

Council on Retention and Graduation Steering Committee

Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2008

UC 3171

Presiding: Scott Evenbeck

Present: Bob Bringle, Cathy Buyarski, Scott Evenbeck, John Gosney, Michele Hansen, Kathy Johnson, Gary Pike, Rebecca Porter, Uday Sukhatme, Pratibha Varma-Nelson, and Gayle Williams

Regrets: Sarah Baker, Mary Fisher, Frank Ross, David Sabol, Marianne Wockeck

Guests: Judy McBride, Susan Meshulam, and Jeff Watt

1. Evenbeck welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.
2. Susan Meshulam explained that she had been invited to share a few things she does to promote student success. She told about learning students' names, helping students feel comfortable about asking questions, giving students individual attention, requiring students to attend the Mathematics Assistance Center if they get below a 73 percent on a test, and requiring these students to attend two mentoring sessions before the next exam. Most of the students in her classes are first-year students. She gave a handout with sample study sheets that she gives to students. To help students learn, she shows examples on the board before she distributes the handout. She tries to let them discover things on their own. After the students work on the handouts in groups, they get together as a class to review answers. Students leave class with their notes, sample problems, and problems they have worked in class. Meshulam uses this same concept for the summer preparatory program class. In response to a question, Meshulam gave more information about the groups. Doing group work seems to be very successful. While students are working with their peers, she has time to walk around the class and work with students individually. Not only do students learn from their peers, but working in groups creates a safe environment for students and prepares them to do homework later. Williams recognized Meshulam's work and what she has accomplished, including her work with bridge students. Williams explained that she coordinates the 21 Club (with Frank Ross) and Meshulam's name is usually on the list several times. Porter said several years ago a large majority of IUPUI students needed remedial math. She talked about how much this has improved. Watt discussed how much the math requirements have changed over the years for high school students. When asked about class size, Meshulam explained that she had 50 students. Watt explained how class numbers have increased as a result of space issues. Sukhatme asked what the math department needs. There was discussion about this. When Sukhatme asked Meshulam if the same people always worked together in groups, she explained that the same people generally worked together. They establish study buddies. She changes the groups if the study groups do not work together well. Varma-Nelson expressed concern that only one instructor was in the classroom. Meshulam said that she has a mentor in the classroom once a week. McBride and Watt explained the mentoring system in the math department. Evenbeck asked about homework. Meshulam explained that she does require homework. Students receive grades

for homework assignments and quizzes. When Evenbeck talked about homework predicting student success, Meshulam agreed with this.

3. Sukhatme gave an update on the Campus Action Plan. He discussed the signature centers, which will encourage research to a higher level. This is a \$3 million investment each year. He talked about President McRobbie's speech earlier in the week. The campus is also focused on enrollment shaping, retention and graduation, making things better for students, and attracting international students. If we want to attract international students, we have to show that our product is really good and that their experience here will be great. He gave examples of new degrees being developed at the master's and doctoral levels. He also discussed the new Honors College, which we need to attract more top-end students. These things all need resources. There is going to be more housing, and space has been identified for the Honors College. He discussed the Cox endowment for scholarships for honors students. Many aspects of the campus efforts, such as summer programs and bridge, are showing their effects. He expects retention to go up every year until the campus reaches 80 percent, and then it will probably stall. He expects the graduation rate to go up fairly rapidly to around 50 percent, and then it will stall. The numbers we were at previously were not acceptable. Evenbeck mentioned the work of Stan Jones and the Indiana Commission for Higher Education. They will see the work done on this campus. Porter discussed the six-year graduation rate versus the four-year graduation rate. Our students do not seem to come here to graduate in four years. Many students who have funding for four years still take six years to graduate. There is something going on that they are not graduating in four years. Evenbeck suggested making more effective use of the summers; it can make all the difference. Pike, who asked to be allowed to be cynical for a moment, noted that we advise students to take classes that do not benefit students for graduation. He told about his son, a college student, who was advised to take a class because they needed students to fill the class; the class did not count toward his graduation credits. Evenbeck believes degree audits will help with this problem. Degree audits will make things as transparent as possible so students will know what they need; it will not be a mystery to them any longer. This is especially true for entering students. There was additional discussion about advising. Sukhatme said there has been a suggestion that advisors located in the schools push students to take classes that they do not need. Is there any supervision of this? Buyarski explained that there is no supervision of this because the advisors (in the schools) are employees of the schools. Some schools provide training, but others do not. She noted that the School of Liberal Arts has a good system to train their advisors. The new council on advising is working on three things: framework, professional development, and a set of professional standards. She explained how this will work. Sukhatme believes we should minimize the time that students have to be in school. Buyarski said the quick and easy way to do this is to utilize degree audits and curriculum checksheets. When asked if all schools use this, Buyarski replied that they do not. Buyarski explained that degree audits allow students to check to see where they are. Sukhatme asked Evenbeck to bring up this issue in the deans' meeting. There was additional discussion about the degree audits. Watt noted that many parents do not believe students can still graduate in four years. Many parents ask him about this; the perspective of parents is very important. There was discussion on how to address this, including summer programs, the personal development plan, advising, and offering courses in the summer that students need rather than what faculty want to teach. Buyarski explained that students should be

engaged in learning. They need the option to follow their passion. Our degrees should not be about simply checking things off a list. There should be a compromise between the two. This goes back to the work that the gateway group is doing. Sukhatme believes there is no real contradiction with what Buyarski said; each semester students have one or two options to take what they want. Buyarski noted that some advisors miss that. Williams said some students decide to major in something because they saw it on television. We need to think about helping students find a major that is right for them. Watt agreed with this; this is especially true when students are going through a lot of changes. He gave some examples of how students changed their majors. It is important to have flexibility. The Schools of Science, Liberal Arts, and University College are on the same page with this, but the professional schools are not. Williams said she gets this question during orientation. When students switch majors and have to repeat three or four courses, then that is an entire semester. Bringle believes some students remain in school to avoid paying student loans, keep insurance, etc. He is concerned about the Stan Jones commission. We do not have the traditional courses that some other schools have. Sukhatme does not believe this will be a disadvantage. We have a lot of transfer students, and they graduate. Either way, we are not disadvantaged. Bringle suggested offering students who are short of graduating by 15–20 hours a full ride scholarship. This would swell the ranks of graduation. Sukhatme said that, to some extent, we are already doing this with general studies. Evenbeck said we will recognize Pell grant recipients. Williams told about a meeting she attended that addressed changes coming to Indiana institutions of higher education. Campuses such as IUPUI will stand to gain because we have a great opportunity to grow. The other piece of it is an increased emphasis on minority and low-income students. IUPUI stands to gain from this as well. Sukhatme noted that our location helps us. We should do the right thing; if we admit someone, we should help them be successful.

4. McBride and Watt gave an update on the summer math program. McBride explained how the program has been increased from two classes to five. She gave an overview of how the program was developed. The idea was to give students a review so they would be prepared for fall math courses. This is assuming they know something about math. Last summer, they went to five weeks. Next summer, the program will go to four weeks, minus one day. There was discussion about why the program was changed to four weeks. Evenbeck suggested having a meeting on this; a group should look at the big picture and how everything fits together. Everyone agreed to work together on this and have a meeting to discuss further. McBride explained the first test that students take. Many students who get below a 75 seem startled by this. She explained how she talks to these students; some vow to work harder, and some think they need to go back to an easier math class. After the second test, she talks to some of these students again. McBride and Watt distributed handouts and reviewed statistics about the program in 2007 and 2008. Watt noted that one six-week course in math is not going to help students get to graduation. There was discussion about this and about expanding the program. McBride said many students do not know how to study math; they are not doing enough homework, and they are not engaged enough. She explained how students journey through high school math and test into college math courses. She discussed DFW rates, including those for African American students. There is a disconnect between MATH 001 and MATH 110/111. Porter believes that some of these statistics are broken down by racial factors, but we need to look at markers for socioeconomic status. It is more a

matter of where you live and where you go to high school. There was discussion about this. Watt discussed the SEAM project. There are a lot of high school math teachers who do not understand big ideas, such as the slope of the graph. There are misconceptions about things like this. Williams noted that out of the number of students graduating from every college and university in the state of Indiana who majored in science education, the total is only five. Watt has more information about this. There was additional discussion on this.

5. Task Force Updates

Ross was unable to attend the meeting, but he submitted a written update on the sophomores task force; Evenbeck distributed the written report. The transfers task force will report next time, as well as metrics. The task force on seniors is trying to figure out a creative way to get the survey to students. Evenbeck and Johnson have been discussing this.

6. Other Business

Due to time constraints, Gosney agreed to give his presentation on the e-portfolio at the full council meeting. He will be at the top of the agenda. Evenbeck reviewed the agenda for the full council meeting. He also reviewed important events on the calendar. Porter announced that the news media has been reporting that student loans will not be available due to the bad economic situation, but there is no evidence that this will be the case. Some students with credit history problems may have trouble. Williams gave an overview of a project that she is working on. She distributed a draft handout that showed the average adjusted gross income for 2005 listed by zip code. Kathy Burton is helping her with this project. There was a brief discussion on this. Evenbeck thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

7. Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by:
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