

Faculty Senate
Admissions & Enrollment Management Council

Final Report 2012-2013

Members: Christina Aiello, Jason Ambrose, Aria Cheo, Karen Decker, Shan Feng, Robert Wolk (Chair)

Council Charges:

1. Coordinate with the University Strategic Enrollment Management Committee to avoid redundant work—determine the manner in which this Council can best work with Chris Cohen and her committee
2. Study of departments with high retention rates to determine best practices which can be shared with others
3. Analysis of summer remediation courses (online, traditional and blended) concerning enrollment and success rate of students
4. Development of a central tracking system for all at-risk students so that faculty could report to and request assistance from one central office
5. Review Student Scholarship policies and procedures

During the academic year, September 2012 – April 2013, the Council met seven times. Meetings focused on discussions with professional staff and representatives from the various Offices responsible for administering programs the Council was charged with reviewing. These individuals included:

Dr. Jane Zeff:	Institutional Research and Assessment
Linda Refsland:	First Year Foundation Program
Amanda Vasques:	Office of Scholarships
Nancy Norville:	Annual Giving and Special Development Programs
Dr. Kristin Cohen:	VP, Enrollment Management

Charge #1: Dr. Ambrose was selected by the Senate Executive Committee as representative from the Admissions & Enrollment Management Council to the Strategic Management Committee. Dr. Ambrose has attended several meetings and reported to Council. Because of scheduling conflicts, Dr. Cohen was only able to attend one of the Council's meetings this year.

Recommendation: A representative from the Council should continue to serve on the Strategic Management Committee. In her absence, Dr. Cohen should appoint a representative to the Council so that dialogue can continue at all levels.

Charge #2: Council discussed retention and best practices with Dr. Jane Zeff who indicated that Nursing, Communication Disorders and Music had high retention rates. Although not unique among academic departments, all three departments provide students with a highly structured curriculum, a sequence of courses that are offered after they are announced, and a student plan of study. Students are encouraged to plan and prepare their programs well in advance with the certainty that courses will be offered. These are also smaller departments in which more one-on-one instruction is made available, and where student progress is carefully monitored.

Recommendation: The Council believes these are all best practices that should be adopted when possible. Because many of our students do better in a more structured environment, a monitored plan of study and course sequencing extending two or more years would give students ample time to take necessary pre-requisites. The ability to plan in advance could contribute to improved graduation within a four year sequence.

Charge #2: Council discussed the needs of transfer students with all guests. Whereas transfer students are a growing cohort at WPU, Council emphasizes that more resources should be targeted to promote their success. This should include:

- a needs assessment survey to better evaluate their concerns
- create an office or center for transfer student with designated individuals prepared to address specific issues
- hold two open forums each semester so that transfer students can meet each other and share information about common problems
- create an online orientation program to facilitate their transition

Charge #3: The Council strongly supports the efforts of Linda Refsland, Head of the First Year Foundation Program, in providing both traditional and online developmental courses required of incoming freshmen, Students taking the courses over the summer have higher retention rates in their first year compared with students starting developmental courses in the fall.

Recommendation: Council supports the need for a second professional staff / coordinator to assist Ms. Refsland in tracking and performing follow-up services with students.

Charge #4: In 2011-12 Council recommended that all offices tracking student academic work coordinate their notices to faculty requesting feedback on students' progress during the year so that faculty do not receive several requests for information from different offices. We believe this has been done.

Charge #5: Council met with Amanda Vasquez, Nancy Norville and Kristin Cohen who explained that requirements for scholarships are under review, and will change in the fall of 2013 as part of the Strategic Plan.

Scholarship applications for the fall are due in March. But last year only 332 students of 1100 who began the application process completed it. Many students seem to stop at the essay, but it is unclear why.

Recommendations:

- **although writing workshops exist for students filling out essays, there is a need to survey students other ways of providing help with the essay or other problems that deter them from completing application**
- **collect more data on why more students are not applying for scholarships**
- **direct contact with high achieving students, those on Dean's List, who should be encouraged to apply**
- **have a Scholarship Day for faculty in each college who can then share this information with students**
- **have a University Scholarship Day for students. Possibly partner with Financial Aid.**

Recommendation unrelated to Council charge:

- When denied Financial Aid, the Office should create a checklist of things for students and their parents to do
- **Because students are not allowed to take courses until receiving approval from Financial Aid, when approval is obtained students have already missed up to three weeks of the semester in each course. This creates an at-risk situation, and some students fall so far behind that they end up doing poorly or fail their courses. Students should be encouraged to meet with faculty and keep up with the weekly syllabus in preparation for entering the course after the financial aid issue is resolved.**

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Wolk