

# Declaration Celebration: iDeclare Week at Florida Atlantic University

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## Abstract

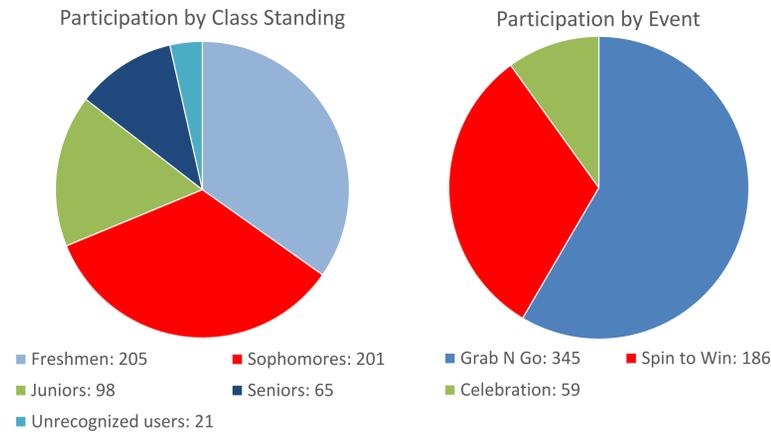
*iDeclare* at Florida Atlantic University began as a two week initiative sponsored by University Advising Services in 2016. *iDeclare* initially served as the sole event for our Exploratory first year students, where we promoted and celebrated major declaration. The first week of *iDeclare* included events, such as Grab n Go Breakfast and a professional panel sponsored by Career Center, while the second week consisted of walk-in advising to declare a major. In 2018, *iDeclare* was shortened to a one week initiative, known as *iDeclare Week* (February 19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018) with the goal of being the capstone initiative for our Exploratory first year students. Shortening the initiative to one week, we adjusted the schedule and partnered with Student Affairs, Housing, and Career Center to promote and execute the events throughout the week. With Florida Atlantic University's policy stating that students must declare their major by 45 credit hours, the emphasis of this week-long capstone celebration is the immediate need for major declaration to our Exploratory students. This annual initiative is an example of how Academic Advisors and Career Counselors can work together to promote, encourage, and celebrate students' exploration of themselves, college majors and careers leading to an informed decision about their future. Most importantly, *iDeclare Week* serves as the capstone event for our Exploratory student population, and to emphasize the time to declare their major is now.

## iDeclare Week 2018

- **Grab N Go Breakfast:** To kick-off *iDeclare Week*, Academic Advisors promoted the week's activities by visiting four primarily underclassmen residence halls and providing students with free breakfast. Here students receive a "passport" including the week's activities.
- **Exploratory Student Panel:** Hosted by Career Center, this panel allows current Exploratory students to hear first-hand advice and stories from former Exploratory students about how they discovered the right major for them.
- **Career Expo:** Exploratory students often benefit from hearing the stories of successful professionals. As part of *iDeclare Week*, students attend the Career Center sponsored event where undergraduate students can network with prospective employers to learn about potential internships, shadowing opportunities, and employment options related to specific majors.
- **Spin to Win:** Students can spin a wheel for correctly answering a question related to academic policies and campus resources. Students then receive a prize and are encouraged to take a major/career assessment from Career Center staff at the table. This event is strongly publicized on social media platforms, including a Snapchat takeover of FAU's official account and University Advising Service's and Career Center's official social media pages.
- **iDeclare Celebration:** Students are encouraged to attend this "finale" *iDeclare Week* event. Here, they receive free items such as t-shirts, phone chargers, and food. Students may meet with an Academic Advisor to declare their majors, meet with Career Center staff to take a major/career assessment, and learn about on-campus resources such as tutoring, Residential Student Scholars, Residential Career Coaches, and Student Health Services. Students also can win prizes by turning in their passports, proving they attended the week's events.

## Data & Outcomes

The committee tracked student participation by swiping student ID cards at each event during the week. This is the first year the *iDeclare* committee utilized card swipes as a method for tracking student participation.



Tracking student participation during the events served as a method to assist the *iDeclare* committee in identifying the student population we attracted during 2018. As the target audience for *iDeclare Week* is first year Exploratory students, *iDeclare Week* was successful in reaching that target. As many of the events were located throughout frequently utilized student spaces across the campus (such as student walkways and the student union,) the data also shows upperclassmen attended events throughout the week.

## Looking Ahead

*iDeclare Week* will continue to be a capstone initiative for our Exploratory student population at Florida Atlantic University, sponsored by University Advising Services and Career Center in 2019. Plans for *iDeclare Week 2019* are currently underway. A significant change to happen with *iDeclare* will be the committee. Typically composed of academic advisors and coaches from University Advising Services, and career counselors from Career Center, the committee will grow in size and campus reach. The committee is hopeful to include individuals from other functional areas of campus such as student involvement, commuter services, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Adjustments, changes, and expansions will also be made to the events of the week. Current plans for *iDeclare Week* events will be made based on the following factors:

- Student participation at events held during 2018.
- Development of learning outcomes for the week.
- Intentional collaboration with various departments and offices across campus to expand our reach.
- *iDeclare* committee is committed to reaching all our students, and will focus outreach to commuter and underrepresented student populations for 2019.
- Partnership with Student Affairs and Career Center, as well as utilization of their staff and programming.

## Conclusion

With Florida Atlantic University's policy stating that students must declare their major by 45 credit hours, it is important to emphasize the significance of major declaration and timely graduation to our Exploratory student population. As a way to emphasize major declaration, University Advising Services and Career Center will continue to sponsor and implement *iDeclare Week* as the capstone initiative for our Exploratory students. Through this annual event, we have been able to provide Exploratory students the opportunity of major declaration and immediate utilization of Academic Advising and Career Counseling. University Advising Services and Career Center will continue to expand and grow *iDeclare Week* at Florida Atlantic University by extending our reach across campus, improving programming, intentionally targeting various populations of students, while emphasizing that the time to declare a major is now.

## References

Florida Atlantic University. (2018). FAU Catalog - Academic Policies and Regulations.

Retrieved from <http://www.fau.edu/academic/registrar/FAUcatalog/academics.php>

**iDeclare Week 2018**  
Dates & Events

<b>Grab N Go Breakfast</b> February 19th 9a.m.-11a.m. Lobbies of HPT, GPT, IRT, & Parliament Hall	<b>Spin to Win</b> February 19th - 23rd Check social media for times and locations!	<b>Student Panel</b> February 20th 3p.m-4p.m. Majestic Palms
<b>Career Expo</b> February 21st 12p.m.-4p.m. Rec & Fitness Center Visit the Career Center table for more info.	<b>iDeclare Celebration</b> February 22nd 4p.m.-6p.m. Nations MPR (First floor of the housing office SH-46)	<b>#Declare</b>  @UASFAU

If reasonable accommodation(s) for a disability is required, contact University Advising Services SU Building, Room 201, 561-297-3064, advising@fau.edu a minimum of five (5) working days in advance of the date of the event for effective accommodations.

