RAC Minutes

February 2, 2009

Attending: Frank Blalark, Angela Bowlus, Amy Brewster, Jackie Carlson, Carla Claussen, Pam Cook, Dan Delaney, Colin DeLong, Tina Falkner, Tracy Fischer, Laurie Gardner, Jaime Gearhart, Kit Gordon, Carol Gross, Emily Holt, Mary Koskan, Anne Lawrence, Stephanie Lawson, Aileen Lively, Margo Mueller, Kathy Nolan, Cindy Pavlowski, Heather Peterson, Andrea Raich, Lonna Riedinger, Cindy Salyers, Jody Seiler-Peterson, Mary Ellen Shaw, Clare Strand, Nathan Tesch, Danielle Tisinger, Sue Van Voorhis, Kasi Williamson, Peter Woxland

Announcements

Tina Falkner announced that PSTL 1571 has been removed from the list of skills courses that fall within the 6-credit skills course limit. This is effective for students taking the course in spring 2009 or later. The course will count as a skills course for students who took it before spring 2009.

Tina also announced that the policy group of the Student Support Advisory Committee has been called by Laura Coffin Koch. They will be meeting to discuss policy concerns, including those raised by RAC.

Mary Koskan announced that the first week of classes went well at One Stop. She will analyze the statistics further and bring them to the March meeting. In general, One Stop had high traffic and low wait times.

Mary reminded the group to use the newest version of the One Stop ticket to link to the One Stop Web site. For assistance, contact Mary at m-kosk@umn.edu

Mary also reported that there was a planned protest of graduate students on that day (2/2/09). They were planning to meet at noon at Social Sciences and march to Fraser Hall to protest tuition and fees. In particular, they were planning to submit waivers for student services fees. Mary said that One Stop will take their student services fee waiver request forms. The flier from the student group said that students will not be assessed late fees if they have submitted a fee waiver request but do not pay on time. Mary said that this is incorrect; late fees are assessed for late payments when fee waiver petitions are pending.

Frank Blalark announced that fall diplomas arrived in the Office of the Registrar on the previous Friday, and they were ready to send out at the time of the meeting.

Frank reported that 9400 transcripts were requested last December. Transcript requests are going up. Frank will also be contacting people about late grades.

Review of January minutes

No changes to the January minutes.

CLA advising system demo, Colin DeLong

Colin Delong gave an overview and demonstration of the Enrollment Tracking System (ETS), an advising system that CLA has built. He noted that this is a tool that was put in place to help meet the retention and graduation rates targets for the fall 2008 cohort.

ETS mainly lets advisers know if there is anything problematic going on with their students. The system is in constant development.

With his level of access, Colin sees the entire CLA population of students when he logs into the system, including degree-seeking and nondegree-seeking undergraduates. He can see system alerts, warnings, and students with exceptions on their record. Advisers don't see all the CLA students, only those for which they are advisers of record.

During his demonstration, there were no students with alerts on their records. This page would list students who had not registered for spring semester as of four days after their registration queue time. It would also list students who dropped all of their courses.

Colin then showed the list of students with warnings, which are less severe. Warnings show when a student drops below 13 credits, drops 2 or more classes, or other reasons.

Next, he showed the exceptions page. This lists students who have exceptions on their record, e.g., 13-credit exemptions; students who have applied for graduation (this has been especially helpful); students on a leave of absence; suspended students; and some others. These exceptions are items that would require some additional action to get the student enrolled.

Colin pointed out that there is not a "demo version" of the system (so the group was viewing real data); instead of building a demo system, they focused on getting the system running as soon as possible.

When an adviser clicks on a student, he or she sees the basic student characteristics—the essential information that would help to start a conversation with students. For example, the page indicates if the student's enrollment is below 13 credits, their active academic plans, and their current course enrollment. ETS is also integrated with CLA's advising appointment system (ULook).

Colin could also access the negative service indicators or active student groups assigned to a particular student, as well as a complete academic and program history. If the student has an electronic major program form on file (a CLA-built application), that would appear.

Advisers can also see a contact history. This shows the last four years of contacts, including mass e-mails, advising appointments, and more recent contacts that have been logged through ETS.

An adviser can log a follow-up with a student through the interface. Once the system knows you have followed up, it will stop reminding the adviser about that student, unless the adviser sets up a reminder timeline (for example, to be reminded in two weeks if the student still has not filed their 13-credit

exemption). This is helpful in establishing an accounting-based approach to student enrollment management.

The adviser can also add notes. Currently, this does not add or include PeopleSoft comments, but Colin hopes that someday the systems will be integrated.

There are also some filters to help advisers narrow down the group of students they see, e.g., by cohort, admit term, or enrollment status. The system can also export information to help facilitate outreach. Advisers can view students according to the holds on their record, or when they were last contacted.

ETS makes use of helpful data stores, including the operational data store, which is essentially real-time data. The system refreshes every 10 minutes. It was important that advisers see current information, so that they do not need to double-check PeopleSoft before contacting students.

CLA plans to integrate mid-term alerts with ETS. This would allow them to do end-to-end outreach through one system. They are also planning to include their 90-credit plus outreach into ETS.

Mary Ellen Shaw asked how difficult it would be to give another college the code so that they could implement this.

Colin answered that in developing the system for CLA, they had to work with data from all colleges, because CLA students may be in more than one college or degree program. Some things are CLA-specific, like the ULook integration, because CLA is the only college using that system. That would have to be handled separately. In general, this would be something they would want to talk about on an individual basis. CLA did develop the system with the idea that other colleges might be interested in using it at some point.

The question was asked whether CLA discussed automating the follow-up with students with straightforward issues, like enrollment below 13 credits.

Colin replied that they did provide e-mail templates for adviser to use. However, follow up was not automated so that CLA could emphasize one-on-one contact with the student.

Frank Blalark asked how easy it is to add or delete different types of warnings. Colin replied that this is an easy process; they sit down with one or more advisers to work out criteria and exceptions.

Tina was asked whether there were plans to make the system campus-wide. Tina answered that yes, she is working with Colin and Chris Kearns to try to find a way to implement it across campus.

Sue Van Voorhis asked what has been helpful about the system from CLA advisers' perspective. An adviser answered that the personalized communication with students has helped. Advisers who send e-mails to students are getting a good response. Also, they are able to track students more effectively now than in the past. And students are expressing appreciation at someone noticing when things look amiss and taking the time to follow-up.

Colin mentioned that a couple of advisers had gotten e-mails back from students who were pleasantly surprised that someone had noticed they had dropped 2 or more courses and followed up with them.

Dan Delaney asked whether the system included any information that wasn't academic, like financial holds.

Colin answered that they are still reaching out to those students, but they have been somewhat limited on what they can do. They have worked with One Stop to find out options and contact students. Mostly, they direct students to contact One Stop.

Mary Koskan indicated that CLA had sent them a list of 90 students that One Stop and OSF have followed up with.

Clare Strand asked about the filter for students who aren't registered—what if a student has transferred?

Colin showed that the adviser can use tags in the system to indicate that a student has transferred to another school.

Danielle Tisinger asked if system would still be customizable at the college level, if it were rolled out to the entire campus.

Colin replied that the system was built so that it could be customized for each student community, though some things may be able to be customized, and some not.

Tina will keep the group updated on efforts to expand the system across campus.

Project update, Jody Seiler-Peterson

Jody Seiler-Peterson updated the group on several ASR projects.

- The Office of Student Finance reported that 1089-T's were sent out successfully.

- Disbursement of spring financial aid went very well.

In-progress projects:

- The Education Abroad project has encountered some delays. There is a need to re-work functional and technical designs, technical resources have conflicts with other tasks, and there have been changes to the project. The new target date has not yet been set.

- The student account re-write project is working on an RFP for billing and payment services.

- The removable of the refusable/refundable fees sections from the registration system should be ready to go by the time registration begins.

Jody reminded the group that the Quality Fair is on Thursday, February 5. ASR had several posters there, including the integration of Graduation Planner into the student athlete advising process, the scholarship search and management project, the classroom performance index, and the student engagement planner.

Jody also stated that the Quarter 4 workplans would be submitted to OIT in the next few weeks.

Sue Van Voorhis stated that all previously deferred work will roll forward into this work plan. ASR hopes to update the way priorities are set for this work.

Leave of absence (LOA) policy, Tina Falkner

The group discussed the revised, though not yet approved, LOA policy.

Sue Van Voorhis noted that the current policy indicated that each college would have an LOA policy. As the topic was discussed in RAC, it became clear that the University has a policy, rather than individual colleges each having their own.

Mary Ellen Shaw reported that, in CEHD, students meet with their assigned adviser if they want to discuss a leave of absence. The adviser will ask the student to fill out their leave of absence form. The form goes to the undergraduate student services office, where staff enter it into PeopleSoft.

On the form, the adviser signs the college approval line. For students who fill out the form before they find out that they are going to be suspended, the leave row is removed from PeopleSoft and the suspend row is added. Mary Ellen noted that they trying to be more systematic about identifying students who are not enrolled and notifying advisers to contact those students.

Tina asked if CEHD ever denies students an LOA if the student is in good academic standing. Mary Ellen said no, they do not. During the transition to new college, they were cautioning students about program space; however, that is not an issue any longer.

Lonna Riedinger reported that in CLA students don't necessarily have to meet with their adviser before filing for an LOA. Some students mail in their LOA forms; the student communities look at the forms and sign them. Lonna's office processes the LOA in PeopleSoft. If the student specifies a return date on the form, CLA enters it into PeopleSoft right away.

In CLA, students do not have to specify a return date, but it is helpful when the student includes one. If it is in the system, the student will be term-activated automatically as the end of the leave. Otherwise, they have to fill out a readmission form.

Tina noted that the policy requires the student give a return date. Should the form say "required" on this field?

Laurie Gardner commented that if students want to change that return row to an earlier term, the college has to ask OTR to make the change.

Cindy Salyers asked if there is a query for students who have been on an LOA for more than two years, so that they could be discontinued, as the policy states. Emily Holt indicated that yes, that query is run; students who have been on an LOA for more than two years are discontinued by OTR.

Mary Ellen Shaw added that in CEHD they do not enter the student's return date in PeopleSoft; students must fill out a readmission form when they return. It was clarified that, when a student has been granted an approved LOA, this readmission form is really just used for re-activation—the student is not actually "applying" to get back into the college. It really is a notification that the student intends to re-enroll so the term activation row can be added.

Mary Ellen Shaw asked a question about the policy: is it accurate that students gone for one year without an LOA will follow new requirements?

Laurie Gardner clarified that, for a student to follow new requirements, the change must be made manually in APAS; Margo Mueller confirmed this.

Andrea Raich stated that the last sentence under #6 still isn't clear: "A student returning after one year or less will be allowed to follow the program requirements." Many agreed that this sentence is confusing, and should be deleted. Tina said that if it cannot be deleted before these revised policies are brought before the senate, the policy will be taken through the regular revision process to delete this sentence.

Frank Blalark stated that when students register for a term, and then drop all of their courses, it causes problems if the leave of absence is entered in that term. For example, students have earned financial aid eligibility for that term, even if they register and drop. Also, it causes errors in the tuition calculation process. Frank asked whether the colleges see any benefit by putting a leave row on for that term, if a student has already registered and dropped.

Lonna Riedinger replied that, in CLA, students are told that if they register and drop, they do not need a leave of absence. However, that message may not be consistent.

Mary Ellen Shaw asked if they should make the leave active for the following term, if the student has already registered and dropped.

Laurie Gardner commented that they like to start a leave of absence for the student when they drop classes, so that the two years are counted accurately.

Clare Strand noted that it would be possible to include in the leave return date in PeopleSoft, but to subtract one term.

Andrea Raich asked if the number of terms they were gone mattered. In the School of Nursing, they have to be very strict with this policy.

Tina replied that the nature of the nursing program is different. Most colleges, in most instances, can simply let the student back in. It is okay to be more strict than the stated policy: the policy states "Students in good academic standing will ordinarily be granted a leave of absence upon request." We say "ordinarily," so that programs that need to be more strict, can be. The policy gives the latitude for the School of Nursing to interpret it one way, and CLA another.

Clare Strand noted that the Morris campus did not initially embrace the LOA policy because they have a stricter policy regarding a "citizen check," which is like the misconduct clause of the revised policy. Everyone at Morris must apply for readmission, so that they can carry out this citizen check.

Tina Falkner updated the group that the meeting of the President's Policy Committee (PPC) has moved to a later date, but a number of policies are going to the senate for discussion on Thursday, February 6. Those who would like to hear the discussion are encouraged to attend.

Tina stated that the piece about applying for readmission would be added to the FAQ/procedures section, to clarify that it the form indicates an intent to re-enroll, not a true re-application. Students returning from an approved leave may have to fill out the form just to indicate that they are coming back. If a return row was entered with the student's leave, the student will automatically be term-activated. Filling out the form does have some advantages, though, because it allows the University to update the student's residency information.

Tina added that the procedures/support documents sections have not been written yet; she will share that information when she has it.

Jackie Carlson commented that the Duluth campus calls their form "re-enrollment," rather that readmission.

The group agreed that it would be possible to start the leave in the next term, if a student has registered and then dropped classes before they apply for their leave of absence. [Note: After the meeting, it was discovered that this solution could create issues with tracking students who are taking a leave of only one semester. Therefore, this issue is still under discussion; the group will be updated further when a resolution is reached.]

Clare Strand would like to have an effective-dating "cheat sheet" to help with this and other processes. Pam Cook indicated that she has one, though it may be outdated. Pam will fax it to Tina.

Probation/suspension, Tina Falkner

Tina Falkner asked the group how they interpret the sentence, "colleges may develop contracts specifying additional requirements that students enrolled in the college must meet to be removed from probation or to register for classes while on probation."

Mary Ellen Shaw stated that the policy had less specific language to begin with. CEHD does not usually assign different requirements, but they may do so if a student is nearing graduation and the college needs to be firm with the student about what they need to do to graduate. That is left up to the adviser. The scholastic committee may also make a recommendation in reply to the request to return to suspension. It gives the adviser a bit of control for students who are close to graduation and not doing well.

Laurie Gardner stated that they always put students on contract when they go on probation. They do not want students to get down to a 2.0, because it may be impossible for them to recover. Mary Franco prepares a contract that states that a student must have certain grades and complete a certain number of credits among other things; this gives the college the option to suspend the student if that student is going down a slippery slope. Students can always appeal. They have better luck keeping students if they have a higher GPA, because it is difficult to recover when a student has below a 2.0 and more than 60 credits.

Amy Brewster added that, in CCE, when students go on probation they meet with their adviser and discuss a contract form, which states that they need to meet all of these particular requirements or they will be suspended. They cannot earn an F or W on their transcript, and they need a 2.0 term GPA. If the cumulative GPA is below 2.0, the student continues on probation. The adviser can make note about extenuating circumstances on the contract. Amy can send the contract to Tina.

Teresa Fruen added that, in CCE, this process is for degree-seeking students. They also do a review of non-degree-seeking students. Non-degree-seeking students do not have contracts. They do, however, receive a probation hold, which suspends their access to registration. Jennifer Koontz added that the probation review for CCE non-degree students may also include the requirement that they cannot be dropped for non-payment of their tuition and fees.

Mary Ellen Shaw said that CEHD does have contracts, but they include the generic language of the common policy. The adviser can add individual requirements beyond that, if there is good reason for it. They do not routinely add additional requirements.

Andrea Raich noted that the School of Nursing has a common policy. They recently updated their handbook and letters. They do not have contracts for students on probation, but send a letter instead. The letter states that if students' term GPA and a cumulative GPA drops below a 2.0, they will be suspended.

Tina clarified that the policy states that if the term or cumulative GPA is under 2.0, the student is placed on probation. If both are under 2.0, the student is suspended. So if students are able to maintain a cumulative GPA above 2.0, but they had two terms below 2.0, they would remain on probation.

Sue Van Voorhis said that it is important to watch out for students whose GPA keeps going down to a point that they would not be able to recover.

Frank Blalark commented that they have seen cases where students are probation eligible, but some do not have the PB hold. So when the next term comes around, they do not get marked as suspension-eligible. He has also seen some students with more than 120 credits who are suspension-eligible (they have a PB hold, a term GPA below 2.0, and a cumulative GPA below 2.0), but not suspended.

Mary Ellen noted that it would be good to outline best practices procedures for managing the holds. The PB hold should stay on a student's record until they are back in good standing.

Lonna Riedinger agrees that this should be happening. She asked Frank to please send examples or communicate with the colleges when it is not happening.

Emily Holt indicated that this data is available through UM Reports.

Mary Ellen commented that it is possible that late grades, or grades changed from I to F, could change the cumulative GPA of a student after the probation/suspension reports are run. Frank commented that the report is run three times before Satisfactory Academic Progress is run.

Tina Falkner asked everyone to send her a copy of their standard contracts.

Suspended students project, Sue Van Voorhis

Sue reported that Provost Sullivan wants ASR to take a look at all suspended students before the term starts, so that the students don't receive any additional charges to their student account before they're asked to leave. Who can she contact in each college to piece together the process? Mary Ellen Shaw and Lonna Riedinger volunteered. Sue or Tina will be in contact with the other colleges.

Please send Tina the contact from each college who can help with this project by the end of the week (2/6/09).

Liberal education update, Kasi Williamson

Kasi Williamson gave a liberal education update on behalf of Laurel Carroll. She reminded the group to continue to send in course proposals; the earlier courses are approved, the more smoothly the transition will go. Please contact Laurel Carroll at l-carr@umn.edu with any questions or concerns about the new liberal education courses or requirements. The earlier she can address those concerns, the better. Kasi will convene the communications committee in February to distribute the communication tool kits for advisers.

Laurie Gardner asked about what the liberal education transition will mean for transfer students. Kasi reported that Laurel and Kasi will update the group at the March meeting.

How to graduate in four years, UMD model, Kasi Williamson

Kasi Williamson distributed a chart that Tina Falkner had noticed on the UMD Web site, which lists four-year landmarks that students should achieve in each college, in order to stay on track for four-year graduation: http://www.d.umn.edu/roadmap/30-60-90.gif. Kasi asked if individuals might be interested in compiling a list of landmarks for Twin Cities students to post on the One Stop Web site. Lonna Riedinger and Mary Ellen Shaw volunteered. Other colleges will be contacted.