

## Encouraging Student-to-Student Support

Your former students can serve as invaluable resources for students who are currently enrolled in your course. There is a major difference between offering advice to students as an instructor and students receiving guidance from their peers. Students who have previously taken your course are able to pass along key strategies that enabled them to be successful in your course and, in turn, can lead current students toward a path of success.

Here are two strategies you can use to include former students in your course:

### 1. Form a panel.

On the first or second week of the semester, invite a group of three or four former students to your class to serve on a panel. Provide these students with a list of questions prior to attending your class. Some questions might include:

- How many hours per week did you spend studying and/or completing homework assignments?
- What types of strategies did you use to take notes on the readings?
- What study methods did you use to prepare for exams?
- What instructor-provided or campus resources were most helpful to you?

Have your former students on the panel respond to these questions during class, and then allow your current students to ask them any additional questions.

### 2. Use advice cards.

At the end of the semester, distribute blank index cards to students in your course. Ask them to write down advice for students who will be taking the same course in the future. You can provide students with the panel questions listed above to help them brainstorm ideas. Collect the index cards and read them to familiarize yourself with the kinds of advice your students are offering and to identify patterns among responses.

At the start of the next semester, distribute the cards to students who are taking the same course. You can give one card to each student or have students form small groups and distribute multiple cards to each group. After students read the cards, ask them to share the advice on their cards with the full class. Engage students in a discussion about how they can be successful in your course and use this as an opportunity to direct students to useful resources.