C. Lovitt announced that today’s meeting will be devoted to reviewing the Access2Success (A2S) Action Plan and beginning to develop an implementation plan for achieving A2S goals.


C. Lovitt provided a brief summary of the A2S Action Plan. He stated that there is a substantial gap of about 10% between the graduation rate of low-income/minority students and the rest of CCSU’s student population. There is a similar gap between the demographics of CCSU’s entering class and the demographics of the state’s high school graduates.

C. Lovitt reported that the programs that we currently have to promote the success of low-income/underrepresented minority students are shown to be very successful initially. However, after about two years the students who participate in these programs are no more successful than those who do not participate. C. Lovitt asked that the Council to give some thought to what can be done to sustain the initial success of these programs.

C. Lovitt discussed the following three goals identified in the A2S Action Plan:

1. Reduce by half the gap between the graduation rates for low-income students and students from underrepresented minorities and the graduation rate for other CCSU students.
2. Reduce by half the current gap between the diversity of the state’s high school graduates and the diversity of the CCSU entering class.
3. Reduce by half the current gap between the diversity of the state’s high school graduates and the diversity of the students who graduate from CCSU.

C. Lovitt stated that many of the recommendations made in the plan derive from previous suggestions made by the Retention and Graduation Council. He noted that it is encouraging to see the amount of recommendations the group has generated; however, it is disheartening to see how many suggestions were never implemented. C. Lovitt stated that the plan also includes: 1) a new set of recommendations that focus specifically on low-income/minority students; 2) a list of indicators that will be monitored to measure progress; and 3) a description of possible challenges to implementing this initiative.

**Discussion of A2S Steering Committee – L. Tordenti**

L. Tordenti provided an overview of the proposed A2S Steering Committee described on page 1 of the Action Plan. The Committee members listed in the plan include: C. Lovitt, L. Tordenti, R. Hernandez, J. Paige, N. Hoffman, M. Johnson, K. Poppe, L. Hall and J. Mulrooney. L. Tordenti also asked M. McLaughlin to participate and he agreed. L. Tordenti asked the Council for feedback regarding the proposed A2S Steering Committee members. Awilda Reasco, Susan Petrosino, and M. Garcia-Bowen were nominated and agreed to participate. L. Hall suggested that the Chief Diversity Officer also be included in the group, and S. Petrosino suggested that a member from IT be included as well. C. Lovitt suggested adding another faculty member to the Committee.

L. Tordenti then asked the Council for feedback regarding the charge of the A2S Committee. Several suggestions were made, and Council members agreed that the A2S Committee’s charge would include:

- Coordinating, supporting and allocating responsibility for various projects
Prioritizing goals
Discussing possible reallocation of resources
Overseeing implementation of initiatives and making sure targeted goals are met
Looking at baseline data to determine which goals will have the greatest impact

Discussion of the Implementation Plan – L. Tordenti

L. Tordenti directed the Council’s attention to the section, “Actions Planned to Meet A2S Goals,” on pages 8-9 of the Action Plan. She reviewed each goal individually and asked for suggestions regarding assigning responsibility to each goal. Council members made the following suggestions:

- **Encourage Senate approval of classroom policies that foster student success:**
  - **Limit number of student withdrawals** – The Academic Standards Committee and the Associate/Assistant Deans are addressing this item.
  - **Encourage faculty to take attendance, encourage faculty to report mid-term grades and greater participation in Early Academic Warning program** – J. Mulrooney suggested that these initiatives be implemented on a voluntary basis, rather than as required policies. This will avoid complaints from faculty about violations to contract and/or academic freedom. He added that he believes faculty will support these initiatives.

  C. Lovitt suggested that some of CCSU’s policies and practices are not necessarily conducive to promoting student success. We may need to make some changes in our institutional culture if we are really serious about meeting the goals of A2S.

  A discussion occurred and the Council agreed that the A2S Committee would have a larger discussion to examine current institutional practices and determine what can be done to get faculty on board.

- **Increase online courses and services; explore options and create protocols for online advising:** After a short discussion, the Council agreed that the ITC, Faculty Senate and A2S Steering Committee will discuss this initiative.

- **Increase availability of student services during evening and weekend hours and during winter and summer:** S. Petrosino agreed to form a group that will address this issue. S. Hazan and R. Hernandez will also participate in this group.

- **Increase availability of trained tutors and peer mentors:** M. Johnson and the Learning Center will address this item.

- **Explore providing child-care:** The Faculty Senate’s Childcare Taskforce and the Work-Life Balance Committee are looking into this issue.

- **Foster proactive customer service; ensure that all student workers are properly trained and supervised and that they perform their duties with appropriate professionalism:** S. Petrosino’s group will address this issue.

- **Promote connections between students and alumni:** Alumni Affairs will address this initiative. O. Petkova noted that the School of Business already has a good model for this, and she agreed to work with Alumni Affairs.

- **Encourage faculty to require more reading and writing of students:** J. Mulrooney noted that the Faculty Senate recently formed the Writing Across the Curriculum Committee, and it has generated a lot of interest. C. Lovitt stated that there is currently no system for evaluating the reading level of our college students, and we might want to consider instituting a placement test for reading.
• **Help students understand relevance and value of General Education curriculum:** M. Horan will look into this item.

• **Consider options and alternatives for students who switch majors in the middle of their undergraduate academic careers or who are unable to meet the entrance requirements for a program:** K. Poppe stated that CACE is already doing this.

• **Explore feasibility of offering a General Studies/Liberal Studies degree:** The A2S Steering Committee will discuss this.

• **Institute an exit interview for all students; Urge students’ major departments to schedule interviews when students request transcripts; Follow up with students who do not register for the next semester:** A discussion occurred and Council members agreed that the A2S Steering Committee would discuss this item.

• **Explore options for communicating more effectively with students; Update CCSU Web site to include virtual tour and “How To” podcasts; Simplify student access to catalog, academic affairs policies, general education presentation, etc.:** M. McLaughlin and L. Hall will look into these items.

The A2S Steering Committee will also establish four subcommittees that will be responsible for looking at the specific actions targeting: 1) commuter students, 2) residential students, 3) transfer students, and 4) minority students. Details regarding the proposed actions of these four groups can be found on pages 9-10 of the Action Plan.

C. Lovitt stated that the A2S Steering Committee will develop a template that lists all A2S initiatives, as well as all parties responsible for implementing each initiative. The A2S Steering Committee will also work on developing a timeline, determining what resources are required, and charting the progress of A2S goals.

**Review of A2S Milestones and Data Collection Plan – N. Hoffman**

N. Hoffman provided an overview of the data presented in the tables on pages 3-6 of the Action Plan. She stated that there are a number of initiatives in place to promote the success of minority students, but there is no system for tracking the impact of these initiatives. She explained that we will gather baseline data on the impact of this year’s current initiatives, in order to allow us to determine which initiatives have the most impact.

N. Hoffman then provided a handout of the 2010-2011 A2S Indicator Data Collection Plan. She asked Council members to look at the indicators on the handout and share any relevant data with her via email.

**Review of A2S Communication Plan – M. McLaughlin**

M. McLaughlin provided an overview of the communication chart on page 12 of the Action Plan. He explained that the communication plan will help to inform stakeholders about the initiatives we are proposing, as well as those that are already in place. The plan will utilize various delivery methods in order to convey information to the following groups:

1. Students (prospective, transferring, and matriculated)
2. Faculty (collegiate and secondary level)
3. Counselors (collegiate and secondary level)
4. The President, Chancellor and Board of Trustees
5. Policy makers and citizens who impact the University’s resources and its abilities to attend to student needs
Review of Action Items and Discussion of Next Steps

- The A2S Steering Committee will chart the Council’s discussed initiatives and suggestions for the implementation plan.
- N. Hoffman asked Council members to look at the indicators on the 2010-2011 A2S Indicator Data Collection Plan handout and share any relevant data with her via email.

The next Retention and Graduation Council meeting will be held on Thursday, November 18, 2010 at 10:30 a.m. in Philbrick/Camp, Student Center.