Retention and Graduation Council  
December 2, 2010  

MEETING MINUTES  


C. Lovitt announced that membership for the four A2S subcommittee groups has been identified, and today’s meeting will be devoted to breaking into these subcommittees and discussing group initiatives.  

Announcements and Follow Up: 

→ C. Lovitt summarized a recent article in the Recorder that discussed students’ dissatisfaction with course scheduling and advising. Students are unhappy that the new schedule blocks compete with work hours, and that many courses are being scheduled at conflicting times. In addition, students do not feel they receive enough guidance from academic advisors, and they would like to see an entire staff devoted only to advising. An advising staff would be focused and knowledgeable about degree programs, and could provide the guidance necessary to keep students on track to graduate.  

L. Glaser noted that at Arizona State University, every department designates a staff member for student advising. C. Lovitt stated that the school-based center proposal provides a similar model, and he asked M. Bigley to report on this issue. M. Bigley stated that the Committee on Academic Advising has put forth a proposal to create school-based centers, and possible roles of these centers include: 1) taking in new transfer students; 2) providing career related activities; 3) providing access to career related internships; 4) building relationships with alumni; and 5) tutoring. The Committee is currently discussing funding for and identification of building space and staff.  

→ C. Lovitt announced that progress has been made regarding the Council’s suggestion to follow up with students who have not registered for classes. S. Petrosino ran a report and found that there are 1529 students who have not yet registered for the spring semester. S. Petrosino sorted the student list by department, as well as in descending order by year and school; C. Lovitt will send these lists to the deans for follow up. C. Lovitt stated that this issue can be managed at the departmental level, and that advisors should follow up with these students to see what their plans are.  

A2S Subcommittee Reports:  
Council members broke into subcommittee groups for individual discussion. C. Lovitt asked each subcommittee to develop one workable initiative for its assigned student group. Each group was also asked to select a subcommittee leader. When the Council reconvened, subcommittee leaders reported on their respective group’s discussion:  

→ Commuter Student Subcommittee – K. Poppe  
The Commuter Student Subcommittee will focus on gathering feedback from commuter students regarding what resources they feel would be instrumental to their success. The Subcommittee will conduct focus groups and speak to student leaders, as well as engage the general commuter population using a table in the Student Center. K. Poppe stated that it is also important to define what a “commuter student” is, and to recognize the various groups within the commuter population. Understanding the commuter population will allow us to develop initiatives that will best suit students’ needs. K. Poppe noted that some of the Action Plan
initiatives regarding commuter students may already be in progress, and he will speak to S. Hazan regarding this issue.

Transfer Student Subcommittee – M. Horan
The Transfer Student Subcommittee plans to publish an electronic newsletter for transfer students. This newsletter will be an information source for new transfer students as well as a marketing tool for potential transfer students from the community colleges. In addition to including contact information and details regarding upcoming events, the newsletter will contain articles that showcase students who have successfully transferred to the university.

Subcommittee members will work with M. McLaughlin to develop a template for the newsletter. M. McLaughlin asked M. Garcia-Bowen if the community colleges would be willing to designate a space on their respective websites for the transfer student newsletter. M. Garcia-Bowen will look into this issue and follow up with M. McLaughlin.

* R. Waterman and Z. Bello joined this subcommittee.

Residential Student Subcommittee – M. McLaughlin
The Residential Student Subcommittee proposes to increase the participation of minority students within the Living-Learning Communities (LLC’s). Actions proposed to strengthen the recruiting efforts of minority students within these communities include increasing culturally sensitive activities within the LLC’s, as well as expanding the designated LLC dorm space in order to support these additional students. Students who currently participate in the LLC’s can invite minority students to join activities and encourage participation through individual outreach. Once participation has increased, the Subcommittee plans to assess the success of this initiative and the possible modification of the LLC’s learning goals, in order to better support minority students.

C. Lovitt asked J. Alicandro to provide the Council with some background information regarding the Living-Learning Communities. J. Alicandro stated that there are currently three LLC’s that have been established for the following majors: 1) engineering; 2) elementary education; and 3) exercise science and physical education. The pilot program was implemented this year and has been well received by students and faculty. About 53 students are currently enrolled, and they will participate for one semester. Students receive support from FYE, faculty, and Residence Life staff, in order to meet the program goal of fostering a sense of community and laying a good foundation for student success. Students travel to class together, study together, and are reported to be succeeding academically. J. Alicandro stated that the program can accommodate 62 students for the fall semester, and that the Residential Subcommittee’s proposed initiatives can be implemented immediately.

Minority Student Subcommittee – J. Paige
The Minority Student Subcommittee plans to identify programs that have a high concentration of minority students in order to develop focused initiatives for student success. The Subcommittee will also focus on identifying and developing mentors within these minority groups. Students who have succeeded academically and/or overcome adversity can become an important source of guidance for younger minority students. The Subcommittee will explore various ways in which to adequately support these mentors in their efforts. J. Paige also suggested that these mentors could assist in encouraging minority participation within the LLC’s.

The Council discussed possible ways to expand the LLC’s in order to accommodate minority students. M. McLaughlin asked if it would be possible to create a new LLC around a major that
has been identified to have a high population of minority students. Council members then discussed some possible limitations that could prevent LLC expansion. For example, adequate dorm space must be identified and reserved for these students. L. Tordenti stated that because dorm space is reserved and LLC students receive priority registration, we need to be sensitive to issues of equity for other students if we wish to expand this program.

C. Lovitt concluded the meeting and asked the subcommittee groups to continue working on their respective initiatives. C. Lovitt also announced that he is scheduled to meet with N. Hoffman and the System Office to discuss the leading indicators in the Action Plan. He will report back to the Council regarding this meeting.

The next Retention and Graduation Council meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 23, 2011 at 11:00 a.m. in Bellin A/B, Student Center.