

Sacred Heart University

From the Selected Works of Sean Heffron

April 25, 2017

SHU Creates Position Devoted to Student Success

Sean Heffron, *Sacred Heart University*



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Sean Heffron will be SHU's new executive director of student success.

Sacred Heart University students will have another guide to help their progress through college with the creation of a new staff position: executive director of student success. Sean Heffron, who will take on the position May 1, will play a critical role in the University's efforts to increase student engagement and success.

Heffron currently serves as director of student experience for SHU's [Jack Welch College of Business](#) and is responsible for many programs. His upcoming responsibilities will have him working directly with deans of the University's five colleges, directors and other campus administrators to design and implement an aggressive, University-wide strategy to improve undergraduate student retention and degree-completion rates.

"Keeping in mind the end goal is improving the student experience, my initial focus is to listen," Heffron said after the University announced his appointment. "To create an intentional, successful experience for our students, I need to start by meeting with leaders at each of the colleges and with student affairs, and learning about the unique needs of our students and how they are being met. We have some amazing people working at Sacred Heart who have created great examples of student services and high-impact practices. My initial focus is to learn about our best programs and practices and see if we can expand and scale up."

Rupendra Paliwal, provost and vice president for academic affairs, said Heffron will focus on coordinated efforts to help students attain excellence in the classroom, which will lead to successful employment in their chosen fields or acceptance to graduate school. "In addition, Sean will oversee the Student Success Center, supporting its mission to directly and proactively promote students' academic success by offering a wide range of services. He will also work closely with staffs who handle academic affairs, institutional research, enrollment management, student life, service learning and others engaged in research and assessment of student dropout patterns. Together, they will present opportunities to improve degree completion and ensure a seamless experience for student success, both in and out of the classroom." Heffron said he's looking forward to his new role. "When I talk to people on campus, there is a lot of passion to grow our programs and improve. There is a lot of care on this campus, a lot of voices. I think the creation of this position shows that the University values each of those voices," he said.

Heffron's career at Sacred Heart began 10 years ago. Before becoming director of the student experience, he was head coach of club baseball, director of first-year enrollment research and student engagement and a freshmen mentor. He has authored two books—*The Skinny on Your First Year in College* and *Seams*. He holds a bachelor's degree in speech communication from Ithaca College, a master's in student personnel administration from New York University and a master's in business administration from Sacred Heart.