

Council on Retention and Graduation
Meeting Minutes
March 18, 2008
UC 115

Present: Linda Brothers, Cathy Buyarski, Melissa Biddinger, Scott Evenbeck, Nancy Fitzgerald (for Jennifer Pease), Michele Hansen, Amanda Helman, Kathy Johnson, Steve Jones, Susan Kahn, Nancy Lamm, Amy Maldi, Sheila Morris-Watson (for Sara Hook), Gary Pike, Becky Porter, Ken Rennels, Ingrid Ritchie, David Sabol, Mark Urtel, Michelle Verduzco, Rick Ward, Jeff Watt, Gayle Williams, Kathryn Wilson

Regrets: Renee Akins, David Bivin, Mary Fisher, Stephen Hundley, Pamela Jeffries, Andrew Klein, Bill Kulsrud, Claudette Lands, Susan Montgomery, Anastasia Morrone, Ted Mullen, Megan Palmer, Jennifer Pease, Uday Sukhatme, Regina Turner, Suzanne Vick, Marianne Wokeck, Robert Yost

Guests: Judy Carley, Lauren DeWell, Tracie Hughes

1. Evenbeck welcomed everyone to the meeting. Introductions were made.
2. Student Employment on Campus:
Evenbeck reviewed the retention and graduation rates for IUPUI. One thing we need to think about is student employment. It makes a difference. We need to do whatever we can to increase students working on campus. He introduced the presenters.

Pike gave a PowerPoint presentation. He discussed national data from NSSE. He thought it would be helpful to provide a little context about student employment. Like Evenbeck said, working on campus makes a difference. Pike reviewed the national data and the categories of students who work. Students who work 20 hours or less on campus have higher grades than those who do not work and those who work off campus. There is a real benefit to working on campus. This is true whether the student is in the first year or a senior (according to NSSE). Working on campus does not cause a student to get better grades, but provides the student with better opportunities and creates conditions for earning better grades.

Pike reviewed the IUPUI data. There are fewer of our students who work on campus compared to national data. As far as actual grades, the difference is more noticeable in the first year. We have a lot of students with senior status, but seem unable to finish school. There was discussion about self-reported data, the categories of working students, the definition of “working,” and who responded to the survey. Pike said the conclusion of the IUPUI data comes to the same conclusion as data in national literature and studies.

Buyarski discussed what they are doing to foster student employment on campus. She explained the restructure of the advising and career centers. We now have the Office of Academic and Career Planning, the Office of Career and Employment Services, and the Solution Center. Telling students that they should not work is not going to be effective because they will work anyway. We want to help students view employment as part of their

overall academic experience. Employment can be part of their academic experience rather than competing with it. Buyarski said they will do their best to steer students into relevant student employment.

Buyarski introduced Judy Carley (Human Resources Administration) and Lauren DeWell (Office of Career and Employment Services). Buyarski said the national literature is clear—working on campus does improve student success rates. She reviewed some of the handouts and discussed the article by Dundes and Marx. Carley reviewed her handouts and announced a workshop on Monday, March 24, about supervising students. She discussed a student employment development program, or Skills Bridge Program, that was piloted over the summer. They hope to roll out the program in the summer or next fall. It links what students want to in their career to what they are doing in their job. She also discussed the JagTemps program and how it provides a service to the campus.

DeWell discussed what the Office of Career and Employment Services is working on, including an alumni mentor database. They are also focusing on training students and providing training programs. When students get into an off-campus job or internship, they will know what to expect. The office also reviews business and office etiquette with students. It is important to write good job descriptions. By doing this, students will know what skills they will gain in a job; it is better for everyone. The office also helps students build transferable skills and write resumes. In addition, they do career coaching and handle the federal work study program.

Buyarski talked more about the Skills Bridge Program. They train supervisors to look at the PULs to see how jobs and skills match the PULs. She gave an example of skills used when taking minutes at a meeting and how this task fits into the PULs. She also discussed the Personal Development Plan (PDP). As of this fall, all University College first-year seminars will require students to complete a PDP. She explained how the PDP will work in the course and how it fits with student employment. She discussed the pilot program for the PDP. After completing the PDP, students will understand what type of job they need to further enhance their academic experience and future career prospects.

Hughes (Office of Career and Employment Services) discussed the career coaching they do in their office. There are times when students seem to be doing all of the right things, but there may be something missing. She discussed how to support student employment and gave an example of a student working in their own office.

Ward said that a number of students he has talked to are unaware that work study is an option. Students need to know the steps to do this. Hughes noted that work study has a finite amount of money available. Work study is part of a student's financial aid package. Some students cannot qualify for work study, such as international students. Hughes said they are redoubling their efforts to work with the Office of Financial Aid Services to get the word out to students. Helman said they never allow students to be identified as "work study students" because this is private information. Hughes agreed and said it is better to use the term "student employee." Porter cautioned people against sending students to the financial aid office to ask for work study. It is true that there are some students who could qualify, but

never do. The bigger issue is the finite amount of money available for work study. Williams said that her office has been working with Porter's office. During orientation, they were trying to help students understand work study and apply for it. They found out this is not a good idea because of the limited amount of funding. If one student applies, another will not receive it.

Wilson noted that the Center for Research and Learning has some money available. They can help students find mentors. This type of work will satisfy a lot of PULs. Grant money is available. Some faculty members who have grants can work a student employee into that grant. Some faculty members can go to the granting agency and request a supplement just to add an undergraduate employee. Hughes said they encourage students to be proactive and talk to people. Buyarski said they have some CTE funds. They are thinking about offering departments money to hire students, if the departments agree to go through the Skills Bridge Program. She asked the council if they would be interested in such an arrangement. Many agreed. Buyarski and Hughes told about the benefits of having student employees. Wilson said they have a grant in the Center for Research and Learning to set up an electronic portfolio to help with research. Any faculty member doing research with a student can take part in that. Everything is based on the PULs. Maldi told about students in Herron. The faculty advising component is very important in student employment. Williams said that we need help from employers to recognize that students are doing pre-professional work on campus. Many students are doing things such as teaching in the classroom, but are not being recognized for it. Buyarski said this may be an opportunity to help students articulate on their resume what they have done. Hughes said they help students do this.

DeWell asked what they can do on campus to promote relevant student employment. Ward said one thing the campus administration is doing is going after additional CTE funds. Ward said he resists anything that adds an additional burden to students, but if it is going to happen, could we ask for more money to support student employment? That money is supposed to be earmarked for student retention and success. Helman said this is a good point. Every time they have a student who drops out, the most common reason is the student got a job (which means they will make much more money); the second most common reason is pregnancy. We can't do anything about the pregnancy issue, but we can do something about students leaving to make more money. We need to put more money into student employment on campus. Porter asked how we recognize departments who are good student employers. DeWell explained a program they have that recognizes good student employers. They honor a student employee of the year and a student supervisor of the year. Porter believes it would be helpful to promote this more.

Williams said they discuss student employment with family members at orientation. There is a disconnect because people want information immediately. They need to be able to give specific information right then and there. DeWell noted that it is important for people to post positions. Biddinger asked if we have any flyers in the orientation packet with tools students can use to find employment. When they get home they can use that information. Williams said the problem is students throw many of the papers away. Trashcans after orientation are full of papers. There is also the problem of cost. The critical point is that we need to get the

information to students when they are in front of us. Helman asked if there was a standard job application. There was discussion about this.

Carley said that she and DeWell were here to help everyone hire students. She hoped people would contact their offices if they could do anything to assist in the process. She asked the council if there were ways they could communicate the educational benefits of student employment to others. Porter said offering departments subsidies would be helpful. Biddinger said presentations about the effectiveness of student employment and money available to help with it would be helpful. While doing this, people could ask questions and be informed directly. Wilson suggested linking jobs to real academic credit. Some people still have the misunderstanding that students cannot get paid for research and receive credit for it too. With the RISE Initiative, experiential learning will be required. Departments will have to figure out how to do this. Verduzco asked if we could put a box on the student application so students could check the box if they are interested in student employment. Porter discussed this; it does not look like a possibility. Buyarski asked if we could put this question on entering student surveys or placement tests. Biddinger suggested putting this question to students when they register for orientation. Hansen and Pike said it would be easier to put the question as part of the orientation registration. Williams said that if we ask students this question, it is very important that someone follow up and contact them. Biddinger suggested having an automatic response that says something to the effect that the student will be contacted with two weeks, etc.

3. Other Business:

Evenbeck and the council thanked the presenters. Evenbeck updated the council on four task forces that the CRG Steering Committee has developed this semester. If anyone wants to serve on a task force, contact Evenbeck. Johnson told about the task force for seniors. She explained a survey they are working on to gauge the extent of particular issues that are causing students to take longer than they should to graduate. They are thinking about administering the survey through capstone instructors. Pike discussed some of the problems of giving students too many surveys. He thought going through the capstone instructors was a good idea. Buyarski gave an update on the transfer student task force. She attended a conference with Jennifer Pease about transfer students. Most of IUPUI's transfer students are in the schools. This issue is not just about what University College can do, but also what the schools can do. This task force is open to anyone. Biddinger volunteered to help. Buyarski said one of the things the task force will do is develop definitions for categories of transfer students. Evenbeck said another task force being developed is for sophomore students. This task force is being organized by Frank Ross. We are trying to understand what we need to do with sophomores that we are not now doing. If anyone is interested in serving on this task force, contact Ross. The newest task force is being organized by Pike. The task force is looking at better ways to measure student success and develop a metric. Pike gave an update on this. Porter said that one of the problems we have at IUPUI is every time we attack a question, we come up with a different way to measure success, which leads to a different set of questions. We never seem to get beyond asking for more data. It would be helpful to have a standard performance metric. We are data rich, but sometimes we are information poor. Porter explained that IMIR is putting together a new data portal, which is available on the IMIR Web site. Pike gave an update about the changes in data for diversity. Williams said

she would like to see five or ten reports that come out every year with a campus expectation that everyone on campus will read these reports. IUPUI has a culture of assessment, which is good, but sometimes we go to an extreme.

Evenbeck reminded everyone that the Student Access and Success Conference will be on April 4 on this campus. Clifford Adelman is the keynote speaker. Evenbeck gave an overview of the conference. Contact Evenbeck's office for more information or to register. Also, April 9 is the dedication for the new campus center. John Gardner will be the keynote speaker for this ceremony.

4. Adjourned.

Submitted by:
A. Snyder
University College