

Council on Retention and Graduation Steering Committee
August 16, 2007—UC 3171
Presiding: Scott Evenbeck

Present: Cathy Buyarski, Lauren Chism, Scott Evenbeck, Mary Fisher, Sharon Hamilton, Kathy Johnson, Stacy Morrone, Megan Palmer, Gary Pike, Frank Ross, Michelle Verduzco, Gayle Williams, Marianne Wokeck

Regrets: Michele Hansen, Steve Jones, Rebecca Porter, David Sabol

1. Welcome and Introductions

Evenbeck welcomed everyone to the meeting. When the academic plan is released, it will be the focal point. Until then, the committee has other work to do. One recommendation that came out of Rick Ward's retention action team is that the CRG should have more of a central role on campus.

In the last year, we have really focused on our cohort. These are the students who hold our feet to the fire. Michele Hansen and Janice Childress are working on reports about the cohort. Dean Sukhatme made a change. In the past we had a threshold of \$100. If students owed more than that amount, they were not allowed to register. Dean Sukhatme asked the Office of the Bursar to change the threshold to \$200. Hamilton agreed to check on this to make sure the change was made. The financial issues students report are a large part of their challenges (this is not to be confused with financial aid).

Evenbeck wanted to discuss a couple of initiatives before beginning the agenda items. We need to make good use of summer. Students have better graduation rates if they have at least four summer credit hours. We should make better use of summer. We more than doubled our Bridge program this year. We have a two-week version organized by the schools. We had another program for students who could not attend a two-week program. Unprepared students were told to come and prepare in math. Evenbeck gave a couple of examples of students who wanted to be in the program. We need to build on our summer success in the future.

One thing that Dean Sukhatme has been concerned about is administrative withdrawals. Some students are administratively withdrawn in the fall, but we allow them to come back in the spring and receive financial aid. Evenbeck explained that federal regulations for financial aid are done by year, not semester. Instead of looking at the financial aid aspect, there needs to be a new academic policy. If students are below a certain GPA in the fall, they will not be allowed to return in the spring. Fisher asked if IUPUI attempts to get financial aid back from students who are administratively withdrawn. (Porter clarified this point via e-mail after the meeting: When a student withdraws or is withdrawn, the student is responsible for repaying the funds that were provided by grants or loans. The amount that must be repaid depends on when the withdrawal occurs and how the withdrawal impacts the total number of hours enrolled. The university is responsible for the return of the funds to the appropriate agency or lender and then must seek to collect the funds from the individual. If the individual is no longer a student enrolled at IUPUI, the account would

be referred to a collection agency after a series of initial e-mails from IUPUI concerning the debt. The recovery of the funds from the individual is not the responsibility of the Office of Financial Aid. Since the funds have to be returned to the originating agency or lender by the university, IUPUI actively attempts to recover the funds. Unfortunately, this is not always successful which leaves IUPUI with a substantial uncollectible debt.)

Williams said about 50 percent of students who are administratively withdrawn and return for spring semester are receiving financial aid. Evenbeck said administrative withdrawals have been very successful. Other departments are adopting it, but not all schools use the policy. Evenbeck will write a letter to all deans to say the council would like them to know about this policy.

Wokeck said she would like a discussion about duplicating data sharing. It does not make sense to have a few units on campus make it difficult for the traditional units to access data. When Evenbeck asked Pike his opinion, Pike replied that the university would have to be involved but he believed such a meeting would be possible. Pike agreed to organize the meeting and invite members of the Steering Committee.

Introductions were made.

2. Evergreen Report by Lauren Chism

Evenbeck introduced Lauren Chism. He explained that retreats have produced successful results in the past, such as the honors program, learning communities, and the PULs. Chism attended a retreat recently for themed learning communities (TLCs).

One of Chism's TLC students came to the meeting with her. They passed out a brochure, *Themed Learning Communities at IUPUI: For Students Who Want an Enriched College Experience*. Chism explained that their team at the retreat had two main purposes: to work on integrating math in the career perspectives TLC and develop the African American perspectives TLC. Some great ideas came out of the retreat. Chism reviewed her handout, "Synthesis Assignment." She said the retreat resulted in more data than they had anticipated. The TLCs at IUPUI are excelling in experiential learning, student affairs, and collaborations. One area that needs improvement is faculty enrichment. Many faculty receive no reward for experiential learning activities. Chism and Palmer are working on a faculty support workshop. Another area is administrative effectiveness. Chism said that as TLCs continue to show positive results, they will continue working to provide more structure in this area.

Chism discussed the future of TLCs. She would like to develop a partnership with the Center for Service Learning. Chism does not want to sacrifice the quality of the TLCs, but would like to increase the number of students served. Chism said they would also like to experiment with expanding into subsequent semesters. Chism explained that Joan Pederson, a career development specialist at University College, came up with a great idea that students could come up with a career development plan or goal. Pederson is working on this idea.

There are trends with the TLCs; the numbers are going down a little bit. Chism would like to look at meaningful learning experiences that they could create, such as an alternative spring break. Chism said they would like to keep the students in a TLC connected after that first semester. They are also looking at the Indianapolis community and beyond. Chism said they are concerned about the number of students struggling with the MATH 111 course.

Fisher expressed concern that the TLCs are not sustainable into the second semester given the resources that are put into the first semester. Chism explained that they are considering this as well. The TLCs have had limited resources since the beginning. Wokeck agreed that we will not be able to sustain this effort, and we need to have this conversation. Chairs of departments need to be involved in this conversation because it is a resource issue. Right now lecturers are teaching many of the TLC courses; we need to involve faculty and get their support. We need to say, if we want to sustain the TLCs into the second semester, this is what we need. For example, for those who teach Bridge, it is very intensive. The TLCs should not be relegated to one type of faculty. We need to discuss some basic issues about the long term. Williams noted that if first-year students were taking predominately the same courses, it would be a different issue. However, at IUPUI we have students all over the map. Until IUPUI moves in that direction, we will continue to have a problem. Wokeck suggested we not reinvent the wheel. Evenbeck noted that when they had a Gateway retreat a couple of years ago, the faculty said what they like most is the chance to work with other faculty and to work with students. This is a very positive reward for faculty. Wokeck said we have not found a way to give credit to faculty.

Evenbeck has been thinking about how we can involve the rest of campus and extend the TLC program. It is good that Chism is working with the Center for Service Learning. With the new campus center opening soon, there are some possibilities there. There are other things that could sustain the TLCs. Buyarski just hired a person who is focusing on externships. This person might be able to help in the spring semester. Chism believes this would be a good place to start, in addition to using course releases, stipends, etc. She would like to work with the resources we have. Wokeck said that for students, it makes sense. However, from the perspective of the schools, it is difficult paying for units that do not generate money. In the School of Liberal Arts, when they look at the finances, they are already subsidizing many programs. Williams said most of the courses in the TLCs are from the Schools of Science and Liberal Arts. There ought to be some way of acknowledging the schools provide this service. Evenbeck believes the TLCs are the right thing to do. They have been strong interventions. Because of the PULs, the TLCs are important. The PULs are pointed out in the TLCs. Chism confirmed that the PULs are discussed in the TLCs.

When Evenbeck asked Morrone when the e-portfolio would be working, she replied that she is hoping by next year. She believes this is the year for the e-portfolio. They are putting considerably more resources into it. Wokeck would like for the faculty to have input into the process. There needs to be better communication. We can learn from the Oncourse experience. Evenbeck said it seems to work well if one can get a handful of faculty together. Wokeck said people who work on these projects do not necessarily have broad

experience. Palmer agreed with this point. In terms of usability and functionality, this is work that Morrone does. Susan Kahn is in a position to get faculty together. Palmer will pass this information on to Kahn so she can collect real life uses, tools, etc. Morrone explained that there are some misconceptions that UITs drives priorities. They do not set priorities. Perhaps the right people are not on the priorities committee, which is a problem. Wokeck said she is not saying the people on the committee are not good. There is a lot of hierarchy in the schools, at least there is in her school. There needs to be a feedback mechanism for voices to be heard. Morrone said that she goes to the deans when terms of committee members are up. Wokeck wondered if this is the best way to do it. Evenbeck said there is not a complete intersection. Sometimes getting the right set of people together is key to success, and then they become advocates. He told Morrone that if there is anything he can do to help, he would be happy to do so. It is very important to have the e-portfolios be a success.

Chism said that her goal for the next year is to double the TLCs within the next few years, maybe six next year. She will talk to the academic advisors to see what makes the most sense. Without a core curriculum, we have to see if there is enough of a pool coming into a major to justify a TLC. Wokeck would like for honors and scholarships to be considered. We can make connections in these areas. Williams believes we are seeing improvement. One issue is with English. Many students are completing college-level English courses in high school or taking AP tests. This breaks the block in TLCs. This is an issue we will have to deal with.

Wokeck noted that if this campus does not have general education, we have to incorporate the PULs. It is very difficult to do that. Hamilton explained that they are working on developing two books. One book will be in the undergraduate area with best practices and critical thinking; the other book will be for graduate and professional schools. They have assigned a person to work on the PULs Web site. She wants to say the success of the PULs is not happening by accident. There has been some inspired leadership in this area, such as Chism. Hamilton said Chism is someone who listens, has wonderful ideas, and has the ability to take the next step. Our campus is complex, but Chism has had a significant impact on student retention and engagement. Hamilton thanked Chism for her hard work. Wokeck seconded Hamilton's statements about Chism. Wokeck said she wanted to play the devil's advocate for a second. Chism does not have to go up for promotion and tenure, so her role is very different. There was continued discussion about faculty and their input into the guidelines.

Evenbeck reported on another type of learning community. Peter White at the University of New Mexico has developed a type of learning community similar to sociology and English students going to the Christmore House and tutoring children. This seems like a logical approach for our campus. Bob Franco at the University of Hawai'i-Kapi'olani has developed a program where a number of students pick their passion and then their service learning and capstone projects are related to that area.

Fisher asked if we could do something like this at Crispus Attucks. Chism said we are not doing activities there yet, but we are doing service learning at other locations. Evenbeck

agreed that Crispus Attucks would be great. Wokeck expressed concern that those classes would have to be small, rely on transporting people, and may interfere with work schedules. Evenbeck suggested keeping service learning activities close to campus. We should ask what resources we have. Williams said that DePaul University does it each summer. They expose students to civic engagement type activities in their summer program. We need to have a block of time. These are excellent ideas, but it is a resource issue. Chism said another issue is if the faculty can participate. Williams said that TLCs are scheduled with blocks of time that students are not in class and usually on campus. This time could be used for activities, but schools are not always aware of this opportunity. Having all players at the table is important.

Wokeck believes we need data to know what works. Chism said scheduling is critical with the TLC students. Buyarski explained that these last two years she has been surprised at the number of students who say they are going to work. Time for these activities needs to be on their schedules. Students are scheduling work around their class schedules. This is based on Buyarski's Bridge experience.

Williams said that Marybeth Myers in the Office of the Registrar has made a great difference. Myers has moved heaven and earth to make the TLCs work. The registration aspect of the TLCs can be difficult, but Myers goes out of her way to make it work.

3. Review of Annual Report

The CRG Annual Report 2006–2007 was distributed. Evenbeck explained that he would not go through the report at the meeting, but if anyone has corrections or comments, please share them. The much more substantive report is the one that Williams does, which may be found online (<https://www.slashtmp.iu.edu/public/download.php?FILE=keeckert/64399a8Vhtb>). Evenbeck said he does not know the status of the retention coordinators on campus. In the past the retention coordinators were part of Charlie Nelms's portfolio. It does not appear to be the case that the new person in this position will stress retention like Nelms did. However, retention is important to Dean Sukhatme. IUPUI will not back off working on retention. Wokeck is concerned that President McRobbie's council has only two people from IUPUI. Evenbeck said it is clear that more baccalaureate degrees will have to come from this campus.

4. Review of Membership

Evenbeck explained that a list of CRG members and a list of the CRG Steering Committee members were included in the handouts. Fisher and Wokeck noted that on the full council roster they should be listed as being members of the Executive Committee.

5. Financial Registration Block Report

Evenbeck said this report brings up the issue of student finances. We know there is a good model at the University of North Texas (<http://www.unt.edu/moneymanagement>). Williams will be resubmitting her proposal for a signature center.

Evenbeck asked if they are still pushing credit cards on campus. Several indicated that is still happening. Williams believes what we are doing is unconscionable. She noted that

55% of African American student loan borrowers graduate with unmanageable debt. While it should not be the job of a university to help students manage their money, it is the reality. Evenbeck recommended the Executive Council take up this issue. Williams said the students are very vulnerable. Evenbeck said he hopes the council can take up the issue of students and finances at a future meeting. At that time, we will have the AAC&U report.

Williams is concerned with the Sallie Mae situation on campus. Buyarski said we need to find out if students are still being rerouted to Sallie Mae when they call because this was supposed to end as of August 1. Wockeck does not understand why our campus cannot be exemplary with this.

6. Retention Report

Palmer distributed a handout, "I'm Okay, You're Okay, See Ya' Later: Preliminary Report of IUPUI Retention Study. She discussed this report. She said that 38 students were interviewed. Palmer urged the council to remember that this is a preliminary report. Overall, students had a positive experience, whether they graduated or not. The study found that some students came to campus to give IUPUI "a try." The summer math program is a good way for students to do this. Students were supportive of campus community efforts, but it was not necessarily something they could pursue. The things that mattered to students were closely tied to their degrees or careers. Students were overwhelmingly positive about interaction with faculty. For some students, the only place they get a sense of community is in the classroom. Some faculty feel that they have too much of that burden, but this is positive feedback. Palmer said they are going to look at the typology of students in the study. They are looking at navigator-type students. Palmer believes this study has some good information that will be helpful. The whole thing to remember is campus community, and students who graduate are most involved with things tied to their academic careers. Pike said that if we are going to recruit out-of-state students, we need to offer community life events and activities. Fisher agreed that we need some of it. Buyarski explained that part of our student population wants campus community activities, but the difficulty with IUPUI students is they want different things. Palmer said the students thought it was nice that the campus offered such things, but they many could only go to one event. When asked what year the interviews took place, Palmer replied that the students were interviewed last year. Hamilton noted that our demographics have change since that cohort. Every year we have more 18 year-old students. Many of them are holding off on getting jobs until their class schedules are set.

Buyarski explained that career orientation is key to students. She has spent the last two weeks in Bridge so that is her frame of reference right now. Over half of the students in her section said that they had siblings who tried college, but it did not work out for them. Most of the students saw this as a negative. The students do not want to be where their siblings are, but they know if college does not work out, things will be okay. After Bridge, students walk away with a six-page plan (from Joan Pederson's class). The first page is about why the students are here; the second is a chart and the students check off where they think they will learn the PULs. The plan includes a four-year plan (or five or six year, etc.) with courses the students will take, what semesters they plan to do service learning and internships, etc. This plan takes students through a commitment process. Students are

focused on learning work skills. Wokeck objected to the idea of students coming to college to learn work skills. They should be focused on academics. Buyarski said the students see the PULs as workplace skills, such as functioning in a global society. Career orientation is top priority for our students.

Evenbeck said Ross has done some things in this area, but campus community is not either or. Ross explained that his office is very intentional about including student activities in learning communities. They welcome students intentionally. He has found that students are interested in opportunities on campus. Williams noted that we are supposed to be the smart people. We have to change students' world views. Just because students say they want something does not necessarily mean they should get it. We do not want to lose that thought in the process. Palmer said what students say they want is tied to research that shows these things work. Wokeck noted that research is tied to students' peer groups. Ross said he liked Buyarski's point about the life plan. A mapping activity with workplace skills is connected to learning. Wokeck said the mapping needs to be tied to advising or the e-portfolio so it can be redirected. We want students to grow. Hamilton said this is in the plan for the e-portfolio. Advisors wanted to play a key role in the first year because the schools will have control. Wokeck noted that we may have students for six years instead of four, so we need a way of adjusting.

7. Official Graduation Rates Report

Evenbeck said that we will not be having any parties about our retention report, but looking at the IUPUI page of this report shows our graduation rate has gone from 21.4% to 27.8%. That is one large increase. What we have to do now is see how we can have similar increases a couple more times so we can be where our peers are. Our work has been effective, but we need to keep it going. Wokeck pointed out that this number applies to only 32% of our students. A student told Wokeck that she graduated in eight years. Wokeck noted that this student does not fit into our categories. These statistics assume that we are a traditional place. It behooves us to use this as a teaching moment.

Evenbeck announced that beginning this semester, for the first time ever, with Pike and Marybeth Myers leading the charge, IUPUI joined a national clearinghouse to track where our students are. We can follow students if they are enrolled at other institutions. Even with Purdue, we have been unable to track our students who transfer there. Belonging to this clearinghouse will help us have a richer understanding of where our students are.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday, September 20, at 8:00 a.m., in UC 3171. In September, we will ask Richard Turner to report on the AAC&U conference. In October, we will discuss financial issues.

9. Other Business

Wokeck asked Palmer if she could set up an interview with students who come to this campus from Bloomington. Wokeck would like to know why Bloomington did not work for those students. There is something very positive about IUPUI. Wokeck would like to see a study demonstrate what is working well. Palmer said she could do that. Palmer

believes we should take advantage of being in an urban environment. We need to focus less on the social aspect. Students can get the social aspect in the city. Palmer said the students want the institution to take advantage of being in an urban environment. Evenbeck noted that the new campus ads are great. They celebrate the fact that we are in the city. The ads are exactly on track with what we are saying.

Williams invited everyone to attend the Bridge celebration that afternoon in LE 101. It is a great way to begin the school year.

Evenbeck thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

10. Adjourned.

Actions to be taken:

1. Hamilton will check to see if the Office of the Bursar changed the amount to \$200 (from \$100).
2. Evenbeck will write a letter from the Council on Retention and Graduation to all deans to make them aware of the administrative withdrawal policy.
3. Pike will organize a meeting about data sharing and invite members of the Steering Committee.
4. Palmer will pass on concerns about faculty needing to be involved in the e-portfolio to Susan Kahn.
5. Palmer will interview students who came from the Bloomington campus for her retention study.

Additional handouts:

- Minutes from the Steering Committee Meeting on March 29, 2007
- Minutes from the Full Council Meeting on April 19, 2007
- Analysis of Responses to the Not Yet Registered Survey, 2002–2006
- Not Yet Registered Survey Update, 2007
- Borden, Cruce, and Pike Reports
- Student Enrollment, Degree Profiles Report
- Article: Top 10 Mistakes College Freshmen Make (by Lindsay Lyon)
- Article: Avoiding Excessive Activity Syndrome in Retention Planning (by Cindy Skaruppa)

Submitted by:
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