

Making good on its pledge: Alfred University alumna's gift will help students graduate on time
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A gift from Pamela Lavin Bernstein &71 will help Alfred University make good on its pledge to students that the University will make it as easy as possible for them to graduate on time.

The \$625,000 gift will allow the University to augment its faculty advisors with professional academic advisors who will serve as coaches to a large portion of the University's first year students, helping them to stay on track to complete their baccalaureate degrees on time, which is part of the Alfred Pledge. The pledge is a commitment to students that if they fulfill their part of the bargain with satisfactory and on-time completion of courses and declaration of major, the University will assure they can complete their degree in four years

"We are thrilled with the support Pam Bernstein is providing our students with her gift," said Alfred University President Mark Zupan. "Through her gift, Alfred University will gain the tools and the people it needs to improve both our student retention rate and our four-year graduation rate. Both are standards upon which the University is measured."

"My hope with this philanthropic investment is to further Alfred University's commitment to ensuring the success of our students," said Bernstein.

Alfred University sees the gift as doing exactly that: assuring the success of its students.

The advisors will initially work with students who may experience barriers to timely degree completion, according to Kathy Woughter, vice president for Student Affairs, who oversees the University's student retention efforts. She explained students who do not yet know what major they are interested in, who are coming from a long geographic distance away, or who may face academic or financial barriers will be among the first assigned to the academic advisors.

When working with students, the academic advisors will also coordinate with the Career Development Center, Financial Aid, and the Center for Academic Success, as well as the faculty advisors, to help students identify the appropriate path to a degree, and ultimately to a career.

"Throughout her years of involvement with Alfred University, Pam has always been focused on the student experience - not just one-time experiences, but sustained engagement that encourages retention and on-time graduation," Woughter said. "Pam's gift and her tireless focus on student success will help us grow our retention and graduation rate so that more AU students are able to finish their degree in a timely manner. Her emphasis on advising students who may be at risk is especially welcome; it allows us to provide an academic coaching model that will supplement our excellent faculty advising."

Through her previous gifts to Alfred University, Bernstein has created scholarships, provided travel grants and leadership gifts that help students benefit from applied and experiential learning opportunities.

As a charter member of what is now the Judson Leadership Center's Advisory Board, Bernstein has been tireless in her efforts on behalf of the leadership program. She also created the Pamela Lavin Bernstein Women of Influence Speaker Series that allows the University to bring in high-profile speakers who are leaders in a wide variety of professions.