

Registration Advisory Committee, Tuesday, February 18, 2014

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Anna Flack, Chris Adams, Gary Campbell, Joanne Braxton, Charles Bartolotta, Jane Shearer, Mary Reese, Laura Levine, Linda Sprague, John Cienski, Dan Feld, Suzanne Dela Raba, June Ohrnberger, Rose Bancroft, Dawn Short, Linda Puleo, Marguerite Timmons, Tom Tyson, Ed Martinez

Guests: Jennifer McGrath, Frances Dearing, Catherine Wynne

Unable to Attend: Nancy Brewer, Donna Ciampa, Chuck Connolly, Chris Gherardi, Jeff Lang, Meryl Rogers, and Kristin Riley for Nina Leonhardt

Anna welcomed the committee and guests. The following fall 2013 recommendations and charges were reviewed and addressed.

Fall 2013 Recommendations and Charges:

Master Schedule

- An attempt to spread out the master schedule for the fall semester by putting 20 percent of the classes on Fridays proved challenging and resulted in an increase of just a few percentage points. The sequencing of moving classes to unpopular times would free up popular times for upper level sequence courses allowing the college to offer less independent studies in order to fulfill graduation requirements for students. Gary reported that this will be an ongoing project with Campus Deans and Academic Chairs.
- The attempt to display open classes only in SSB/Check Class Availability during the peak enrollment period proved less effective due to other unforeseen ramifications.
- For the next enrollment period Gary will be working with IT in obtaining an extract report to determine if CAPP is checked for courses with pre-requisites.
- Regarding open and closed classes, there is a way in Banner for students to choose if they want to view open classes only or all. This will require some customization as well as submission of a project request.
- The request to hide upcoming semesters when students are registering for classes is not an option since Academic Chairs are building courses in SSB for those semesters. Meryl put forth this request since students were selecting the incorrect semester when registering for classes. It was recommended to bring this to the attention of counselors so that they can highlight that field during advising.
- Gary will provide the campus Registrar's Offices his Part of Term Exception Reports for the fall semester.

Payment Due Date/Daily Descheduling Procedures

- Anna noted that the College is trying to effectively reach out to students to make them aware of their financial obligation to the College prior to the beginning of their enrollment process.
- Anna emphasized that registration should not be taking place outside of the Registrar's Office once classes begin due to the complexities in liability and the various drop codes.
- The procedure for Dean Approval for students adding classes after the allotted time frame will be done through email between faculty, academic chair, and academic dean with final submission to the Registrar's office.

Communication Enhancements

- Meetings have been held to develop an RFP for a company that would deliver mobile communication services to the College allowing the College to text students in addition to other means of communication. Joanne reported that protocols will be established in terms of how text messaging will be used. With the help of the Office of Institutional Advancement, text messaging will be used in a very strategic way to allow students to pay attention to key matters such as registration, scholarships, bill payment, and closings. The design will allow the College to message separate groups, campuses, specific degree programs, etc. As part of the protocol, the College is looking into changing the information requested of students which will also require changes to the admissions application. Joanne further noted that this initiative will require a campaign to have current students update their contact information.

Record Retention Processes

- The record retention procedures will be distributed shortly to the College community. Anna stressed the importance that everyone at the College should be fully aware of our processes to maintain as well as destroy records appropriately.

The September 19, 2013 meeting minutes were accepted.

Winter/Spring 2014 Enrollment Review

Master Schedule

- Gary reported that the College is flat with FTEs. He noted a net decrease for the semester of 223 students, Ammerman was down 312 students with 14 less sections than last spring, East was down 33 students with 11 more sections some of which were career programs running with lower numbers, and Grant was up 122 students with an increase of 11 sections. Gary reported good section/seat utilization overall, but emphasized the impact career programs have because of the need to run upper level course offerings with 6 or 7 students in order to facilitate graduation from an approved program.
- Gary reported on special topics courses. The policy for special topics allows the course to run twice after which it must be removed from the master schedule or request approval through Curriculum and Governance as a regular course offering. Three special topics courses for the fall semester have already run twice. Gary will follow-up, at the President's request, to ensure these courses go through the proper approval channels or are removed from the master schedule.
- Central Administration and the Calendar Committee are working on a plan to address make-up days for the spring semester which will be rolled out via college brief shortly.

Admissions

- Joanne encouragingly reported that enrollment is flat despite the 2.5% predicted decline. She applauded all of the campuses for their efforts with continuing and new students and extended a special thanks to the Grant Campus, who based on the admissions report, did a yeoman's job retaining continuing students.
- The admissions application will be updated to address Visa types due to more detailed student information being requested by the state and federal government.
- SUNY is now requiring that all institutions inform them of undocumented students, matriculated and non-matriculated. Regarding curricula that are low enrolled, Joanne indicated the need to review restricted curricula and their requirements to maintain proper enrollment. Admissions has identified several curricula where students are not enrolling in these programs. Scholarships are available in specialty areas; however, there aren't enough students to award them to.

- Curricula that indicate January application deadlines are being reviewed and recommendations are being made to change the submission deadlines for many of them. This will enable the College to properly inform students since the review process is not complete until May or later. The one program where the January application deadline is adhered to is Nursing.

Recommendations/Charges

- ❖ **Regarding undocumented students, policies, procedures, applications and forms will need to be updated to comply with this mandate. These updates must be in place before March 31 for the fall 2014 semester.**

Financial Aid

- Saturday, February 22 is SUNY Financial Aid Day across the State. Each campus will be providing financial aid workshops. Juniors and seniors from feeder schools have been invited.
- Rose reported a loss of 300 zero balance students at final de-scheduling and half re-registered. Notices regarding confirming attendance began at the start of priority registration and many students confirmed early on. During the registration period outreach was done regularly; weekly emails, phone calls and robo-calls. Questions arose as to why we lost 100 more zero balance students than usual. It was noted that we started with more zero balance students. It was further noted that many students were selecting the wrong semester under WebPay since spring 2014 was not the first option. Anna noted that she can enhance her messaging to students during peak enrollment periods to pay attention to certain items. Students are able to check their account status in the portal under pay my bill.
- Rose explained the SICAS refund process hierarchy, which looks to students' accounts for full PELL grants or TAP grants and if a loan comes in it will send the refund of the loan directly to the student and waits for the grant money. Since the second TPP is February 24, the TAP payment had to be moved to Friday, February 21. Once TAP gets paid, by regulation, TAP must pay tuition and fees and the SICAS refund process is bypassed. Therefore, if a loan comes in it will pay whatever is owed.

Recommendations/Charges:

- ❖ **Anna will work with the Computer Center to make the current semester the first option under WebPay/Confirm Attendance.**
- ❖ **Anna and Rose will put together an email to the RAC informing them of the SICAS refund process and the consequences.**

Registration Processes

- Anna acknowledged the challenges the front-line staff endured due to banner outages during registration and expressed her appreciation for their hard work. ITECH had Suffolk and Nassau County Community College, the two largest SUNY institutions, on the same disc drive competing against one another. Suffolk has since been separated from Nassau and moved to faster discs which will hopefully better support the College's needs.
- ITECH also scheduled maintenance a day or two before de-scheduling which required us to change the payment due date and daily de-scheduling by a day. The consensus indicated little impact probably because of the combined power and Banner outages that were occurring at the same time.
- June noted that non-credit ESL bills were sent late and students were de-scheduled. She also indicated that ESL bills at times indicate an incorrect payment due date. Anna acknowledged the oversight attributing this to the many occurrences that the Computer Center was juggling at the time. Enhancing the grade rosters will catch some of the errors. Since everything is a domino effect, by front ending the process the dismissal hearings will not impact the following semester's registration as it did this year.
- Joanne remarked that answering phones during peak registration times needs to be addressed.

Recommendations/Charges

- ❖ **Anna recommended that June remind the Computer Center and herself of upcoming billing activities so they're not overlooked. She also recommended that June be involved in the bill review process for ESL.**
- ❖ **Joanne expressed the need for an institutional plan of action regarding answering phones during peak enrollment times. It was recommended to include Steve Clark in the discussion and Dawn expressed interest as well.**

Student Accounts

- John indicated some issues with late registration fees and excelsior fees. With Excelsior, faulty fee assessments are occurring if a student is in full-year part of term, and one of the semester parts of term messes up the student accident insurance assessment. With late registration, if a student registers late the fee is assessed, however, if the student subsequently drops a course the late registration fee comes off.
- Changes will need to be made to the Excelsior applications related to citizenship and tax reporting.
- Anna asked for feedback on the 1098-T rollout. John indicated that the citizenship decision resulted in 4,000 forms being held up. Due to the IRS citations for not having correct social security numbers, the Business Offices have been addressing this since January, Central Business is entering social security numbers daily, and mailings are being done weekly.

Recommendations/Charges

- ❖ **Anna will schedule a meeting with John, Deborah Wolfson and the campus Registrar's Office regarding Excelsior application revisions.**

Summer & Fall 2014 Start of Term Activities

- Summer and fall priority registration and payment will begin on March 31.
- The campaign to promote the start of priority registration will begin shortly and outreach will be increased. Last fall's communication campaign for spring was very successful and yielded a very nice increase in continuing students.
- John suggested Anna include a message on the final spring bills that all outstanding balances must be paid prior to the start of fall priority registration.
- Including transfer credits in the priority registration breakdown was discussed. Anna indicated that transfer credits are not included in the breakdown because they are not earned credits at Suffolk and including them would put in-house students at a disadvantage. Tom remarked that the rationale behind priority registration in part is giving the students that are closer to graduation the chance to get the courses they need. Linda S. suggested that regardless of the decision to include transfer credits or not, students should be informed. Rose remarked that including transfer credits would increase our graduation rates. Linda P. noted that she gets complaints from students that take a semester off because they're not considered currently enrolled. Anna will take suggestions on how she can revise the structure to include these groups. She also noted that exceptions have been and can be made. Linda S. commented that according to SUNY 30% of students at four year institutions are transferring back to community colleges. Regarding payment at registration, John noted that tuition and fees have not yet been established for fall. Joanne noted that the agreement was in order to allow students to pay at registration they could pay the current tuition rate.
- Academic advisement is on-going.
- Priority registration holds will be applied approximately one week before, on or about March 21.

- Financial holds for students who owe \$500 or less will be applied the weekend before the start of priority registration.
- Payment due date is scheduled for August 6.
- Walk-in payment dates are scheduled for July 31, August 1, August 4, and August 5.
- Zero balance, less than \$300, and veterans will be de-scheduled Tuesday, August 26.
- Saturday openings for all Enrollment Services Offices are scheduled for August 16, August 23, and September 6, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Late hours through 6:00 p.m. will begin August 4 through the end of de-scheduling, September 15, not including Fridays.
- June will meet with Linda P. to establish the ESL payment due date and bill date.
- John reported that the new hold process will be in place for the fall. The application through self service will set end dates for each student. There will no longer be a need for emails and less confusion between “C” and extended holds. There will be a need to establish a hierarchy and protocol of who will have permission to place students on hold.

Recommendations/Charges

- ❖ **Anna will meet with John prior to February 27 to develop messaging for the final spring billing regarding outstanding balances affecting priority registration. She will share the proposed text with the RAC and an email will be sent to all students.**
- ❖ **Anna will work with Joanne to identify the students that are returning from four year institutions to obtain their associates degree.**
- ❖ **Anna will schedule a quick meeting with the Pay at Registration Committee to address tuition, the billing schedule and key messaging.**
- ❖ **A communication plan will be put in place regarding Saturday openings.**

Technology Initiatives

- The Degree Works team will be engaged with a consulting group on site for technical and functional training the week of March 3. They are confident in this group’s ability; they have brought Degree Works up for many institutions including parts of SUNY and CUNY. The team’s objective is to have it rolled out for the College community to view and test by the end of the spring semester. SUNY would like schools to be live in Degree Works by September 1. In terms of the usage, we need to ensure that all of the pieces are functional such as the financial aid compliance piece. SUNY is aware that the College will not be actively working within it for fall priority registration. Degree Works and SAIN/CAPP will run simultaneously for a while until a level of comfort is achieved. The team will collaborate with Title III to ensure that all faculty are well versed.
- Anna is putting a plan in place to have electronic transcripts available by summer.