Minutes of the Graduation and Retention Council  
January 29, 2010


Meeting convened at 10:05am.

1. Meeting Minutes of 12/15/09 were approved.
2. 4th Year Subcommittee Report – D. Adams

The subcommittee had planned to focus on two groups – students who had a high probability of graduating in 6-yrs or less and students who had a low probability. The low probability group did not respond and/or show up for the sessions. All data comes from the high probability group.

Fourteen suggestions came from the focus group of students – there is no particular significance to the order listed below. These are brainstorming ideas – no cost/benefit analysis was done.

1. Each department should have a suggested program of courses that will move the student through graduation in four years.
2. Departments should facilitate personal contact between faculty and students
3. FYE courses should acquaint students with the culture of campus life – students should be shown offices on campus and what each office can help them with.
4. There should be a more consistent oversight of resource allocation. Are more or less sections needed for particular courses?
5. Registration deadlines should be relaxed. * It is not clear what is meant by "registration deadlines” – is it add/drop? Is it the deadline for when classes that don’t meet enrollment are cancelled?
6. The policy of cancelling classes should be terminated or adopt a policy that a department must have an average number of students registered for their courses and only cancel classes when it is absolutely necessary. *There was brief discussion regarding the fact that students wait to sign up for certain classes instead of enrolling immediately.
7. The Gen Ed program needs to be presented differently to students so that they understand those classes are to further the student’s education goals.
8. There should be a planned program for Gen Ed that shows students how to fulfill the requirements in 4 years.
9. The list of Gen Ed courses that satisfy each requirement should list when each course is offered and how many credits it carries.
10. CCSU should institute an opt-in text messaging system to alert students to important deadlines and holds.
11. CCSU Facebook page should be more targeted to certain groups.
12. Put more monitors that display campus information around campus and expand the information shown on the monitors.
13. There should be some information kiosks around campus that have keyword search capability to direct students to finding answers.
14. Everyone who works in an administrative office needs a “customer service” attitude.

*Suggestion that each Admin office on campus should have a copy of the campus map for directing students.

Comments from council members:

B. Fangiullo: Bursar’s Office does customer service training for staff and student employees. Many students don’t know what they need so we ask lots of questions. Willing to go to FYE and give a presentation.
J. Mulrooney: Students should be held responsible for reading CCSU email since it is the official means of campus communication.

B. Fangiullo: There is an email policy but it is not promoted or visible on the CCSU web site. It needs to be more prominently displayed so it can be referred to by departments.

J. Paige: Students need reinforcement – should there be a message about the email policy on WebCentral-Banner Web pages?

B. Fangiullo: Students want communication from all angles - email, phone calls, snail mail, text messaging, announcements, Facebook, etc.

M. McLaughlin: Why should we put the same information on Facebook that a student can get on our web pages.

L. Washko: Because that’s where the students “live”.

S. Hazan: Is it true that students are no longer able to forward their CCSU email to an off-campus address?

L. Washko: Existing students who have email forwarded can keep it that way for now. All new students are given a MyCCSU email account at www.outlook.com. Their email address ends with my.ccsu.edu and it is theirs for life. They choose their email address name from a list provided by the university. In the very near future, all student email will be transitioned to my.ccsu.edu.

* It was suggested that the campus needs a fresh campaign to reinforce to students that email is the official form of communication of the university and students MUST read their CCSU email.

3. Communication Issues – L. Hall

Larry and Mark McLaughlin are forming a subcommittee that will discuss communication issues. If you would like to join the committee, contact Larry. Meetings are held every other Tuesday.

Some of the items that have been discussed regarding communication:

- Prospective students are shown presentations during Admissions information sessions with important information such as expectations of college students, hours of study, etc.
- Incoming freshmen now get an email from the SGA president, Alumni president, Dean of the School, and the President of the university.
- One web site where students can see every program and the graduation requirements for that program. Work is being done to get the program sheets posted online. Students should also be able to see a 4-year plan for each program.
- For continuing students: Each campus office should have maps available for students to help direct them to pertinent offices. Each campus office needs to reinforce email as the official means of communication.
- When there are events on campus, who needs to be notified and by which means in order to facilitate traffic flow?

4. Focus Group Report – B. Hosch

Focus groups of 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year students were conducted. Students were selected for groups based on their estimated probability of graduation. Only those with high probability chose to participate so the data is not really representative of all students.

Major Findings – Students with a high probability of graduating shared common characteristics:

- Highly motivated and self confident
- Actively sought out connections and friendships with other students, faculty, and with professionals in their fields
- Frustrated with curricular structures
- Frustrated with university communication and processes
Mixed perception of advising

Year specific issues
- 2nd year students has no issues to discuss
- 3rd year students found difficulty in junior year
- 4th year students talked about the lack of availability of internships

Comments from council members:
B. Hosch: If motivation is a factor – how do we motivate students?
K. Poppe: Questioned the availability of internships. The CACE has information about available internships. Is it lack of communication?
M. Horan: Obviously we cannot argue with students so we just need to make sure they hear it 10 times in lots of different ways. Perhaps some Podcasts can be created that contain lots of information that is pertinent to students such as, Gen Ed requirements, when to apply for graduation, email is the official means of communication, etc.
L. Tordenti: Students getting help from older students is a concept that will be piloted in the fall with 15 Peer Mentors.
M. Garcia-Bowen: We need to make sure transfer students are involved.


The policy was put in place to save students who are failing. “Let’s not get rid of them – let’s help them become better college students.” The implementation of the policy was a massive effort by a group of people in a short period of time. Even if students don’t get off probation, they may be successful enough to take what they learned and use it somewhere else. In this case we will have made a positive impact on the student’s future.

The process is as follows:

a. Students whose GPA was less than 2.0 in the first week of January were sent a letter via postal mail and email informing them that they are on probation and must sign up for a probation session that will take place before the spring semester begins or they will lose their spring semester course schedule.

b. During the sessions students met with advisors who explained the Good Standing Policy and helped the students make appropriate course schedule adjustments.

c. All continuing students made appointments to meet with an Academic Coach from The Learning Center who will develop an intervention that is tailored to the student’s individual circumstances. All students whose first semester was in the fall of 2009 were enrolled in a section of ID102 w/directed study hall or Reading 140.

d. Going forward the student’s participation in the intervention is documented and used to help determine eligibility for future semesters.

Stats: 919 students were sent letters, 130 took no action, some signed up for a session but did not attend, 77 students lost their spring semester schedule (as promised).

Good News regarding 1st year students: 41% have GPA’s above 3.0 and there was a reduction in the number of students who had a GPA less than 2.0.

Comments from council members:
M. Horan: A letter went to faculty members regarding the probation policy asking them to check their class lists because a student might have a schedule that was printed before the classes were dropped.
S. Hazen: Question for B. Hosch – the students that fell below 2.0, was that consistent with their high school grades?
B. Hosch: There is no correlation.
M. Leake: Planning is being done for an appeal process.
M. Leake: Should the ID class be “Pass, No Credit”. This will be taken to the Curriculum Committee.
M. Leake: Changing the culture is not easy and will not happen overnight but this went a long way in moving us in the right direction.

Action Items

1. Report from the Transfer Subcommittee.
2. Report from the Communication Subcommittee. Notify Larry Hall if you would like to serve on this subcommittee.

Meeting adjourned at 11:25am.

Minutes respectfully submitted by L. Washko.