RETURNING TO THE NEST:
HELPING FORMER STUDENTS GRADUATE

Seahawk Success Program (SSP)

- Established in 2017 at UNCW, this initiative was designed to recruit former students and provide options for a pathway to graduation. The website for the program can be found here: https://uncw.edu/cas/academic/seahawksuccess.html
- The SSP students may not have returned without a nudge and encouragement. Once they take the first step, having an advisor who helps them remove or address obstacles can make all the difference.

Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS)

- The IDS program was created with buy-in from all UNCW colleges and schools. We accepted our first group of students in fall 2018. The website for the degree program can be found here: https://uncw.edu/ids/index.html.
- The IDS degree may be for returning students who:
  - Want the flexibility to align their coursework with interests that may have changed while they have been away
  - Have moved away from the Wilmington area and need an online degree program
  - Want to earn a degree to increase their employment prospects, as well as opportunities for advancement in their current fields

Lessons Learned

- Important to be prepared for myriad of student scenarios; students surfaced who thought they had graduated but hadn’t completed all requirements.
- Clearinghouse list contained students who have graduated with at least a Bachelor’s
- Reinforced importance of establishing and maintaining relationships with campus departments and establishing a potential point of contact (e.g., Registrar, Financial Aid)
- Beneficial to employ staff familiar with UNCW degree programs and processes
- Many students need to reorient themselves with UNCW processes and academic work, so a virtual CANVAS orientation was created

Pitfalls

- The Seahawk Success Program is a university wide initiative but housed in College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and managed by one CAS advisor
- Limited human capital to advise SSP and IDS students
- UNCW is gradually increasing online offerings, but IDS students sometimes find it difficult to secure online upper division courses for which they qualify
- Time intensive substitution and approval process for new IDS courses
- Degree Works audit system has limitations creating additional IDS advising review