

Registration Advisory Committee, Wednesday, February 14, 2013 Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Anna Flack, Gary Campbell, Joanne Braxton, Charles Connolly, June Ohrnberger, Charles Bartolotta, Linda Sprague, Jane Shearer, Meryl Rogers, Laura Levine, John Cienski, Dan Feld, Suzanne Dela Raba, Tom Tyson, Kristin Riley (for Nina Leonhardt), Chris Gherardi, Rose Bancroft, Nancy Brewer, Dawn Short, Linda Puleo, and Marguerite Timmons, Kathy Payette

Not in Attendance: Robert Beodeker, Mary Reese, Nancy Brewer, Jeff Lang, Michele Green

Spring 2013 Enrollment Review

Master Schedule

- The master schedule update was provided. Gary reported a 92.21 percent section utilization for the spring semester. A total of 122 sections were cancelled college-wide; 79 sections at Ammerman, 34 sections at Grant, and 9 sections at East. In comparison to last spring, the College is down 4,254 total seats.
- Gary noted that parts of term are reviewed frequently and corrected as needed up until the point that students are registered. Some mass drop and add situations existed this term because many honors designated sections did not meet enrollment projections and needed to be changed to traditional sections. Due to a problem in Banner, all of these sections needed to be rebuilt and students were transferred over. Gary stressed the importance of parts of term because they dictate the start/end dates as well as refunds. He requested that when academic chairs cancel sections but leave them in the schedule by zeroing out seat limits, to please remove from print and voice response to ensure they won't show up on his reports.
- In light of declining enrollment, Gary stressed the importance of Academic Chairs keeping the schedule tight, following the proper sequencing of courses, and communicating with one another. Sequencing is critical when follow-up courses exist along with small numbers of sections. Fall should be first and third semester courses and spring should be second and fourth. It has been found that proper sequencing leads to increased enrollment.

Admissions

- Chuck Connolly remarked that the spring enrollment period went well, centrally as well as college-wide. It was reported that enrollment was down slightly under 3 percent.
- From a Central Admissions perspective, Joanne noted that initiatives were being taken earlier, individuals were working differently, and reassignments have been made to enhance processing. The Central Admissions Call Center located at the Sayville Center will be rolled out this semester. Staff will be trained to intake all external calls allowing Central Admissions to process applications without interruption. Anna will provide FERPA training, Steve Clark will provide system training, and Annie Monaco will provide Admissions Manual training.

Financial Aid

- Rose reported that the spring financial aid process also went well, including the SAP run. Chuck Connolly noted that based on his analysis, 90 percent of these students have re-registered. He will release his data once it is complete. Rose further reported that a lot of Ammerman students re-registered also. Students who lost their aid due to academic progress were notified via college and personal email and given the opportunity to file an appeal. Students were advised to either drop their classes or join the tuition payment plan.

Chuck Bartolotta remarked about the negative impacts created by SAP. Students didn't have the money for their tuition and were dropped in a short span of time. He noted that factors such as the tightened SAP regulations, default rates and the 150 percent rule combined to make it difficult for students, particularly for returning adult students. Rose noted that the students that were blocked from financial aid were the same students that were on academic dismissal, they were not a new population. Rose further explained the new financial aid regulations to the Committee.

Anna noted that the SAP run was delayed due to the delay in end of term processing caused by grades being submitted late, which is a significant problem. All of these processes should have been completed one week earlier.

Payment Due Date/Daily-De-scheduling Procedures

- Spring Payment due date and daily descheduling procedures worked fine. Zero balance, veterans and students owing less than \$300 were held through the day before the start of the term. Constant communication took place with these population, especially those that owe less than \$300. Rose reported that 1,604 zero balance students were held when descheduling began and 217 were descheduled the day before the first day of classes.
- It was noted that students are still experiencing difficulty with completing the confirm attendance process.

Recommendations:

- ❖ **Look into the possibility of monitoring a student's progress while engaged in the payment or confirm attendance processes.**
- ❖ **Include students in a focus group to evaluate changes to online processes.**

Charges

- **A request was made to determine the success of holding the ZB, Veterans, and students owing less than \$300 populations. Of the students that were held how many completed the necessary processes to become enrolled? Anna will discuss with Joanne.**
- **Moving forward, Anna and Joanne mentioned holding these populations up until one week before the first day of classes rather than the day before.**
- **Anna will initiate a Banner IT Project Request to implement a function for message prompting during the confirming attendance process.**

Enrollment Management

- The Enrollment Management Initiatives document was distributed to the committee outlining all of the outreach provided to keep students engaged.
- Joanne provided the spring enrollment at 96.679 in terms of head count. Excelsior still needs to be accounted for as well as a small number from the Police Academy. There is an overall concern regarding enrollment being down. Other cohorts are being pursued to help increase enrollment. At today's Enrollment Management Committee meeting, Joanne will be sharing the high school graduation numbers up through 2019. The college can no longer rely on high school graduation numbers; we must expand on other avenues in terms of enrollment. For example, during a visit to the Air Force Base, the College was asked to become their online institution. Dr. Mazzarelli has an interest in pursuing this partnership. Other committees are looking at retention to develop strategies that help us retain the students currently enrolled. One of the cohorts being researched is the returning adult student. The College needs to nurture and expand this group. Joanne met with the Directors of Admissions and they have been charged to

work on plans of action within their geographic areas through community and civic organizations.

- Dawn addressed the veteran population with the committee in terms enrollment. It was brought to her attention that many returning veterans enroll for a short period of time so that they can get on their feet or obtain employment since the VA pays for their tuition and housing. Dawn suggested finding a way to entice this population to continue their education. Joanne mentioned that Workforce Development has programs that provide manufacturing skills—although, at present, these programs are not certified with the VA. Additional work needs to be done in this area.

Course/Campus Time Conflict Outreach

- This outreach had to do with students that didn't allow themselves enough time to travel between campuses. The Computer Center was responsible for producing a very helpful report of students who were registered for two classes—one of which was located on a campus that required a drive of up to 45 minutes to another campus—but was scheduled only five minutes later. Cheryl Eldredge emailed, called and wrote to each identified student in these weekly reports. Most students were unaware that they were registered at another campus.

System Performance Issues

- Anna remarked about some system issues that took place during the spring enrollment period. Printing issues occurred. The mass registration form wasn't working correctly. Anna noted that a mass drop/mass add usually takes place right before the start of the semester due to a course cancellation or an incorrect part of term and this process must be handled quickly and efficiently. Laura indicated that when a situation like this occurs all IT can do is look behind the scenes. They are usually a result of high activity. A fatal error issue also occurred. Laura noted that these were resolved. A setting was changed and some maintenance was done on Tuesday, February 12, but the errors are reported to be back. The time-out error is still occurring. Laura is in touch with ITEC which is investigating this. The printer issues, while resolved, are still being investigated.
- Another system issue that took place was related to the web pay function. In these cases, the only portion of the payment that was posted to the student's account was the \$20 convenience fee. The tuition was not posted, resulting in the student being de-scheduled. There were three cases; one on the payment due date, one on Christmas Eve and another the first week of January. A meeting on this topic resulted in a solution if/when this occurs during daily de-scheduling. Further discussion is needed when these occurrences take place outside of the daily de-scheduling period. It was reported that these three students' schedules were reinstated since their classes were lost due to College error.

Recommendation

- ❖ **As a safety check, Laura will ask Jason to run a report to look for anomalies in the web pay output.**

Charge

- **Joanne was asked to have the committee change the name of the "convenience fee". Complaints have surfaced from some who are irritated by this terminology. Joanne will forward this to Legal Affairs for advisement.**

Summer/Fall 2013 Start of Term Activities

- Anna reported that we are ready to communicate priority registration information on the portal in terms of registration dates and advising information. There has been some interest on the part of Title III to get advisement information out on the portal as quickly as possible. Linda has been in touch with Paul Matus to post student and faculty information by next week, but is requesting the go-ahead from Central to move forward.
- The initiatives to maximize fall 2013 enrollment will look very much like those conducted for spring 2013. We will replicate the initiatives that worked. The communications for summer and fall will be similar as well. Anna welcomes any suggestions to improve communication with students.
- Anna discussed the dates the committee previously agreed to for fall billing activation and payment due date.
 - Based on discussions that took place after the September RAC meeting, most members of the committee recommended moving bill activation up to Wednesday, June 5 and the payment due date up to July 31 for the purpose of solidifying the schedule and keeping students engaged.
 - In response to these dates, other processes will need to be moved up. Rose noted that financial aid will begin processing earlier.
 - One significant factor to consider is the change in the tax rules. John noted that the IRS is anticipating a higher volume of extensions filed this year which may result in students not receiving their tax information in time to file for financial aid. Rose agreed that this would impact students being certified for financial aid (who make up 50 percent of our population).
 - Dan raised another issue that by opening billing up earlier, a great deal of pressure will be placed on Enrollment Services staff requiring them to work longer hours for a longer period of time. In addition, this will have budgetary implications due to the overtime needed.
 - Chuck Bartolotta remarked that moving up the payment due date may be counterintuitive during a period of declining enrollment combined with financial pressure.
 - The earlier date allows a clearer picture of the schedule earlier on, and gives us the ability to open up classes sooner.
 - Tom remarked that schedules were much easier to build last term, even at the last minute, based on the declining enrollment.
 - John recommended maintaining the same de-scheduling date guidelines as we usually do since we gain a week with the fall term start on September 3. A critical point in deciding the payment date is the affect it will have on enrollment.
 - Jane mentioned that, from an academic standpoint, the later we begin the bumping process the more challenging it becomes to hire adjunct faculty.
 - Anna noted that if de-scheduling occurs sooner, earlier and efficient communication will take place regarding the payment due date.
 - **Based on the discussion and points raised, the committee agreed to recommend a fall 2013 payment due date of August 7. This date will be forwarded for approval.**
- Anna suggested giving some thought to Saturday & evening Enrollment Services openings and to discuss potential scenarios with campus executive deans.
- Anna was asked to address the call center with the Committee based on issues that occurred during end of term processing. A faculty member made a complaint to the President's office that he couldn't get through to the campus registrar's office. Anna will meet with Steve Clark

and others to look into this particular call center setup and discuss options to improve our current system.

- Anna addressed a meeting that took place to resolve the volume of undeliverable mail and the cost affects involved. The Business Office, Purchasing, Registrar, Mailroom, and Central Student Affairs were all involved in the discussion. The recommendation is to place a hold on students' accounts whose mail is undeliverable by either creating a hold that would not allow them to register during priority registration or warn them. Gary recommended becoming paperless and making electronic mail the only means of communication. Federal law requires that institutions notify students that electronic mail will be their official means of communication and students must choose to opt in. Anna remarked that there will be time when the college will need to send things via mail, i.e. 1098-Ts. Regarding 1098-Ts, students must affirmatively confirm their willingness to receive them electronically.
- The committee agreed that it is beneficial for students to be able to forward their College email to their personal email account.
- Text messaging has been approved and funding is in place. The process will begin shortly.

Recommendations:

- ❖ **Anna will query other institutions regarding a possible decrease in enrollment due to moving up the payment due date.**
- ❖ **Laura will look into the ability for students to opt into or out of electronic communications on the portal when establishing their user name and password.**

Charge

- **Linda will provide Anna and Joanne with priority registration advising portal information for review with Dr. Mazzealli.**
- **Anna will provide priority registration population break-down to Laura.**
- **Update the Key Enrollment document to reflect bill activation beginning on June 5 and payment due date on August 7 and discuss with the Enrollment Management Committee.**
- **Provide information on forwarding a student's College email to their personal account.**

Banner User Group Update

- Anna provided information on the I.T. project review structure.
- Two pending projects under review are: Flexible Registration (for Continuing Education) and the Automatic Removal of Developmental Holds
- Anna provided a status report of the Degree Works implementation.
 - Scribing has been completed (by an Ellucian consultant) and training has begun.
 - The team consists of the same people who implemented CAPP.
 - Go-live date is hard to predict at this point.
 - SICAS is currently building the financial aid tracking feature since it does not exist in Degree Works.
 - Degree audit results require an overnight update—as opposed to real-time compliance runs.