

## **Council on Retention and Graduation Steering Committee**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**November 29, 2007**

**UC 3171**

**Presiding: Scott Evenbeck**

**Present:** Cathy Buyarski, Scott Evenbeck, Sharon Hamilton, Michele Hansen, Kathy Johnson, Steve Jones, Megan Palmer, Rebecca Porter, Frank Ross, Gayle Williams, Marianne Wokeck

**Regrets:** Susan Montgomery, Stacy Morrone, Gary Pike, David Sabol, Michelle Verduzco

1. Evenbeck welcomed everyone.

2. Retention Action Team Report Discussion:

A handout was distributed with the main discussion points from the full council meeting on November 13 when Rick Ward gave a summary of his action team's report. Evenbeck proposed the Steering Committee focus on transfer students, seniors, sophomores, and students who reflect diversity. We have done a lot for entering students, and we will not back off. The drop in retention after the second year reinforces the need to do more with sophomores. We need to get these items on our agenda.

Wokeck suggested that when we work with seniors we should devise a questionnaire for the schools to send out. This would allow the schools to collect information about what is keeping students from finishing. The survey would provide evidence and help schools better target problems. We could survey students who have been enrolled in the last five years campuswide. Evenbeck asked Wokeck to serve on a task force for seniors. Wokeck accepted the assignment. Kathy Johnson also volunteered. Johnson noted that when projects evolve to the point that you need schools to do something, the projects stall. Evenbeck asked Wokeck and Johnson to think about whom else can serve on the task force.

Evenbeck announced that Porter met with the deans about degree audits. Porter reviewed what happened in the meeting. Porter said they are trying to find clarity on what gets done and what does not. It is a resource issue. Until they are finished with the PeopleSoft upgrade, the Office of the Registrar is unable to devote resources to degree audits. It is a critical process. Degree audits would assist students in doing self-advising. They would also assist schools with personalizing communications with students. Porter estimated that about 50 percent of degree audits are being completed right now.

Jones told about his experience of advising when he was finishing his Ph.D. The department he worked for set up appointments with all incoming seniors. Others agreed that we do not have anything like that. Porter suggested the council encourage best practices. It is not realistic for all schools to meet face to face with every student.

Williams reminded everyone that one thing the retention action team reported was that the undergraduate curriculum has not been evaluated for a very long time. In fact, some schools have not evaluated their requirements for a very long time. It is the job of IUPUI to look at

this. She told about a problem they have when selecting which courses to connect to the themed learning communities. Some courses are on the schools' curriculum checklists, but no longer required or part of a sequence. It was agreed that this is an issue that should go to the faculty governance committee.

Evenbeck discussed setting the pathway for a task force for sophomores. University College plays a role with sophomores, including career courses, mentoring, etc. This is an issue that needs the schools to get involved. Wokeck said many institutions have a second-year seminar. Perhaps, instead of doing a sampler course, we could have second-year seminar. This would involve the schools. Jones volunteered to be on the task force. Porter believes that when we look at sophomore issues, it should not be generic but academic unit specific. We need to look at how to get individual academic units involved. Wokeck told how this is related to an honors college. Also, liberal arts students have to figure out what they are going to do. They have many choices, but programs have different flows. Evenbeck believes the personal development plan (PDP) will help. In fall 2009, every student will have a PDP. This will not be a magic bullet, but it will help. Johnson and Wokeck volunteered to serve on the task force for sophomores. It was suggested that Joe Thompson from the School of Science be invited to serve on the task force. It is important for the School of Liberal Arts and the School of Science be involved in this task force. Ross volunteered to serve on the task force. Evenbeck suggested we have concreteness for seniors and sophomores. We will still discuss transfer students and students reflecting diversity. The new vice chancellor for diversity should be included in this.

3. Report on Nursing Students:

Evenbeck discussed a report that Pike has worked on about nursing students. Pike's report was distributed. Evenbeck explained that there has been discussion about the possibility of retention and graduation rates going up if all nursing students were dual admits.

Buyarski gave an update on what advisors are doing to expose students to a variety of health professions. They also have career assessments at the beginning of the process to expose students to different careers. The School of Nursing has Plan B workshops. However, the students who really need these workshops are not showing up for them. Buyarski told about a newsletter going out to students interested in health professions. The advisors get a list of students who are denied admission to the School of Nursing. Williams told about the online pre-orientation program. She hopes that students will go through the program and do a self-assessment. This may plant seeds that students need to think differently about this. Williams believes students who select nursing want to help people. We need to think about students' emotional drive to get this degree. Williams said they are seeing something similar in science. The School of Science has tried to offer as many learning communities as they can. Right now, science is the number one major for entering students. Jones wondered if students could be guided to other caring professions, such as social work or education. Students need to know other options. Porter believes we need to identify career paths for students who are not academically strong.

4. Impact Reports:

Michele Hansen distributed three reports. She discussed conducting a series of analyses and the need for understanding who is participating in programs, as well as the nonparticipants. Hansen reviewed the "First-Year Seminar Impact Report." She explained how she did the analysis. Evenbeck said that many students who decide late are nonparticipants. Buyarski said that by July, there are no seats available for learning communities. Evenbeck wants us to make more seats available.

Hansen discussed different types of first-year seminars. This is helpful in understanding what types of programs have impact. For example, is an online LC more effective for certain students than others? Williams noted that themed learning communities (TLCs) fill early, and many of the students in TLCs are Bridge students. Hansen noted that many nonparticipants are not participating in other programs on campus. Conditional admits seem to be helped more by first-year seminars in terms of retention rates. For the GPA, there is a small degree of variance. In response to a question, Hansen explained that the students in this analysis were enrolled at census. Williams said there are not many students who drop a learning community; Hansen agreed. Porter pointed out that there are different types of conditional admits. Hansen explained that she is unable to get that data. Others agreed. Porter said there are different reasons students are admitted conditionally, such as low SAT scores, etc. Williams noted that there is a perception among faculty that conditional admits are in that category because they did not pass their placement tests. Wokeck suggested that we should have a campus discussion about curriculum. Hansen explained that she also did a qualitative follow-up and analyzed open-ended comments from students. Students are making connections with advisors and learning about campus resources. They do not like busy work that is not linked to learning outcomes.

Hansen reviewed data about critical inquiry for spring 2007. She discussed the results. The data indicates a positive direction, but it is not a significant impact. Critical inquiry analysis suggests students like the class design and the curriculum design. They also like the group discussions. Hansen discussed an analysis that she did a couple of years ago. There was discussion about the faculty who teach critical inquiry. Williams said some faculty do not find out until right before classes start that they are going to teach critical inquiry. They are looking at the quality of teaching. Buyarski noted that the intent of critical inquiry is the transferability of skills. If you look at the impact the critical inquiry has on one course, the true impact may not be measurable until the follow year. Evenbeck said there is a positive association between learning communities and the graduation rate. Williams told about a student who reported in her last year that critical inquiry was the most important course she took. Wokeck noted that there is general agreement that critical inquiry is something that works in the long run, but planning for it is difficult. There needs to be a discussion about why we are doing this. We can encourage faculty in general. Williams explained that they were trying to get students into this second-semester course. They probably linked critical inquiry with courses they should not have, but there is a numbers issue. Wokeck does not believe we are using faculty in the best way.

Hansen said that in looking at longer-term impacts, it is a matter of prioritizing. It is very difficult to assess the transferability of skills. She would have to interview students. When you look at a long-term impact, it is hard to connect it back to a program because there are so many things that happen between that time. Williams wondered if we could partner with the School of Education to train a pool of people. Palmer said that will cost money. Wokeck suggested looking for someone doing a thesis on this; we would have someone who does qualitative interviews. There was additional discussion about working with the School of Education. There was also discussion about the math department's summer program.

5. Follow-up on Action Items:

- *Jones will give committee members a copy of the national guide to service learning when it is available.* Jones said they do not have a hard copy yet. He will share the sections that he has.
- *Palmer will talk to the School of Education to gain their cooperation in the work we are doing with Summer Academy Bridge Program, scholarships, etc.* There was discussion on what Palmer can do to work with the School of Education. It was suggested that Palmer could discuss ways that faculty and graduate students could have our work on their radar.

6. Other Business:

Evenbeck reviewed the handouts that were distributed. He told about the College Board Pilot Study. Porter added that this is a "first shot." This was a pilot study intent on learning what we can do to get urban students to respond. They will do a larger study, probably in the spring. Evenbeck reminded everyone that we are cautioned not to over-survey students. Porter said they are working with Pike on this study. There was discussion about a section in the article that discussed the potential negative impact of students spending time in the library. It could be that students who are skipping classes or not studying are going to the library to spend time on the Internet, etc. Evenbeck reviewed the other handouts.

Evenbeck reported on three items:

- Cathy Buyarski and her team have the names of every student from the fall 2007 cohort who is not yet registered. Buyarski noted that they are able to reach only five percent. There was discussion about the IU-Notify system and if students' information will be updated more often.
- Williams, Buyarski, Ben Boukai, Chris Foley, and others did a great job of coming up with a proposal for expanding Bridge next summer. Evenbeck gave an update on this. There was discussion about the math program, sending out letters, and budget issues.
- Roberta Matthews, who works with Nancy Hoffman and Jobs for the Future, has a large grant to look at retention issues. Evenbeck will send out more information about this.

7. Meeting Adjourned.

**Action Items:**

- Wokeck and Johnson will serve on Task Force for Seniors. They will think about whom else to invite to serve on the task force.
- Jones, Johnson, Wokeck, and Ross will serve on Task Force for Sophomores. They will think about whom else to invite to serve on the task force.
- Evenbeck will send out information about the Roberta Matthews grant for retention.
- Jones will give committee members a copy (as available) of the national guide to service learning when it is available.
- Palmer will talk to the School of Education about our work.

**Additional Handouts:**

- Article: “‘Swirling’ Seniors: Multiple Institution Attendance”
- Article: “College Access for the Working Poor”
- Article: “QEP: Enhancing Student Success”
- Article: “Perspectives: Using White Privilege to Rank Black Colleges”
- Report: Degree Audit Status
- Report: Undergraduate Retention, 2006 Cohort
- Report: Enrollment Management Steering Group

Submitted by:  
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