Sarah Hansen, Vice-President for Student Life
What Matters for Undergraduate Retention

- **Learning**: Make learning central
- **Relationships**: Don’t leave relationships to chance
- **Expectations**: Clear and high expectations
- **Alignment**: Transform silos into systems
- **Improvement**: Assess and improve process and outcomes
- **Leadership**: Nurture a culture of purpose across the organization
“One dimension of making learning central to campuses that deserves much greater attention is helping students integrate their various learning experiences. Excellent undergraduate education prompts students to make connections between classroom and out-of-classroom learning, between college and career, and between academic disciplines and personal purpose.”

Felten, Gardner, Schroeder, Lambert, Barefoot, 2016
Iowa GROW® uses brief, structured conversations between student employees and their supervisors to help make the learning that is occurring through student employment more “visible” to the students.

The conversations focus on 4 key questions about what students are learning and how they are applying their learning.

- How is this job fitting in with your academics?
- What are you learning here that’s helping you in school?
- What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
- Can you give me a couple of examples of things you’ve learned here that you think you will use in your chosen profession?
Why does Iowa GROW matter?

- Iowa GROW® (Guided Reflection on Work) makes student employment a "high-impact activity," one that requires students to reflect on their learning and connect their learning within and beyond the classroom.
- GROW® participants are retained at 7-15 points higher than non-GROW® participants

- Jump start to belonging
- On-campus internships

“My job provided me with a sense of belonging. It gave me a place where I was needed, a place where I was accepted, and a place I was expected to be.”

-DSL Student Employee
Why does Iowa GROW matter?
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CAMPUS JOBS ARE A MOBILITY TOOL

- DSL First Gen Student Employee Retention
- UI First Generation Retention

Graph showing trends from 2012 to 2020.
Iowa GROW® participants were significantly more likely (p<.01) to agree/strongly agree that their job was helping them attain the following 10 outcomes of student employment, and to be able to to articulate specific examples:

1. My supervisor helps me make connections between my work and my life as a student.
2. My job has helped prepare me for the world of full-time employment.
3. I can see connections between my job and major/coursework.
4. My job has helped me learn about career options.
5. My job has helped me improve my writing skills.
6. My job has helped me develop more effective time management skills.
7. My job has helped me improve my verbal communication skills.
8. My job has helped me develop conflict negotiation skills.
9. My job has helped me use critical thinking skills to form opinions and solve problems.
10. Because of my job, I am able to work effectively with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures.
“Not only does GROW illustrate the power of simple reflective practices, but it also underscores how small interventions can have significant outcomes for the undergraduate experience.”

Nate Robinson

- Hired as a first-year student
- Worked in VSPL all four years
- Alpha Phi Alpha, Inc.
- Homecoming Royalty
- RA for Young, Gifted, Black LLC
- Teach for America
- Legislative Fellow for Rep. James Clyburn, Majority Whip
Chloe Inskeep

- Hired as a first-year student
- First-Gen Hawks Participant
- Active in CHAARG
- Senior Class: 82

My employment is in the office of the vice president for student life. Every single time we see each other, the vice president talks to me about how it's going and how I'm feeling. And, along with her assistant, Eric Rossow, they have been, seriously, one of the best things ever for me and my education. They make you feel like you want to be there, and they want you there.
We (faculty/staff/institutions) must reframe student employment from:

① transactional to transformational
② supervision to mentoring
③ expenditure to investment

Student jobs can be on-campus internships