

Council on Retention and Graduation
Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2007
UL 1126

Present: Melissa Biddinger, Scott Evenbeck, Mary Fisher, Sharon Hamilton, Michele Hansen, Steve Jones, Susan Kahn, Amy Maldi, Susan Montgomery, Stacy Morrone, Ted Mullen, Megan Palmer, Jennifer Pease, Gary Pike, Becky Porter, Ingrid Ritchie, Beth Spears, Rick Ward, Jeff Watt, Gayle Williams, Kathryn Wilson, Marianne Wokeck, and Robert Yost

Regrets: Cathy Buyarski, Sara Hook, Kathy Johnson, Andrew Klein, Nancy Lamm, Frank Ross, David Sabol, Mark Urtel, and Michelle Verduzco

1. Evenbeck opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. Introductions were made. Susan Montgomery (IUPUC) will be joining the Steering Committee. Amy Maldi (Herron School of Art and Design) will be joining the full council.
2. Rick Ward's Retention Action Team:
Ward gave an overview of the work the retention action team has been doing. Ward distributed a summary of the final action team report. The action team looked at where the pipeline is leaking. The bad news is the pipeline is leaking throughout. The team focused on specific areas where the pipeline is the "leakiest."

For first-time, full-time students, some issues are very clear. Only 50 percent of FTFT students who had a GPA below 2.0 enrolled for a second semester. We need to find better ways of identifying students who are going to struggle. There are some successful things that are working, such as learning communities. Ward discussed the Price report and the recommendations for students who were not retained. Ward said having an early read on how students are doing is very important. We need to focus on students who are not coming to class. Ward pointed out that academic support programs like STAR (Students Taking Academic Responsibility) are working well. If we force students into a second-semester intervention, we have a much better chance of retaining them. The problem is we do not have the resources to do that.

Ward discussed second-year students and their retention rate. One issue that arises in the second year is how well students connect to campus. We need scholarships aimed at improving academic performance. For transfer students, we need to be developing more to help them. Working with Ivy Tech will continue to be an important issue. Ward also discussed African American students. In addition to adding resources for African American students, we need to be sure we add staff. We already have overworked people. For part-time students, we should probably be developing specific strategies for these students. Ward said that some of our seniors are not finishing. We need to look at what the barriers are for these students. Why are they not finishing in that last year? He gave an example of what the School of Liberal Arts is doing.

Ward pointed out that there is no silver bullet or just one problem. He is worried that our retention effort is so focused on the first-time, full-time cohort. Ward hopes we continue to focus on this important cohort, but also look broader.

Ward reviewed the recommendations of the action team. We know students are stumbling in gateway courses. There is a national dialogue going on about undergraduate curriculum. It needs to be revised in light of twenty-first century issues. Ward also addressed financial issues of students, such as financial management. He discussed the model used by the University of North Texas. One of the stunning things Ward discovered by listening to the UNT people was that students have credit cards. In addition to graduating with student loan debt, they also have substantial credit card debt. For example, a student may have \$30,000 in student loan debt and another \$30,000 in credit card debt.

Ward believes there is a lot of good work going on around campus, but it has not been well coordinated. We need a centralized administration. One good example of that happening is with the PULs.

Evenbeck and the council thanked Ward and his action team for their hard work. Evenbeck reminded everyone that the retention rate went up 10 percent by working with the schools. He asked the council if we should put together task forces to look at the areas targeted in the action team report; at the end of the year, these task forces could come back to the council to report and make suggestions. Evenbeck reviewed the two articles that were distributed. Having a sophomore task force would be a great help. One thing that Porter has pointed out is that only half of the degree audits are up and running. If we do not have degree audits working, we cannot send out letters to students. Bonita Jacobs, who visited recently from the University of North Texas, told Evenbeck about a conference they have to discuss transfer students. Perhaps we could get a small task force on transfer students to send to the conference. At the next Steering Committee meeting, the members could put together these task forces. This is not the work of University College. For example, working with seniors and transfer students must come from the schools.

Watt said that when we talk about these issues, we often talk to too many administrators. Instead, we should be talking to the faculty members who are "in the trenches." For example, in the School of Science, there are not enough laboratories. A shortage of labs results in not enough sections being offered to students, so seniors may not be able to take certain classes their last year. We need for the seniors to talk to us, as well as the faculty who are working with these students.

Pike told about a suggestion made by Williams regarding Arizona. If we are going to have task forces, we should do it in a similar way. There should be very specific suggestions, guidelines, etc.

Porter believes that we can do more task forces, but this in itself will not move us forward. Before a task force is charged, we need to get some commitment. It is difficult to get a person to commit to something that has not been generated yet. Instead, tell a group that they have X amount of resources and ask how it should be spent.

Fisher said that the schools need to be heavily involved. Some industries can provide support for students. For example, nursing students receive support from the hospitals; the students work while they are in school and they have a job upon graduation. If the biggest issue is finances, we cannot hand out money so we will have to come up with another way. If a student graduates with \$30,000 in credit card debt, he or she is in debt for life.

Williams said that 39 percent of student loan borrowers graduate with unmanageable levels of debt, and 55 percent of African American student loan borrowers graduate with unmanageable levels of debt. Indiana's economy is not good. We are crazy if we do not look at this relationship. If there were benchmarks, a team could come back and see how well a plan was working. It would help us set measurable goals. Evenbeck believes it would make sense for the Steering Committee to take this on.

Wilson asked why a task force was necessary. We talk about centralization, but that has already been done. Some of the problems mentioned have already been looked at in the action team document. She gave an example of how they encourage undergraduate students with research. She agreed that sophomore retention is not good. Mentoring is a problem on this campus. It is not possible to mentor all majors; there is not enough space or faculty. She believes we need to come up with ideas and just do them.

Wocek explained that she and Mullen are on the task force for the honors college. This is a model that we can adopt. There are other issues that we can work on. We need coordination and commitment. Another area to look at is assessment. We do assessment, and then it falls flat.

Palmer said that Ward's team has made some incredible recommendations. There is powerful information in the report. Evenbeck said we need to get things started, similar to Dean Sukhatme's approach.

Jones is not sure we need to come up with new recommendations. One thing that helped civic engagement on this campus was faculty buy in. At some point, we have to address issues of faculty culture, which can inhibit or permit these recommendations to move forward. If the faculty do not see it as part of their work, it will not move forward. What can we do to get faculty to take this seriously?

Evenbeck explained what our retention rate is relative to our peers, as well as our retention to graduation rate compared to our peers. If our ratio were the same, our graduation rate would go up by 11 percent. The retention problem is serious, but the graduation rate is even more serious. If our graduation rate went up 11 percent, it would mean more than 7 million dollars in additional tuition money. There was additional discussion about retention and graduation.

Wocek believes we need a shift in the culture of the administration. We have a resource issue. She would like to know what the teaching loads are for faculty at our peer institutions. People are spread too thin. We cannot spread our faculty and advisors any thinner. Evenbeck said he would send out his peer comparison charts.

Palmer believes there are structural issues, such as need based aid, academic calendar, intensive weekend programming. She suspects our peer institutions have addressed these issues. She finds it impressive that returners and non-returners praised the faculty. There are other things that preclude students from returning.

3. Michele Hansen Presentation:

Hansen gave a quiz that asks questions about IUPUI students. She gave information and assessment data between questions. Hansen explained that the retention rate for men has gone up. The retention rate over time is going up. First-year seminars have an impact on retention. About 89 percent of students are participating in a first-year seminar. She reviewed information about students who are not participating in a first-year seminar.

A council member asked about our students going to other campuses. Evenbeck explained that IUPUI is now part of the national clearinghouse to track students. Another question was asked about conditional admits. Evenbeck explained that we have had good luck with the math bridge program. Watt agreed. He explained how the program works. Williams said that housing is an issue for many students. Pease added that some students do not attend these programs, not because of unwillingness, but because they have obligations such as caring for parents or children. Watt said that when the math department spoke with students on the telephone, many simply said "no." Some students understood the importance. One family even cancelled a vacation trip. Watt said he is sympathetic to some of these situations, but we need to make hard decisions. Indiana is one of the worst areas for social promotion. It should be no surprise that many students are not being retained.

Hansen reviewed information about themed learning communities and the positive impact they have on students. She also discussed the concept of academic hope and the role it plays in retention. She discussed students working on campus and off campus, first-time full-time students, first generation students, living on campus, the retention rate for African American students, academic interests and goals of students, and finances. Evenbeck asked Hansen to send her PowerPoint presentation to everyone. He asked everyone to give Hansen credit if they use this information.

4. Other Business:

Porter announced that IMIR and Enrollment Services will be hosting a workshop in January to discuss data resources. Contact her for more information.

Williams said that information for the 21 Club is now available. Williams said she will send this information out to everyone. Evenbeck noted that one advisor received eight nominations.

Evenbeck reviewed what will be happening with the new campus center. Adaptive Educational Services will be moving into the University College building. He is hoping Chartwells will maintain a minimal amount of food service in University College. He reviewed changes that will be taking place in the University College building after people

begin moving over to the campus center. Porter said the campus will take possession of the building on December 3. People will be moving into the building throughout December.

Evenbeck announced that the University College faculty and staff will be having a retreat on January 18. Everyone is invited to attend. John Gardner will be the keynote speaker. During the retreat, they will be working on the academic plan. Gardner will also be the speaker for the campus center dedication in April.

5. Meeting adjourned.

Action Items:

- Evenbeck will send out peer comparison charts.
- Hansen will make her PowerPoint presentation available to the council.
- Williams will send out information about the 21 Club.

Submitted by:
A. Snyder
University College