Retention and Graduation Council  
February 12, 2008  

MEETING MINUTES

Approve 12/12/07 Minutes
The December 12, 2007 minutes were approved.

Catalog Coupons
Dr. Lovitt asked Mr. McLaughlin and Mr. Carberry to discuss the catalog coupon setup. Mr. McLaughlin provided the background on how the catalog coupon setup began. Several years ago, it was discovered that 10,000-15,000 catalog were being destroyed at the end of their shelf life. In an effort to decrease that number, it was decided to cut back on the number of catalogs that are printed each year. Mr. McLaughlin noted that catalogs cost between $1.30 and $1.50 (per copy) to print. A plan was implemented, which assured every student would receive a copy, as well as all University offices. It was also decided that if a student lost their copy, they would have to purchase another copy from the University Bookstore for a $5 fee.

Mr. Carberry distributed a copy of the catalog coupon letter, which is distributed to all students. The catalog coupon letter is e-mailed to students, in an effort to cut down on the cost of postage. Mr. Carberry stated that if a student misplaces their letter, the Admissions Office will give them another letter, per the student’s request. Ms. Schuberth asked if all students who are admitted to the University receive the coupon letter, as well as students who reactivate their files. Mr. Carberry replied yes, but noted that the Orientation Committee recently decided that incoming first-time students will not receive the coupon letter, as catalogs will be distributed at the orientation sessions. Dr. Toston stated that orientation is not mandatory, and requested that coupon letters be sent to students who do not attend. Mr. Carberry stated that if there are certain types of students who are not getting the coupon letter, to please let him know and he will be sure they are included. Mr. Carberry noted that when the Admissions Office receives calls to request a catalog, individuals are referred to the University website for the most up-to-date version. However, if the person is persistent with their request for a catalog, the Admissions Office will send them one. Ms. Garcia-Bowen asked if it was ever considered to put the catalog on a CD. Mr. Carberry stated that the suggestion has come up, but a decision has not been made. In regards to orientation, Mr. Hernandez clarified that students are given the most current catalog with a big sticker on it, which states that this is not their catalog. Ms. Bigley stated that there is a proposal to have the deadlines changed, which will change the catalog publication dates. A resolution will be put forward and will go to Faculty Senate for approval. If approved, this will allow for current catalogs to be available at the orientation sessions.

Mr. Carberry stated that catalog should be readily available to all campus departments/offices. If any department/office has a problem getting catalogs, please contact Mr. Carberry directly.

Dr. Lovitt suggested putting the web address of the on-line catalog in the coupon letter. In addition, Dr. Lovitt proposed reducing the $5 fee to $2. A brief discussion occurred. It was decided that before making a decision the following question would need to be answered:

1. How many catalogs are we currently throwing away?
2. How much money has been generated from the $5 replacement fee?
Dr. Toston suggesting putting the web address for the on-line catalog on the hard copy of the catalog, which will let students know that there is an on-line catalog.

Subcommittee Reports

Students who Successfully Graduate within Six Years – Ms. Deloy reported for this subcommittee. This subcommittee has decided to focus on the finding, which states that the amount of reading done by students relates directly to their graduation success rate. In an effort to engage students with the University, the subcommittee proposed a common reading program, with a proposed start date of fall 2009. Ms. Deloy thanked Ms. Leake for providing all of the background information regarding common reading programs. Ms. Deloy stated that the subcommittee has discussed lots of suggestions and that the hardest part of the project will be choosing the books. As a next step, the subcommittee will now prepare a timeline for this program. Dr. Lovitt stated that he instituted a common reading program at his previous place of employment. He stressed the need for faculty support, as well as the difficulty of choosing the books. Dr. Lovitt encouraged the subcommittee to move forward with this and to submit a proposal to FYE, which would then go to Curriculum Committee. Ms. Hensley suggested tying the program to the New Britain community. Dr. Toston stated that at her previous institution of employment, two books were chosen that had plays associated with them.

Advising Taskforce

Dr. Paige reported that, in December, the Advising Taskforce completed a series of tasks. A mission statement has been established, as well as various goals and objectives. Dr. Paige briefly reviewed the following recommendations, which have been submitted to Dr. Lovitt and Dr. Toston:

1. Ensure adequate resources for the delivery of academic advising throughout the University.
2. Adopt a University wide mission statement and goals/objectives for academic advising.
3. Integrate the Advising Center and Career Services into one unit that reports to Academic Affairs.
4. Establish a standing Academic Advising Council, to include faculty, students, advisors, and other related members of the University.

Dr. Paige stated that a student focus group will take place, to hear suggestions/comments. Dr. Craine requested that an advising report be presented to the Faculty Senate. Dr. Paige will work with Dr. Craine to set this up.

Retention and Graduation Council Report

Dr. Lovitt thanked all of the subcommittees for submitting information to him. He then asked for comments/suggestions/corrections regarding the Retention and Graduation Council Report.

Ms. Schuberth stated that the only section of the report, which she feels needs improvement, is the section regarding future action. She asked what the Council’s top priorities are for next year. Ms. Schuberth suggested added mid-term grades for freshmen, as well as availability of tutoring for students who are in trouble. Another important area that needs to be worked on is the student “runaround”. Ms. Schuberth suggested moving with a little more speed, and to get a timeline in place. Ms. Schuberth also asked what the intervention plan will be for freshmen, which will put us in direct contact with students. Dr. Lovitt stated that each group will have $5,000 to move forward with some changes. Dr. Lovitt suggested that the Council agree on
five top priorities to focus on. Ms. Schuberth expressed some concern in regards to giving each committee $5,000, which would allow for many different little things to be done rather than something big.

Ms. Bigley stated that she was surprised that FYE was not included. She suggested that this be included at the top of the list. Ms. Bigley stated that all first year students should have an FYE, during their first semester.

Ms. Leake supported the suggestion that all of the groups work together towards one big thing.

Dr. Toston encouraged implementing changes that will have the most impact.

Ms. Leake reported that the FYE Committee is making strides towards offering more sections of FYE.

Dr. Lovitt discussed instituting mid-term grades. He suggested moving forward with this proposal, but noted the following items:

- Once the mid-term grades are available – who will communicate what to whom?
- What type of intervention will be instituted?
- Mid-term grade should be taken as an indicator of how students are adjusting to the academic demands of our institution.

Dr. Toston asked if mid-term is early enough to intervene, or if it should it be done during the first 6 weeks. Dr. Lovitt agreed, but stated that mid-term is the most likely to be accepted. However, Dr. Lovitt stated that faculty will be encouraged to provide feedback at 3 and 6 weeks. They will also be reminded that the earlier feedback is provided, the better. Dr. Hosch stated that the best way to describe this effort is as an early intervention program.

Mr. McLaughlin suggested sending a letter/e-mail message to all first year students, before mid-term, notifying them of the assistance that is available. Ms. Leake stated that many students do not have any knowledge of the assistance that is available. Ms. Leake discussed the following items, which she will be proposing for The Learning Center (for next year):

- Offering several section of ID102 for the second eight weeks of the fall semester.
- Provided faculty with an electronic referral system to The Learning Center, for students they feel are in trouble.

Ms. Leake stated that she would love to see a group formed, which would work on what will be done, how students will be directed, etc… Dr. Lovitt asked for volunteers. Ms. Hensley, Ms. Horan, Ms. Hicks, Mr. Hernandez, and Mr. McLaughlin volunteered. Ms. Leake will follow up with them. Dr. Hensley and Ms. Bigley discussed a concept that is used in the School of Education and Professional Studies. Dr. Lovitt suggested including someone from IT on this committee, who would assist in the development of an electronic system for referring students.

Mr. Hernandez stated that “early alert:” comes from many sources, other than faculty. Parents are sometimes the people who will call. Class attendance rosters are also an effective tool, which can be used to identify students that are in trouble.
Dr. Lovitt stated that Dr. Henry Greene, of the Marketing Department, mentioned that a tool could be developed, which would predict poor performance in students. Dr. Hosch stated that Noel Levitz has already built a program, which predicts poor performance. He has heard various reports on its effectiveness.

Dr. Lovitt stated that the list of recommendations does not include anything that does not need to be done. There are many items, which are fairly straightforward. For example, “follow up with students who do not register for the next semester”. Dr. Lovitt reported that there were 356 continuing students who registered in January. Had we been implementing this item, we would have known that these students were not registered. Dr. Lovitt suggested that the Registrar’s Office could note the number of continuing students who did not register. Ms. Bigley asked how many of the 356 students had holds on their records. Ms. Fangiuolo stated that she would be able to provide that information. Dr. Lovitt also suggested that someone meet with all students who request a transcript, in an effort to find out why the student is leaving, etc …

Dr. Lovitt asked each of the subcommittees to go through their list of recommendations and identify one or two things that they will institute, using the $5,000 that will be given to them.

Ms. Garcia-Bowen asked how to proceed with the activities that do not require money. Dr. Lovitt asked each of the subcommittees to go through their recommendations and submit action plans for each recommendation they would like to implement.

Dr. Lovitt asked for any final comments/suggestions regarding the Retention and Graduation Council Report, which will be shared with the campus community. Changes/suggestions/comments should be e-mailed to Dr. Lovitt by Friday, February 22, 2008.

Dr. Hosch suggested building a website for the Retention/Graduation Council. Mr. McLaughlin will ask Mr. Pierce to work on this.

Dr. Lovitt discussed a few miscellaneous items, which were listed at the end of the report - course substitution process and brio. Ms. Bigly clarified both items.

**Action Items**

- Dr. Lovitt requested that the following questions be answered, before a decision is made regarding catalog distribution:
  - How many catalogs are we currently throwing away?
  - How much money has been generated from the $5 replacement fee?

- Dr. Lovitt encouraged the members of the “Students who Successfully Graduate within Six Years” subcommittee, to move forward with the common reading program, and to submit a proposal to FYE, which would then go to the Curriculum Committee.

- Dr. Lovitt suggested that the Retention and Graduation Council agree on five top priorities to focus on.

- Ms. Leake will follow up with Ms. Hensley, Ms. Horan, Ms. Hicks, Mr. Hernandez, and Mr. McLaughlin, regarding the early intervention committee.
• Dr. Lovitt suggested including someone from IT on the early intervention committee, who would assist in the development of an electronic system for referring students.

• Ms. Fangiullo will provide information regarding how many of the 356 students who registered in January had holds on their records.

• Dr. Lovitt suggested that someone meet with all students who request a transcript, in an effort to find out why the student is leaving.

• Dr. Lovitt asked each of the subcommittees to go through their list of recommendations and identify one or two things that they will institute, using the $5,000 that will be given to them.

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The next Retention and Graduation Council meeting will be held on March 12, 2008, at 9:00 a.m. in Bellin A/B, Student Center.