Retention and Graduation Council  
September 6, 2011  

MEETING MINUTES


Approve April 6, 2011 Minutes
C. Lovitt provided a brief overview of the April 6 minutes. He stated that the decision was made not to pursue the FIPSE grant, as it would have been impossible to develop a successful proposal by the end of May. C. Lovitt added that he hopes to continue with our discussion on mentoring this year. The April 6 minutes were approved.

Profile of Fall 2010 Cohort – Y. Kirby
C. Lovitt briefly stated that he would like the Council to focus its energies on looking at retention and graduation data and taking a more proactive approach in determining what can be done to improve our success rates. He stated that the Access2Success (A2S) initiative focuses on looking carefully at the leading indicators for success, rather than waiting until the end of the semester to look at data. He suggested that the Council look at various data early on in the semester, in order to find opportunities for intervention and implement change before it is too late to do anything about it.

Y. Kirby then provided a handout and a brief summary of the Fall 2010 Cohort profile (see handout). Y. Kirby stated that this is the first year of the new federal race/ethnicity definition, which may be the cause of some of the fluctuation in the data since last year. The following discussions then occurred regarding the Cohort data:

Male-to-Female Ratio:
Y. Kirby directed the Council’s attention to Figure 1 on the handout. Interestingly, Figure 1 shows that CCSU had more males than females (56% male and 44% female) enrolled in 2010, which is contradictory to national findings.

A brief discussion occurred regarding this unusual male-to-female ratio. C. Lovitt asked if the other CSU schools have a similar ratio. N. Hoffman replied that this phenomenon is unique to CCSU. L. Hall stated that more males are applying to the university than females right now, and this may be because of our program offerings. For example, we are the only school in the System that has a School of Engineering and Technology. Several members agreed that housing may also be a reason for the decline in female enrollment. J. Alicandro noted that females tend to prefer nicer room accommodations, which are sometimes difficult to come by. L. Hall agreed and added that we need to develop a process that would allow us to show rooms to female students before the fall semester begins. If the students knew what the rooms looked like and what their accommodations would be ahead of time, they’d be more likely to decide to live on campus. M. Garcia-Bowen noted that we may also be attracting more male students because of our Division 1 sports teams. Several members also agreed that females tend to graduate at a higher rate than males, which could also be a contributing factor in this unusual phenomenon.

C. Lovitt then asked the Council for feedback regarding what can be done to increase female enrollment. He suggested that Y. Kirby further analyze the Cohort data, in order to determine what majors our male and female students are clustering into. C. Lovitt added that this
anomaly may be causing us to work against our own agenda. In other words, if our goal is to increase the graduation rate, and we know that females graduate at a higher rate than males, then admitting more males than females would be counterproductive. C. Lovitt then suggested that we focus on finding ways to recruit more female students into traditionally male programs. Council members agreed. He also suggested that we begin to consider financial aid/scholarships as another way to target the kinds of students and build the kind of class that will increase our success rate.

**Data on DFW's:**
Y. Kirby announced that she recently pulled data on DFW’s, and she will be sharing her findings at an upcoming meeting. She then directed the Council’s attention to Table 3 on the handout. She noted that 2% of the students were reported as having no GPA. She then asked the Council to provide her with feedback regarding how we could find out whether these students were ever actually here on campus.

**Access2Success Variables and Data – N. Hoffman**
N. Hoffman provided the Council with a handout and a brief summary of the GPA and credit data collected for first-year, full-time Black and Latino students who enrolled in 099 in 2010 (see handout). N. Hoffman noted that the data does not include the entire 2010 cohort. She explained that the data looks at 099 enrollment, GPA, and credits earned in the fall and spring semesters. N. Hoffman then stated that the data clearly indicates that there is work to be done to improve the fall semester success rates. A brief discussion occurred and several Council members agreed that it would be helpful to compare this data with a dataset that included the entire cohort of students. J. Alicandro stated that comparing minority groups to non-minority groups could provide a better understanding of the educational gap. L. Hall also noted that it may be useful to compare the success rates of minority students enrolled in programs like Bridges and EOP with those who aren’t enrolled in any such programs.

N. Hoffman then reminded the Council that Sally Lesik’s is conducting a FQCA study, which will look at success variables and help to identify high-risk students. N. Hoffman then shared the following list of variables being considered for use in the study:

- High school rank
- Recommendation for 099
- SAT score
- High school GPA
- Type of high school attended
- Percentage that had financial needs met in the first semester
- Undecided vs. major chosen
- Gender
- EOP/CONCAS enrollment
- Early Warning System referrals
- Residency status (commuter, resident, Living-Learning Community participant)
- Engagement in student activities
- FYE grades
- Socioeconomic status
- Utilization of Learning Center

N. Hoffman asked the Council to provide her with suggestions for other variables that can be used in the study. The following variables were suggested:

- First generation student
- Participation in athletics
- Participation in high school athletics
- On-campus jobs
- Participation in faculty/student research

N. Hoffman asked Council members to email her with any further suggestions.

**Discussion of University-wide Learning Outcomes – C. Lovitt**

C. Lovitt stated that we seem to be facing the problem that he expressed concern about at the onset of the A2S initiative – that successfully improving our “Access” goals would have a negative impact on our “Success” goals. On the one hand, data shows that we have become more successful in providing access to education; however, we have not become any more successful in helping these students succeed. C. Lovitt stated that if we continue to do things in the same way, we will continue to get the same results. He then asked the Council to begin to think about how we can function more collaboratively as a university to meet our goals. He asked the Council to think of the following questions:

- How can we begin to think of common objectives?
- How can we be more explicit about the pursuit of common learning outcomes?
- How can non-academic departments begin to think about these learning outcomes?

Council members then discussed the following items:

**Mentoring:**
M. Garcia-Bowen asked if the Council would be moving forward with its discussion on mentoring practices on campus. She stated that in addition to helping students, mentoring would provide a way to gather data and determine what is prohibiting students from doing well. A brief discussion occurred, and members agreed that mentoring should be a collaborative effort. C. Lovitt then stated that he would like the Minority Student Subcommittee to continue with its research on mentoring practices.

**Attendance:**
A discussion occurred regarding the importance of class attendance. Members first discussed the possibility of adopting a formal attendance policy at CCSU; however, many agreed that this would be very unlikely. M. McLaughlin asked why faculty members would be against adopting a formal attendance policy. C. Lovitt stated that there are faculty on campus who do not take attendance because they believe that students should be capable of behaving like responsible adults who understand the consequences of their actions. A discussion occurred. N. Hoffman reported that studies show that taking attendance within the first three weeks of class significantly improves the student success rate. M. Leake agreed that attendance is crucial, and that faculty should also be using the Early Warning System to report students who haven’t attended class. L. Hall noted that there will be new federal mandates in effect next year that will require attendance for financial aid purposes.

After a brief discussion, C. Lovitt asked the Council what could be done about this issue. Council members agreed that faculty should be encouraged to take attendance, at least within the first three weeks of class, as well as encouraged to utilize the Early Academic Warning System. L. Hall suggested that C. Lovitt send a letter to faculty, requesting that they take attendance during the third week of class and report students in the Early Academic Warning System. M. Bielawa will generate new class rosters and send them to faculty, along with instructions for using the Early Academic Warning System.
C. Lovitt concluded the discussion and stated that he hopes the Council can take these kinds of suggestions back to their prospective units in order to promote the adoption of new policies and procedures on campus, as well as to encourage increased participation in these collaborative efforts.

**A2S Subcommittees – C. Lovitt**

C. Lovitt asked the Council for feedback regarding the continuation of the A2S Subcommittees. He asked the Council if the subcommittees should continue as is, or if any changes needed to be made. C. Lovitt then repeated that he would like the Minority Student Subcommittee to continue its work on researching mentoring programs on campus. M. McLaughlin suggested that the Council start by looking at more data, in order to determine if changes to the subcommittees’ charges need to be made.

**Work in Progress:**

L. Hall stated that we need to develop a process for showing rooms to female students before the fall semester begins.

C. Lovitt suggested that Y. Kirby further analyze the Cohort data, in order to determine what majors our male and female students are clustering into.

C. Lovitt suggested that we focus on finding ways to recruit more female students into traditionally male programs.

Y. Kirby announced that she recently pulled data on DFW’s, and she will be sharing her findings at an upcoming meeting.

N. Hoffman asked Council members to email her with any further suggestions for possible variables to be used in Sally Lesik’s FQCA study.

C. Lovitt stated that he would like the Minority Student Subcommittee to continue with its research on mentoring practices.

L. Hall suggested that C. Lovitt send a letter to faculty, requesting that they take attendance during the third week of class and report students in the Early Academic Warning System. M. Bielawa will generate new class rosters and send them to faculty, along with instructions for using the Early Academic Warning System.

The next Retention and Graduation Council meeting will be held on **Wednesday, October 5, 2011**, at 9:30 a.m. in **Bellin A/B, Student Center**.