

INSTRUCTION COUNCIL

January 16, 2009

204 Whitehurst

MINUTES

Present: Raj Basu, Celeste Campbell, Bob Davis, Robert Dooley, Bavette Miller, Ed Miller, Shiretta Ownbey, Mark Payton, Chris Ross, David Thompson, Tina Meier, and Gail Gates.

1. D2L – Tina Meier

Tina noted that the procedure to combine courses and/or sections is working but wasn't aware of the number of sections and courses that would need to be combined. Information Technology (IT) has remedied most of the issues with incomplete grades without additional paperwork by allowing students access to the course for one year. If a student needs access to the on-line instruction for over one year a request needs to be submitted to Dr. Gates for approval. Teaching Assistants (TAs) were having difficulties accessing the D2L system if they weren't recorded in SIS as having instructional responsibility. Depending on the structure of the class, some TAs are classified with 1% instructional responsibility and in others the faculty member has 1% instruction. IT proposed using percentages to determine the different levels of access or rights. Tina asked who should have what levels of access. Members asked Tina if she could provide a description of the access granted based on the percentage of instruction and provide a list of courses with faculty showing as 1% instruction. Members also asked if a statement could be added to D2L to notify faculty/TAs that entering grades in the D2L gradebook does not enter the final grades into SIS. Tina agreed that they would look into it. Tina commented that they had been experiencing some issues with students who do not have an open matriculation for the current term (for example; students auditing courses or students who are not currently enrolled but wish to finish an incomplete grade). Tina also mentioned that the D2L system needs to be upgraded periodically and it takes approximately 4 hours each time. Members asked if faculty could receive advanced notice of the downtime and Tina responded that they would be notified. Dr. Gates will look at the calendars from all the OSU campuses and will work with IT to determine the best time to run the updates. Tina noted that in relation to the on-line classroom, IT has made available virtual labs which allow access to programs from a distance. IT has a new server for files with YouTube type file extensions and is looking at a university portal program, an open source for viewing purposes only. Tina asked members if there were other services desired to let her know and noted that she will revisit Instruction Council to continue discussions on the identification of instructional needs related to IT.

2. Admissions Policy and Procedures – Gail Gates

Dr. Gates noted that the Admissions Policy and Procedures needed to be revised. Two of the main revisions were to add holistic admissions and to shift approval of alternative admitted students from the Director of Undergraduate Admissions to the Admission Review Committee (ARC).

Members Approved.

3. Fall 2007 Freshman Retention Analysis Report – Celeste Campbell

Dr. Campbell noted that the retention rate for the Fall 2007 freshman cohort was the lowest in 10 years (77.1%). The highest freshman retention rate during the past 10 years was 84.6% for the 1999 cohort. The purpose of the study was to identify factors that contributed to retention. She conducted an analysis using the Fall 2007 freshman cohort and was able to predict retention status moderately well (82.4% accuracy) from a set of academic, financial, and demographic variables. The most important variables that predicted retention status were the college GPA, unpaid OSU balance (bursar hold), the number of credit hours dropped during the first semester, and the high school GPA. Students who were *not* retained:

- had significantly lower college GPAs;
- were significantly more likely to have an unpaid OSU bill;
- withdrew from significantly more credit hours of coursework during the first semester; and
- had significantly lower high school GPAs.

Other variables that made a relatively small contribution to the prediction of retention were: ACT score (departed students had lower scores); number of credit hours attempted during the first semester (departed students attempted fewer hours); family income (departed students had lower family income); amount of scholarships, grants, and tuition waivers (departed students had less assistance that did not require repayment); unmet financial need during the first semester (departed students had more unmet financial need); gender (male students were more likely to depart); and race (minority students were more likely to depart).

A group of students were predicted to be retained but they left OSU. These students, who resemble retained students on most of the variables examined in this study, are of particular interest. Recommendations include interviewing a sample of these students to determine the reasons for their departure. Prior retention studies revealed financial difficulties, location of OSU, academic difficulty, personal/family problems, and student's lack of talking with advisers as factors for student withdrawal. Many students had never discussed their decision to leave with an adviser or other staff member at OSU. Members discussed other possible reasons these students are not retained: a boyfriend/girlfriend left the University, a student was used to making high grades and their college grades are lower, there is a community college close to home, the campus is too small or large, etc.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to identify Fall 2008 students who show characteristics of students who were predicted to leave. The Directors of Student Academic Services (DSAS) agreed to ask advisers to contact these students. Dr. Gates commented that "The Appreciative Advising Revolution" workshop on February 2nd will address some of the issues of students not being able to accomplish their dreams.

4. English Proficiency of Teaching Assistants – Mark Payton and Gail Gates

Action: Discussion

Dr. Basu confirmed that OSU-Tulsa had TAs who are non-native speakers of English. These students must travel to Stillwater to take the class GRAD 5990. The President has been receiving complaints about international teaching assistants that undergraduate students are not able to understand. Dr. Payton explained that there are 3 levels of grading on the English Proficiency Exam: (1) Pass, (2) Provisional Pass, and (3) Fail. Members noted that they know that there are departments that aren't requiring their international TAs to take the test. Some department heads are concerned about the way the ITA exam is administered - students are downgraded because the evaluators don't understand the content being presented by the TA. Dr. Payton encouraged departments to send representatives to act as evaluators and help TAs prepare a presentation that is easy for a lay audience to understand. Dr. Gates noted that a letter will be sent out requesting a list of student international TAs and asking for confirmation that those students took the test.

5. Availability of Diversity Courses – Gail Gates

Action: Discussion

Dr. Gates noted that advisers have noted concerns regarding the lack of diversity courses and Dr. Crauder identified several courses being offered with the diversity designation that have openings this spring. Members indicated it would be most helpful if the course could fulfill two general education designations (e.g., SD or HD). Discussions will continue at the next meeting.

Adjourn: 10:47 a.m.