Retention and Graduation Council  
June 18, 2007

MEETING MINUTES


Approve 5/2/07 Minutes
The May 2, 2007 minutes were approved.

Subcommittee Reports

Residence Life Students – Mr. Hazan reported for this committee. Some of the items that this committee is looking at are:
- Is there an inherent benefit to some length of time in the residence halls
- First year resident vs. non-resident – tied to the graduation rate?
- Possible guaranteed housing for first year students

Commuter Students – Mr. Frazier reported for this committee. Mr. Frazier stated that we need to be sure that students are not getting the “runaround” and suggested that CCSU institute a “Central Call Center”, which would be staffed from 6 am – 10 pm. This would allow people to speak with a “live” person when they call, as opposed to a machine with a series of prompts. Mr. Frazier also recommended that each department/area appoint one or more individuals to serve as the resource for their area and become the “point person.”

Part-time Students – Ms. Schuberth reported for this committee. Ms. Schuberth stated that Dr. Petkova is going to develop a spreadsheet, using the information from the SSI results that was provided by Dr. Toston. Ms. Schuberth stated that part-time students are probably more like transfer students, therefore they would like to compare the satisfaction rate of part-time students to that of transfer students.

Transfer Students – Ms. Horan reported for this committee. At this point data is still being collected regarding probation and dismissal rates. Once the data is collected they will look at possible interventions. This committee is also looking at possibly developing a “Pathways to Human Services” program, similar to the “Pathways to Teaching” program. Information could be communicated to the Community Colleges to allow for a smoother transition into CCSU. Ms. Horan briefly discussed the recent “pilot program” that was offered to transfer students. Ms. Bigley’s model, which she uses in the School of Education, was used to run a transfer registration/advising day. The response was very low, but the students who did come were very well served. Ms. Horan stated that this was run on very short notice, but that they would run it again in a few weeks with more advance notice. Ms. Schuberth stated that it is important to follow up with the students who did not come, and also not to be discouraged when starting a new program. When the word gets out, people will come. Ms. Horan stated that they would follow up with the students who did not attend.

Students who Successfully Graduate within Six Years - Ms. Petrosino reported that this committee has not had the chance to meet since our May 2nd meeting, but will do so in the upcoming weeks. However, Ms. Petrosino stated that this committee was very successful in getting data from both the Planning Office and from Rob Rak. The next step will be to decide how to best use the data.
Review Suggestions for Improvement

Dr. Lovitt thanked everyone who contributed the very thoughtful insights about things that need to be fixed and suggestions for improvement. Dr. Lovitt stated that there are some items listed that can be dealt with right away. Several individuals recommended having a transfer experience course that parallels the FYE. Dr. Lovitt encouraged the members of the transfer subcommittee to have a discussion with the individuals who just developed the FYE model, preferably before the July 9th meeting, to begin to frame out what the transfer experience course might look like. Ms. Leake stated that the School of Technology (Computer Electronics and Graphics Technology) will be offering a course just for transfer students and suggested that Dr. Karen Tracey may be able to offer some suggestions on the development of a transfer experiences course.

One of the other items on the spreadsheet that was mentioned by more than one person was regarding the quality of services offered by student workers. Dr. Lovitt stated that we need to give more thought to adequately training student workers.

Dr. Lovitt discussed the suggestion to institute midterm grades. There has been a lot of research in regards to this subject and there is widespread agreement about the value of letting students know early how well they are doing. Dr. Lovitt suggested that we at least formalize an institutional communication regarding student performance at the midpoint of the semester. Ms. Petrosino suggested that we send out a midterm deficiency report to indicate students who have a C- or lower. Dr. Toston raised a concern regarding the critical points in the semester, which are three weeks and six weeks. We really should focus on the first three/six weeks rather than waiting until midterm. Ms. Schuberth proposed that we look at the current withdrawal policy along with the possibility of midterm grades or deficiency reports. Ms. Hicks agreed with Dr. Toston regarding three/six week report, rather than midterm. Dr. Craine stated that most professors do not give full blown exams within the first three weeks, but that he would support a six week report. Dr. Craine stated that this issue would have to be taken up with the Academic Standards Committee. Ms. Horan discussed various issues surrounding withdrawals. A discussion occurred regarding grade reporting and withdrawals. A discussion also occurred regarding the FERPA release form. Dr. Craine suggested that there be a box in Banner that indicates if the students have signed a FERPA release form. Ms. Petrosino stated that there is a comments section in Banner that is used to indicate that information. Dr. Lovitt asked that we be more proactive in letting parents and students know about the FERPA release form. Ms. Petrosino raised the issue of satisfactory academic progress: students need to be aware of the implications when they are withdrawing from classes.

Mr. Hazan stated that all of the suggestions for improvement are really great, but that we need to fix the internal issues first. This may only allow us to service a smaller number of students, but at least we would provide those students with a higher level of service, possibly allowing us to improve our retention rate.

Mr. Frazier raised the issue of academic dismissal, specifically with students who receive financial aid. He recently got a call from a junior transfer student, who has a 1.70 GPA. The student was admitted back as a part-time student. However, if you do the math the student will have to continue at a 3.25 in the remainder of his classes in order to graduate with a 2.0 GPA. The question is - are we really helping the students out by accepting them back? Ms. Petrosino stated that she is currently working with the Associate Deans to develop a policy in regards to this issue. A brief discussion occurred.

Dr. Lovitt stated that we need to be thinking about what we need to do to make sure that our students succeed and to improve their chances of doing so. We need to be more vigilant and decisive in identifying problems early and institute measures that are not voluntary for the students who are having difficulty. A prescribed curriculum needs to be developed, which would have both academic and co-curricular components. Dr. Lovitt suggested that a group be formed to design the curriculum. We could then work with the Faculty Senate and the Academic Standards Committee to institute new policies.
Ms. Lake-Piano raised the issue of block scheduling and outlined scheduling for students. Mr. Hernandez stated that CAPP is an excellent tool for students and staff to be using. Ms. Petrosino stated that a letter regarding CAPP was sent out to the entire campus community. In regards to block schedule, Ms. Petrosino stated that we do have new software that we are waiting to be implemented/finalized, which has the capability of projecting course needs.

The next Retention and Graduation Council meeting will be held on Monday, July 9th at 2:00 p.m. in the Bellin Gallery.

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