

Council on Retention and Graduation Steering Committee
March 31, 2011
UC 3171
Presiding: Rick Ward

Present: Enrica Ardemagni, Mary Fisher, Steve Graunke, Michele Hansen, Susan Kahn, Sarah Lang, Gary Pike, Becky Porter, Rick Ward, and Gayle Williams

Regrets: Bob Bringle, Cathy Buyarski, Kathy Johnson, and David Sabol

Guests: Mary Jane Brown (Community Learning Network), Khaula Murtadha (Community Learning Network), and Kate Thedwall (Gateway to Graduation Program)

1. Ward welcomed committee members and guests. Introductions were made.
2. Stop-Out Letters:
 - Murtadha and Brown told how the stop-out letters originated with one letter going out of Bloomington to all stop-out students on all campuses. A few regional campuses decided to make the stop-out letters personal, including IUPUI.
 - Brown reviewed how many letters have been sent to stop-out students and how many of those students returned to the IU system. Some students return to different majors. Murtadha said their emphasis is to get students to return to complete their degrees regardless of majors.
 - The Community Learning Network (CLN) works with stop-out students who want to return to school. These students generally have between 44 and 90 credits; some have as many as 116 credits. CLN staff work with students to determine the best way to use existing credits toward graduation. Brown said their goal is to help adults get a degree the quickest way possible.
 - When Ward suggested having people assigned to this, Murtadha said they are working on a center for adult learning to help this population. One of the purposes of the center will be to help students overcome barriers when returning to school.
 - The committee discussed senior stop-outs, FERPA issues, challenges that stop-out students face, and obligations of the students and the institution.
 - Lang suggested CLN use a postcard or put something on the envelope like “we want you back.” Otherwise, students may throw stop-out letters away since many students get inundated with fundraising letters. Brown said Kokomo tried the postcards, but students complained about privacy issues. Hansen said research shows that institutions have higher response rates if letters are sent via FedEx or similar shipping companies. The committee thanked Murtadha and Brown.
3. Critical Thinking and Gateway Courses:
 - Thedwall gave a brief description and history of the Gateway to Graduation Program. She told how a group of faculty went to the University of Louisville for training to use critical thinking in gateway courses.
 - The gateway faculty saw critical thinking as a component that they wanted to incorporate into gateway courses. The DFW rates for gateway courses have gone down. Thedwall

gave examples of how critical thinking is being used in gateway courses. She talked about the old ways of teaching. The new paradigm for teaching is about producing learning to engage students with discovery. Critical thinking is more than problem solving. Intellectual humility and intellectual courage are needed when using critical thinking in the classroom.

- Thedwall distributed a booklet by Paul and Elder about critical thinking. She reviewed parts of the Paul-Elder model of using critical thinking in the classroom. She also gave examples of how faculty are using critical thinking in their courses. This model can be used across all disciplines. Hansen told how critical thinking is being added to the first-year seminars. The PDP also uses critical thinking.
- The committee discussed using critical thinking in the classroom. Thedwall told about a webinar she attended. The authors said you cannot lower your standards. Lowering standards does not increase retention and graduation. One thing they recommended is using critical thinking in the classroom.
- Thedwall continued reviewing the Paul-Elder model, including elements of thought and SEEI (state, explain, example, illustrate). She gave an example of how she uses SEEI in her R110 course. This model may not be right for every class, but it is great for gateway courses. It will increase the success of all students and will improve retention and graduation.
- The committee discussed students learning to use critical thinking in gateway courses and then moving to upper-division courses. The committee also discussed the PULs, measuring student learning, and longitudinal studies. Williams told about a student in the Bepko Learning Center who recently received certification to train others in the use of cognitive maps. The committee thanked Thedwall.

4. CRG-EMC Summit:

- Ward reviewed the history of the academic roadmap and where IUB is in the process of creating it. The PDP has been part of the conversations in this process. The summit on April 15 is an opportunity to give feedback on the academic roadmap.
- Ward reviewed the eight components of the academic roadmap and the draft agenda. The eight roadmap components need to be addressed during the breakout session. Ward asked for the committee's input in how to do this. The committee discussed how to form groups based on the eight components and decided to combine some of the areas.
- Fisher suggested adding RISE to the discussion, especially if things are going to be centralized. Ward explained that if the academic roadmap is a set of resources for students, the committee needs to think about what resources they want students to have. What resources should students have when they work on their PDPs? Should all RISE courses be listed every semester? The committee discussed the inability of SIS to interact with the PDP. Kahn suggested that a member of the CRG Steering Committee be a part of each group to frame the topics and to facilitate the discussions.
- Ward said he would formulate the groups and send them to the committee. The committee discussed allowing participants who RSVP to select the group they want to work with (or topic). When asked by Ward, Thedwall said she could bring a group of gateway students to the summit on April 15.

5. Other Business:

Williams told the committee about the annual mentor celebration to be held April 15, 5:00–7:30 p.m. in the Conference Center (across the street). A scholarship will be named after Scott Evenbeck, who will be in attendance. Williams also told about some of the activities the students will be doing to celebrate Earth Day on April 27.

Submitted by:
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