

Council on Retention and Graduation Minutes

April 19, 2007

BS 2000

Presiding: Scott Evenbeck

Present: Drew Appleby, Beth Barnette, Melissa Biddinger, Bill Borden, Victor Borden, Ben Boukai, Pam Brown, Kathy Burton, Nancy Chism, Ty Cruce, Scott Evenbeck, Chuck Fearnow, Gina Gibau, Sharon Hamilton, Michele Hansen, Amanda Helman, Sara Hook, Barbara Jackson, James Johnson, Susan Kahn, John Kremer, Nancy Lamm, Joyce MacKinnon, Henry Merrill, Bill Orme, Jennifer Pease, Gary Pike, Rebecca Porter, Kathy Purvis, Irene Queiro-Tajalli, Frank Ross, David Sabol, Roger Schmenner, Jack Schmit, Philip Seabrook, Elizabeth Spears, Kim Stewart-Brinston, Diane Sturek, Uday Sukhatme, Terri Talbert-Hatch, Kate Thedwall, Regina Turner, Gayle Williams, Marianne Wokeck, Robert Yost

Regrets: Mary Fisher, Anastasia Morrone, Ted Mullen, Megan Palmer, Michelle Verduzco

1. Evenbeck opened the meeting. He announced the Derek Price report is now available and copies were distributed. Evenbeck introduced Victor Borden.
2. Borden distributed a handout, "Developing a Persistence Index: IUPUI Edition." Borden hoped the information presented would help guide questions. He introduced Ty Cruce. Borden explained that people are notoriously bad at predicting probabilities. He hoped the information would help everyone make better sense of the Derek Price study and the sequential model. Borden said this research is a different way to look at the system. In a sense, it is not very insightful as to what makes a difference, but may show where the differences are. He gave a PowerPoint presentation (handout and presentation are available on the CRG Web site).

Borden explained that only 36 percent of IUPUI students enter as a traditional cohort. The biggest group of students is external transfers. The term "traditional cohort" is really for the Bloomington campus only. Another problem is that IUPUI serves a different kind of student. Students taking six credit hours or less are difficult to retain.

Borden discussed the persistence index. There is a myth that once we get students into their majors everything will be okay. The index works by taking all of the undergraduates and arraying them according to their factors related to persistence that reflect student input differences (such as credit load, class level, prior academic performance). This index shows big differences in persistence. You do not need to distinguish juniors and seniors. Borden wants to capture what the student was like when they came to IUPUI, including prior academic performance, SAT or ACT scores, GPA for transfer students, etc. Borden noted that there are some pockets where academic ability does not make much sense; in some areas it makes a big difference. The persistence index matrix for common weights is similar to the cost-of-living index.

The unadjusted one-year persistence rate for IUPUI is 74 percent; the adjusted one-year persistence rate is 77 percent. In the persistence matrix comparisons, there are pockets where

we are not doing well. Results are mixed for other campuses. For example, Columbus does better with part-time students and poorly with full-time students. This information will help us focus our thinking to look at where the differences are.

Borden compared schools. The highest performing schools are business, medicine, social work, and nursing. Whatever these schools are doing, they are doing well. It should be remembered that when students graduate from these schools they tend to find jobs, which is one reason for a higher retention rate. Two schools struggling are liberal arts and science. They are having trouble with upper classmen. University College is struggling, but we would expect them to be lower because they have students who have not made up their minds.

After Borden reviewed the rest of his presentation, the question was asked about the schools with high persistence rates. Is it true that students picked those majors and schools for specific careers, which motivates them to persist? Borden said this is true; money and vocation is a factor in persistence. Someone asked if Borden's study tracked students in the School of Science, such as those going into medicine. Borden said they did not, but these are things to consider. Someone said one thing that had been overlooked is socioeconomic status. Borden agreed that this was a good point. This might be a better indicating factor than academic ability.

3. Cruce gave a PowerPoint presentation (available on the CRG Web site). He discussed framing the persistence problem, understanding results of retention studies, and providing perspective on concepts.

We look at graduation rates and the time it takes students to graduate. For the individual student, what is the probability they will graduate in a certain time frame? The effects of characteristics on retention and departure do not change over time. The methods for examining persistence under this framework can be very complex and are relatively new to many in the institutional research field.

While reviewing the information about financial aid, Cruce said the problem is finding out if the effect on retention is the aid itself or that students on financial aid are more or less likely to come back any way.

After his presentation, someone asked if our cohort of 36 percent is first-time, full-time students. Cruce said that it is. When asked why Cruce excluded African Americans, he explained that he did not exclude them but he used a different model. Someone mentioned that Cruce frequently said "all things being equal." Did he check things being "not equal"? Cruce said in an ideal world you have these things in a control model. Cruce said he wants to predict who will come first. The propensity to stay is based on the propensity to enroll. This is not accounted for in this model.

4. Gary Pike gave a PowerPoint presentation on identifying at-risk students (available on the CRG Web site). When Pike was at the University of Missouri and Mississippi State University, they used student groups in enrollment management. These groups were used to assess the effectiveness of recruitment efforts, advise students, and assess progress in

improving retention. Pike presented additional information about student groups. He found the factors associated with success include gender, first-generation status, institutional commitment (intent to transfer), amount of time spent working, and student groups. Pike found minority status was not significantly related to student success in this study.

He discussed the overall probabilities of success. For females, it is a second-generation student in student group one who intends to graduate from IUPUI and works 20 hours per week or less. For males, it is a first-generation student in group four who is not certain he will graduate from IUPUI and works more than 20 hours per week. Predictors include first-generation status, intent to transfer, financial need, total gift aid, total loans, and if GPA is less than 2.0.

After Pike's presentation, someone asked if GPA is a causal factor. Pike believes that financial need is more of a factor. If GPA is a causal factor, it is low enough that the student is dismissed. When asked if we can look at things to change GPAs, Pike said he does not suggest giving students higher grades for the sake of retention.

5. Additional Handouts: "IUPUI Academic Support Programs and Academic Success: Highlights" by Michele Hansen (March 29, 2007), and "College Freshmen Arrive with Determination and Motivation So Why Do Only Half Graduate?" by Catherine Stover (March 2007).
6. Adjourned.

Submitted by:
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