

PROVOST'S COUNCIL RETREAT – ADVISING, RETENTION AND STUDENT SUCCESS
Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center
717 General Booth Boulevard, Virginia Beach
August 23, 2010

- 8:30-9:00 a.m. Continental breakfast
- 9:00-10:30 a.m. Presentation on retention and graduation rates – Carol Simpson
Discussion
- 10:30-10:45 a.m. Break
- 10:45-12:00 noon Advising and NACADA consultants' report (see attachment, p. 1-9)
Meeting Student Demand for High-Touch Advising (see attachment, p. 10-12 and review complete report on the Education Advisory Board website – link to be provided)
Discussion
- 12:00-1:15 p.m. Lunch
- 1:15-2:15 p.m. Role of Adjunct Faculty in Student Success
○ Best Practices for Supporting Adjuncts (see attachment, p. 13-17)
○ Study on Adjunct Faculty – Connie Merriman
Discussion
- 2:15-2:30 p.m. Break
- 2:30-3:30 p.m. Learning Commons and Student Success Center – Overview from Ginny O'Herron (see attachments, p. 18-20)
Discussion
- 3:30-4:00 p.m. Wrap-up and Next Steps

PROVOST'S COUNCIL RETREAT
August 23, 2010
Minutes

Members of the Provost's Council, along with Associate and Assistant Deans and invited guests, held an all-day retreat on Monday, August 23, 2010 to focus on student success, advising and retention. Those present were: Carol Simpson (Chair), M'Hammed Abdous, Osman Akan, Ali Ardalan, Oktay Baysal, Debbie Bauman, Richardean Benjamin, Judy Bowman, David Branch, Andy Casiello, Mona Danner, Linda Irwin-DeVitis, Sharon Judge, Janet Katz, Brenda Lewis, Terri Mathews, Alice McAdory, Connie Merriman, David Metzger, Ginny O'Herron, Renee Olander, Chris Osgood, Mike Overstreet, Worth Pickering, Chris Platsoucas, Brenda Roth, Deanne Shuman, Mary Swartz, Linda Vahala, Sandy Waters, Charles Wilson, Robert Wojtowicz, and Gil Yochum. The following topics were discussed.

1. Presentation on Retention and Graduation Rates

Carol Simpson presented information on retention and graduation rates. She asked each of the Colleges to begin to identify strategies to increase retention and graduation rates and improve advising. The following comments and suggestions were made.

- Professional advisors are essential but faculty advising is also important.
- SAT scores are one of the best predictors of student success.
- Review the large lecture sections and look for a method to break students into small groups. Consider making the large lecture sections hybrid courses; students could gather information on the web and also work in small groups.
- Send something to students at various milestones during the semester – one week, one month, mid-term, and end of semester.
- Don't forget about the good students.
- Students want a relationship with someone on campus.
- Reinstate learning communities.
- Ensure students complete general education.
- Take the bottom 10% of the freshman class and have them enroll in two courses in the summer with some of our best professors. This was successful at another institution.
- Increase funding for student organizations.
- Provide mentors for new students.
- Organize students into teams and create competitions, such as study group competitions.
- Consider changes to the class schedule so classes meet Monday and Wednesday with Friday available for students to meet in teams.
- Find out why students do not return.
- Determine how ODU can become the first choice school.
- Provide students with career information.
- Ask faculty to provide advisors the results of the first exam as a way for advisors to see the progress of their students.

- The success advisors are using FOCUS, a tool in the Career Management Center, and this has been successful. Consider using FOCUS at Preview or open houses.
- Create incentives for advising and rewards for good advisors.
- Buy-in from faculty on the effort to increase retention and graduation rates is essential. Training for faculty is also important.

2. Advising and NACADA consultants' report Meeting Student Demand for High-Touch Advising

Sandy Waters reported on several items related to the NACADA report and high-touch advising.

- Attendees received a handout on the master advisor program, which has been implemented. Carol Simpson asked the Deans to encourage their faculty to become master advisors.
- Funding is available for a University-wide awards program for advising. Attendees received information on the advising award.
- Old Dominion Advising Network (ODAN) has been organized and the group will present programs on advising, with the goal to become an allied member of NACADA.
- A career ladder for advisors has been implemented.
- The early alert grades process is working. Student success advisors contact those students with two or more grades below C. Housing staff will assist by contacting those students who do not respond to the contact from advisors.
- The advising staff are working to implement much of what the NACADA report recommended.

Comments and suggestions from the group are as follows.

- Work to break students into small groups for advising in the summer.
- VCU revamped their English composition classes and trained faculty from different disciplines to teach a focused inquiry class. The faculty member for the focused inquiry class also serves as the advisor. This has been successful at VCU.
- Writing across the disciplines worked in the past at ODU.
- Peer mentors have been used successfully. They were instrumental in learning communities. There is an effort underway to get a sense of the various mentoring programs available on campus. There is also software available that can match students to mentors.
- Student organizations can be used to provide mentoring.
- The teach your passion courses are effective. Carol Simpson encouraged the Deans to work with their faculty to offer more of these courses.
- Strive to implement the requirement/expectation that all freshman students should participate in some type of first-year program: learning communities, an orientation course, the teach your passion course, mentoring, etc.

- Snack attacks have been offered in the College of Engineering and Technology during the first five weeks of the semester. Snacks are provided in an effort to get faculty and graduate students to meet freshmen.
- Experiential transcripts that allow students to showcase their experiences have been successful.
- Consider expanding early alert grades beyond the 100/200 level.
- Housing staff will review the early alert grades to see if there are patterns within the dorms or dorm floors.
- Class attendance is critical to student success. Quizzes at the beginning of class may be useful in encouraging attendance. Carol Simpson asked the Deans to encourage their faculty to take attendance whenever possible.
- Requiring students to write a two-minute essay at the end of class on what they learned and/or what problems they encountered can be useful to faculty.
- The Center for Learning Technologies can provide support to faculty in redesigning their classes.
- Provide incentives for faculty to become involved in helping students succeed. Too often the message is that research is what matters.

3. Role of Adjunct Faculty in Student Success

Carol Simpson encouraged retreat attendees to review the report on Best Practices for Supporting Adjuncts by Richard E. Lyons and Helen Burstad. She noted that many adjuncts teach introductory classes that are sometimes difficult for students, adjuncts often feel disconnected with faculty in their department, and adjunct faculty are not well compensated. She also stated that the adjunct faculty handbook is not current; Connie Merriman volunteered to lead the effort to update it.

Connie Merriman presented the results of her study on adjunct faculty organizational sense of belonging and affective organizational commitment. She presented data on adjunct faculty at ODU and stressed the importance of the following to adjunct faculty: orientation programs, communication, office space, mentoring, peer observation, evaluation, and awards.

Key findings and implications for administrators and department chairs are as follows.

- Retaining quality adjunct faculty with a vested interest in the institution benefits everyone.
- Adjunct faculty have a lower organizational sense of belonging than full-time faculty.
- Identify and reevaluate policies that adversely impact the ability to develop organizational sense of belonging.
- Actively involve adjunct faculty in faculty governance.
- Increase opportunities for adjunct faculty to interact with each other and full-time faculty.
- Increase opportunities for faculty development and reward participation.
- Acknowledge adjunct faculty as serious scholars, valuable to the institution.

- Update pay practices.
- Improve mechanisms for evaluation and performance feedback.

4. Learning Commons and Student Success Center

Ginny O'Herron provided an update on the progress of the Learning Commons and the Student Success Center, which are targeted to open in October 2011. Partners in the Learning Commons are the Library, University College, and the Office of Computing and Communications Services. The goal of the Learning Commons is to integrate services to support learning outside the classroom. The next step is to engage the campus community and seek ideas on how to make the Learning Commons an exciting place to learn.

David Metzger stated that he is working with the units in University College that will be moving to the Student Success Center. Tutoring will be enhanced in the Learning Commons and the resources of the Math and Science Resource Center and Writing Tutorial Services may be available in the Commons.

Renee Olander announced that there will be something similar to a mini Learning Commons in the Higher Education Centers. Andy Casiello stated that distance learning is working with community colleges to develop spaces similar to a Learning Commons. Mona Danner added that the QEP will focus on student learning, and the QEP committee will be gathering ideas on what the QEP topic should be. The timing for developing the QEP fits nicely with regard to the opening of the Learning Commons and Student Success Center.

5. Wrap-up and Next Steps

Carol Simpson asked for feedback from the group on ideas from the retreat they might implement. She expressed interest in looking at learning communities again and peer mentoring. Additional comments were as follows.

- Arts and Letters: mentoring; make retention everyone's interest; work with faculty to become better advisors; update the manual for adjunct faculty; and create an orientation program for adjunct faculty.
- Business and Public Administration: issues related to adjunct faculty.
- Education: add a Success Advisor to the College and redefine faculty roles; and investigate using doctoral students from the Counseling graduate programs in advising.
- Health Sciences: retention of high school students who are not accepted into a program in the College of Health Sciences but could move to another program within the University; strengthening the public health program; and mentoring.
- Sciences: develop subgroups and teams of students; acknowledge the students who are successful; and achieve success in the Math and Science Resource Center.

- Distance Learning: will expand the Center for Learning Technologies to become the Center for Teaching and Learning. Andy Casiello asked the Colleges to involve the Center as they implement strategies and programs for student success.
- Institutional Research and Assessment: will survey tenure-track faculty; and will gather a group of faculty recently tenured to involve them with tenure-track faculty.

Carol Simpson stated that she will review the College's annual reports next year to see what the Colleges are doing with regard to advising, retention and graduation. She also noted that she will ask that advising be moved from the service category to teaching.