

Council on Retention and Graduation Steering Committee

September 18, 2008—UC 3171

Presiding: Scott Evenbeck

Present: Sarah Baker, Robert Bringle, Mary Fisher, John Gosney, Michele Hansen, Kathy Johnson, Susan Montgomery, Becky Porter, Frank Ross, David Sabol, Rick Ward, Gayle Williams

Regrets: Gary Pike, Uday Sukhatme, Pratibha Varma-Nelson, Marianne Wokeck

1. Evenbeck welcomed members to the meeting.

2. Task Force Updates:

Sophomores

Ross gave an update on the CRG Sophomores Task Force. He distributed data that his group has collected. The task force will be looking at this data more closely and finding what information will be helpful. The task force is meeting next week. Fisher asked if we can tag students who are not intending on getting a degree from IUPUI. There was discussion about tagging students, such as those going to Purdue, etc. Ross agreed to put this in his report.

Seniors

Johnson gave an update on the CRG Seniors Task Force. She reviewed a letter she wrote for instructors of capstone classes. She is concerned about the letter because the instructions to students are difficult. She discussed the senior survey and why they started the survey. The survey has been a grassroots effort thus far. The task force will be presenting the survey to the Council of Deans. Since the resources to organize and analyze the survey are not available, the survey project may be dead. Ward told Johnson that what she has done in her own department has been an effective way to get information out to students. There was discussion about the survey and the best way to have students take it, such as using Survey Monkey or giving students incentives to complete it. A suggestion was made that this survey could be added to the survey that goes out to students who graduate. After additional discussion about the survey, Fisher said that it would be helpful to know if the delay to graduation is something we can control. Evenbeck thought it would be useful to get this survey out to schools to show how they can use it to collect information about their students. The Kelley School of Business once looked at why their students were not graduating; many students had two or three majors, and some were delaying to get certifications. This is a complicated issue. Porter is looking at this issue as well. Ward pointed out that if we push students to graduate, and then they have to take additional courses for graduate school or medical school, then students would have to take those courses at the graduate school rates. Does this serve servants well? Williams believes it is important to create a mind-set for students; right now, we are not doing that. Fisher noted that for some students it is not an economic possibility to graduate in four years because they have to work. Williams said some students are better off taking out loans and getting through school in four years, but we are not getting that message out there. There was additional discussion on this. Porter suggested that the full council discuss what it would take to lower withdrawals since there has been some investigation on this matter. Johnson believes it would be helpful for this

campus to do a Maymester, similar to Purdue's program, or to help students use their summers wisely. Evenbeck discussed the Summer Academy Bridge Program. We know that a six-week course in writing does not work well. One thing that is complicated is the faculty load. It seems to be a complicated issue on this campus because we have not held out models for it. There was discussion about faculty carrying a five-course load. Gosney asked about online courses. The regional campuses are using online courses more. Fisher asked if we were "ahead of the pack" when it comes to online courses. Gosney said he would not characterize this campus as being "ahead of the pack" when it comes to online courses. There was discussion about alternative formats and delivery modes, including offering students an incentive to graduate, charging a flat rate for tuition, and six-week courses. When Evenbeck asked if six-week courses are something that could happen in the School of Liberal Arts, Ward said they would discuss it. Evenbeck believes that if we could figure out how to offer a six-week course, such as writing or psychology, we already have a template. Williams believes we need to be cautious about making decisions for exceptions rather than the rules. We need to create a different mind-set and lay out the expectation for students to graduate in four years. Porter believes this campus is different than traditional campuses such as Ball State or IUB. Fisher said we will be penalized for it. Evenbeck told about the learning community that he teaches with Ross. Khalilah Payne comes to their class to talk to students about financing an education. She encourages students to take out more loans. If they work two or three jobs, students will reduce their eligibility for financial aid and their GPA usually drops. Williams said this is a message that needs to be delivered to students and their parents. Parents do not always understand this. Ward expressed concern that a rather large percentage of our students get loans and still have to work. He told about a student he knows who takes 12 credit hours, works off campus, and already has \$48,000 in student loan debt. Is it the right thing to do to get her in more debt? She has already taken six years to get through school. The problem is education is too expensive! Evenbeck told about a report that Kathy Burton does about students who earn 20 credit hours in the first year. He will invite her to come to the full council next month.

Transfer Students

Williams gave an update on the CRG Transfer Students Task Force. They are trying to clarify the definition of transfer students, such as swirling transfers, true transfers, masquerading transfers, etc. They are collecting information about transfer students. They are also trying to collect data from the various schools. She distributed data that the task force has collected. It may be helpful to know which transfer students will be most likely to succeed. Kathy Burton is working on this. There was discussion on what the campus could do with this information.

3. Reaching Higher Report:

Williams told the committee about meetings she has been attending. She believes there will be a change in the way higher education is funded. There will be pressure to get students to graduate in four years. Other campuses are looking at ways to do this. Williams discussed the Indiana Commission for Higher Education's Reaching Higher reports. We may want to develop a different mind-set. Institutions are doing various things to make the path to graduation much clearer, such as putting caps on withdrawals or not allowing students to retake courses. Fisher noted that Dean Sukhatme has started making it clear to students that

he expects them to graduate in four years. Evenbeck said the campus has been talking about common general education courses. Some say we do not need this because we have the PULs. When students switch majors, they have to take all of the general education requirements over. If we had a more concrete set of general education classes, we could put these in the themed learning communities and gateway courses. Ward noted that when students move from liberal arts to science, it is not the general education courses that students have to repeat, but prerequisites. We should be cautious to not give in to political pressure. We should preserve our perspective as an institution. Williams discussed students who are in the pipeline. There is a changing shift in demographics. The business community is beginning to recognize this and work as partners in education.

4. Agenda for CRG Full Council Meeting:

The agenda for the full council meeting was discussed. Porter and Mary Beth Myers will talk about degree audits. Porter briefed the committee on what they will be discussing at the full council. Evenbeck told about some of Kathy Burton's reports. She is trying to use degree audits for analysis to present to the Council of Deans, but she cannot do this if degree audits are not implemented. Fisher suggested having Burton come to the full council to let schools know what she is working on. Evenbeck said he will do this. Porter said that the Passport Program Report will be completed by November. She will do this. She requested that Evenbeck let Amanda Helman know about this. Evenbeck said he will also ask Andy Barth to come to the meeting. Porter noted that there is a conflicting conversation about second-start classes. If we are going to limit withdrawals, we should not be promoting second start-classes at the same time. Fisher said second start-classes are for students who need to maintain full-time status. This would apply to students who drop classes early. There was more discussion about students withdrawing and second-start classes. Evenbeck said Michele Hansen will also be on the agenda for the full council to discuss her data reports. Evenbeck noted that 94 percent of students are in a learning community this year.

5. Other Business:

Evenbeck announced that the cohort for IUPUI this year is about 2,800 students (including Columbus). Indianapolis is around 2,500 students. The retention rate for Indianapolis is over 70 percent. Fisher believes this is due to the learning communities. Evenbeck talked about the increase in admissions. Williams believes the themed learning communities and the Summer Academy Bridge Program also contribute to the increased retention rate. Ward asked about the impact of the summer math program. Evenbeck said he is unsure, but will invite Ben Boukai to come to the Steering Committee to discuss this. Porter suggested inviting Chris Foley as well. There was discussion about the summer math program. Williams said the 21 Club identifies people who make a significant difference. She noted that Susan Meshulam makes a big difference. She would like to hear from Meshulam to find out what she is doing to make a difference. Evenbeck said he will invite her to the Steering Committee.

There was a discussion about preparatory programs. Porter mentioned that the summer preparatory program dropped math in order to provide opportunities for other courses. The committee discussed what students need, such as reading and writing. Williams believes the problem is not that students cannot read, but that they chose not to read. Sabol noted that we

do not offer critical inquiry until the second semester. There was additional discussion about this, including the Upward Bound summer component. Ward said there is no placement test for writing skills. We need to identify students with weak writing skills. We might be able to have a hybrid critical inquiry course. William, Ward, and Sabol agreed this would work with reading.

Evenbeck reviewed some of the handouts he distributed, including the HEA reauthorization, Financial Registration Block Report, learning communities enrollment, and the OTEAM's summer phone calls to students about returning to school. He hopes Ken Durgans will want to work with the council in the future to target retention and graduation rates for minority students.

Evenbeck announced important upcoming events: RISE Town Hall on September 30, Family Connections Dinner on October 3, Plater Institute on October 10, Access and Success Conference on October 17, and the Assessment Institute during October 25–28. Fisher announced that the current draft of the RISE document will be on the Web page of the Dean of the Faculties. They want feedback on this.

Evenbeck told Montgomery that anyone on the committee would be happy to travel to Columbus to talk to their faculty. The students there have faced great challenges with the floods. Montgomery said they have dismissed a lot of students, about 10 percent more than they usually do. There was discussion about this. Montgomery said they will invite committee members to Columbus.

Ward explained that there have been discussions in the School of Liberal Arts about the U110 classes. It seems there could be better coordination with one another, including how we publicize these courses. When Williams asked if he was talking about learning communities or themed learning communities, Ward said themed learning communities. Williams discussed this. They cannot grow the program unless they work with the School of Liberal Arts. Williams said she will organize a meeting to discuss this issue. Evenbeck announced that Lauren Chism and Kate Thedwall have moved into Taylor Hall. They are working closely together. It was suggested that Williams invite Chism, Baker, and people from the School of Liberal Arts. Bringle said he would like to attend. Williams said she will work on this and send out information.

6. Adjourned.

Action Items:

1. Ross will put information in the final report for the CRG Sophomores Task Force about tagging students, such as those who do not intend to get a degree from this campus, those going to Purdue, etc.
2. Ward will have the School of Liberal Arts discuss the possibility of offering six-week courses.

3. Evenbeck will ask Kathy Burton to come to the next Steering Committee meeting next month to discuss her report about students who earn 20 credit hours in the first year and the full council to discuss how she uses degree audits for analysis.
4. Evenbeck will ask Ben Boukai to come to the Steering Committee to discuss the summer math program.
5. Evenbeck will ask Chris Foley to come to the Steering Committee to discuss admissions.
6. Evenbeck will ask Susan Meshulam to come to the Steering Committee to discuss what she does to make a difference.
7. Evenbeck will let Amanda Helman know the full council will be discussing the Passport Report in November.
8. Williams will organize a meeting about themed learning communities.

Submitted by:
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