Retention and Graduation Council
December 12, 2007

MEETING MINUTES

Approve 11/14/07 Minutes
The November 14, 2007 minutes were approved.

Follow-up to Institutional Research Report
Dr. Lovitt asked if anyone had any comments or questions regarding the presentation that Dr. Hosch made at the November 14 meeting. Dr. Hosch stated that the major prediction factor, in regards to students graduating in six years, is their first semester GPA. This is a much stronger factor than items like gender and race. Dr. Hosch stated that a student’s GPA is an early warning indicator that can easily help to identify students who are less likely to graduate. Students who earn over a 3.0 in their first semester have about a 63% of graduating, students with between a 2.0 and 3.0 have about a 48% chance, and students who earn less than a 2.0 have less than a 1 in 11 chance. Dr. Hosch stated that students, who take courses during summer/winter sessions graduate at higher rates. Dr. Lovitt cited a recent article from *The Chronicle*, which discussed a finding that high school students who are in dual enrollment programs have a higher chance of completing college successfully. Dr. Lovitt stated that this may be something to explore.

Mr. Hazan asked if CCSU’s graduation rate has ever been significantly higher/lower over the past 20 years. Dr. Hosch stated that the furthest back he has been able to look is 1990. The graduation rate then was a little higher than now, but not significantly. Dr. Hosch stated that very few institutions have data management such that they can look back very far. However, Rhode Island College recently tracked statistics back to 1890. Higher graduations were seen in the 1960’s, by about 10 percentage points.

Dr. Petkova stated that one of the major reasons why students don’t graduate on time is that there are not enough courses; she then suggested developing/conducting a study that would assist in resolving this issue. Dr. Lovitt stated that he has addressed this issue with the Deans. The Deans were asked to look within their respective schools and do their best to accommodate students’ needs.

Report on Hobson Retention Conference
Ms. Schuberth distributed notes from a recent video presentation entitled “Implementing a Comprehensive Retention Solution: Results One Year Later”. After viewing/listening to the presentation, Ms. Schuberth, Mr. Frazier, and Ms. Lake-Piano met to compare notes. Ms. Schuberth briefly reviewed the information.

Report on Pell Institute Study
Dr. Lovitt distributed information regarding results of a study that looked at low-income college students at large public universities. Dr. Lovitt briefly reviewed the information and stated that he has the complete report if anyone would like to see it.

Improving Service to Sophomores and Juniors
Dr. Lovitt distributed information regarding strategies for supporting sophomores. He reviewed and discussed the various strategies. Mr. Hazan stated that, per a recent survey, freshmen and seniors participate most in recreational activities. One suggestion for getting sophomores more involved was to involve them more in helping first year students. Dr. Craine stated that completion of 200 level Math courses now qualifies students to get credit for tutoring, whereas students used to be required to complete 400 level courses. Ms. Deloy asked how many students identify themselves as sophomores, as this is not part of the language at CCSU. Ms. Leake stated that the culture needs to change, where students assume that they will graduate in 4 years. Dr. Lovitt briefly discussed the importance of service learning. Mr. Hazan asked if there is a service learning coordinator at CCSU. Dr. Lovitt replied that there is not, but that during the budget planning process some decisions will be made regarding new positions.
Subcommittee Reports

Transfer Students – Dr. Hensley reported for this subcommittee. A focus group was recently held, which included six students. One of the outcomes of the focus group was that students reported finding it very difficult to navigate Central Pipeline. They also feel like they get the “runaround”. Dr. Hensley stated that the CCSU website needs to be updated. She suggested a virtual tour, as well as “How To” podcasts. Student Affairs recently distributed flash drives to incoming students. Dr. Hensley suggested possibly giving flash drives to incoming transfer students with academic information on them. Dr. Hensley reported that a transfer orientation is scheduled for Friday, December 14. It is extremely helpful to have one faculty member available from each department for transfer orientation. At this point, there has been mixed success with this request. Dr. Hensley stated that there have been issues with the course substitution form. This form needs to be revised. Ms. Lake-Piano raised the issue of catalog distribution. A brief discussion occurred. Dr. Lovitt stated that he would look into this issue and report back to the committee.

Residence Life Students – Mr. Hazan reported for this subcommittee. Mr. Hazan suggested exit interviews for all students who leave the campus/university. Dr. Paige stated that this suggestion was recently discussed at a Diversity Committee meeting. Mr. Hazan discussed the possibility of advising in residence halls, which was a student driven suggestion. Ms. Bigley addressed the idea of exit interviews, stating that this would be a very difficult thing to accomplish. We do not always know students are leaving CCSU until they are already gone. Mr. Hazan stated that if a student is transferring they must request transcripts, and suggested requesting an exit interview when their transcripts are requested. Ms. Petrosino stated that students do file leave of absence or withdrawal forms. It was suggested that a mail survey could be a possibility. Dr. Hosch suggested following up with non-registered students for the following semester. Ms. Leake stated that we are figuring out why they are staying, but not why they are leaving. Ms. Hicks asked what percent of our students leave in good standing. Dr. Hosch did not have those numbers at the moment, but stated that he would get them. Ms. Horan stated that the University of Connecticut conducts their surveys over the phone. Ms. Schuberth asked how we currently track students who left in good standing. Ms. Lake-Piano said that Admissions has all the data.

Action Items

- Dr. Lovitt asked each of the subcommittees to send him answers to the following questions:
  - What are the most important insights or lessons your subcommittee has gained concerning the characteristics, needs, or problems of your particular population of students (residential students, commuter students, part-time students, transfer students, successful and unsuccessful students)?
  - What actions does your subcommittee recommend to better serve or to improve the retention and graduation of your student population?
  - What are units currently doing or what can they do to address these issues?

Dr. Lovitt asked this information to be sent to him in a bulleted format by Friday, December 21.

- Dr. Lovitt and Dr. Toston proposed giving each of the subcommittees $5,000. This money will be used by the subcommittees, or distributed to other units/individuals, to implement some changes. The subcommittees were very excited about this proposal.

The next Retention and Graduation Council meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 12 at 1:00 p.m. in the Bellin A/B, Student Center.

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