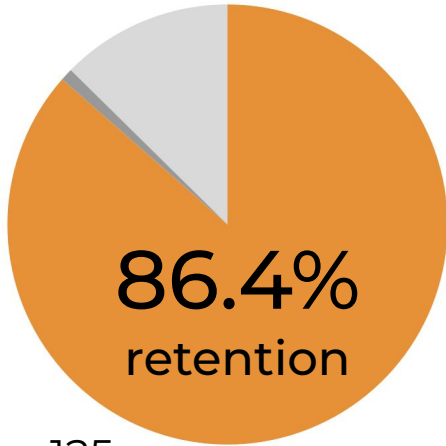
with whom they had made a strong connection.

90 faculty and staff made connections with
3 or more first-years.

THANK YOU!!!!

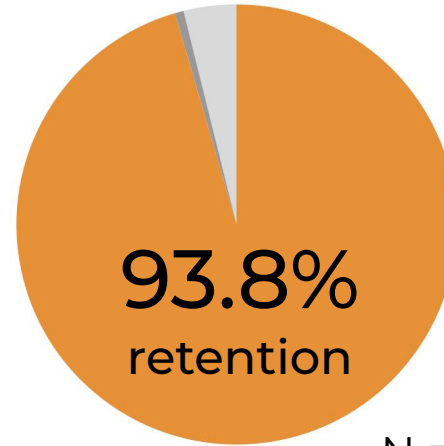
Advisor as Instructor

Persistence Fall 2023 to Fall 2024
for First-Years enrolled in Fall 2023



N = 125

Advisor NOT Fall Instructor



N = 545

Fall Instructor as Advisor

Recent Retention Initiatives

Academic Expo and Major Declaration

First Year Experience & SOAR

The Sophomore Experience

Success & Career Coaching

Progress Updates

Engage Program

Advisor-as-Instructor (6-to-5)

Classroom Research Study

Required Office Hours

Valued Contribution Emails

Early Semester Feedback Loop

Recognizing the Whole Person

Early Alerts

Not a Punishment for Students (or us)

Absences

Poor Work

Risk of Failure

Desire to Transfer

Personal Difficulties

Ghosting



We're all teachers and mentors

Strategic Priority: St. Olaf will guide each student's flexible, holistic St. Olaf Pathway through advising, mentoring, and the development or purchase of a software platform to capture student learning in and out of the classroom.

Strategic Priority: St. Olaf will systemically infuse a culture of belonging and well-being across the entire campus community.

We care about our students.



Thanks for helping them thrive

What do you think the College could do better when it comes to student belonging and retention?

What roles do you think faculty and staff have to play in improving student belonging and retention?