

Lawton appointed director of retention

9/19/05

Alfred University has welcomed Elizabeth Lawton of Pownal, VT, as its director of student retention. "We are enthusiastic about Ms. Lawton's ideas for improving connections between students and the Alfred University community," said Wendy C. Beckemeyer, vice president of enrollment management, to whom the retention director reports. "Her past experience and breadth of education will enrich our enrollment management team." Although Alfred University's student retention rates are higher than the national average, there is always room for improvement and the University has made recruitment and retention institutional priorities, said Lawton. The director of retention is responsible for evaluating current practices, developing and implementing an institutional retention plan, reviewing existing data to find themes that need to be addressed, and participating in the determination and implementation of the marketing plan as it relates to student experience and institutional branding. Lawton has begun analyzing historical data regarding why students stay at Alfred University, and why they leave. She is also meeting with faculty, staff, and students to gain their perspectives on the issue. Lawton is also working with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to set up a peer-mentoring program. Future plans for Lawton include establishing more ways for students and faculty to connect outside the traditional classroom setting as well as working with Residence Life staff on activities that will help students feel a part of the University-wide community. She also plans to look at new and creative ways to use technology in both student recruitment and retention and will be networking with the Alumni Association. Lawton earned a bachelor of arts degree in sociology from the University of Vermont (1999), and a master's degree in education in risk and prevention from the Harvard Graduate School of Education (2003). Most recently, Lawton served as coordinator of corporate and foundation relations at Connecticut College, New London. Prior to that she was an intern for the Appalachian Mountain Teen Project, Wolfeboro, NH, where she mentored and counseled individual adolescents; was a staff assistant for the John F. Kennedy School of Government, External Affairs Office, Cambridge, MA; and was an associate at Bainco International Investors, Boston.