

RAC Minutes

September 14, 2009

Attending:

Deb Basarich, Frank Blalark, Sheryl Bolstad, Laurel Carroll, Carla Claussen, Grant Clavelle, Pam Cook, Dan Delaney, Tina Falkner, Tracy Fischer, Carol Francis, Michael Galegher, Kit Gordon, Barb Jensen, Mary Koskan, Sarah Kussow, Anne Lawrence, Stephanie Lawson, Linda Lindholm, Aileen Lively, Heidi Meyer, Margo Mueller, Anya Norton, Ingrid Nuttall, Les Opatz, Heather Peterson, Ann Rausch, Lonna Riedinger, Cindy Salyers, Fran Schirmers, Jody Seiler-Peterson, Julie Selander, Clare Strand, Judy Swanson, Nathan Thompson, Sue Van Voorhis, Kasi Williamson, Peter Woxland

Introductions

Announcements

Ingrid Nuttall announced that:

- The *Record* newsletter has a new look and some new content; there will continue to be new content and some changes in structure. Please send your feedback or ideas for potential content to Ingrid at ingridn@umn.edu.
- ASR is looking at all student-facing forms to create lists of comprehensive standards for more consistency.
- Anya Norton has become a communications coordinator for OCM. This is a more formal recognition of her existing role, which has included a lot of communications-related work.

Margo Mueller made an announcement related to the process of entering exceptions on transfer courses. If you are entering an exception for a transfer course that does not currently have a direct target, you should wait until the grade for that course has been posted. Once the grade is entered, the Office of Admissions will re-articulate the course and course numbers will change. If you absolutely must enter a course before the grade is posted, then contact Margo at m-muel@umn.edu.

Anya Norton announced that OCM has re-designed their Web site, improving navigation and layout. There is also a new page that features classroom projects.

Mary Koskan announced that registration performance was very good at the beginning of fall term. She noted that it was a challenging fall for One Stop. Financial aid packaging went well, but there were many more students with financial need issues. Mary also highlighted a few items from the One Stop statistics:

- Wait-time on the phone decreased.
- Compared to last year, walk-ins were down in Fraser the week before the semester, but up during the first week. This fluctuates from year-to-year.
- Walk-in wait time was good, considering the amount of counseling that was needed.
- The West Bank had many more walk-ins this year.
- E-mail traffic was up.

Overall, Mary was pleased with the fall statistics, but One Stop is always looking at ways to improve.

Mary Koskan also mentioned that One Stop was open Saturday of Labor Day weekend. About 70 students and parents visited, and staff responded to about 150 e-mail messages.

Sue Van Voorhis let the group know that the undergraduate deans met and are looking for information on why students transfer from college to college. They may want to add questions to the change of college form. Volunteers to consult on this group included Lonna Riedinger, Nathan Tesch, Clare Strand, Les Opatz, and Laurie Gardner.

Tina Falkner announced that ASR has a student worker looking at transcripts for students in all majors who graduated in four years. Ultimately, they will be creating sample plans based on real course-taking patterns. Tina would like to have a group of volunteers, one from each college, to review these sample plans. Volunteers included Mary Ellen Shaw, Andrea Raich, and CLA volunteer to be identified by Lonna Riedinger.

Tina also mentioned that, as the new liberal education requirements are approved and made available on the Web, sample plans will have to be revised accordingly. This will be an agenda item in October.

Changes to the minutes

There were several changes to the August minutes; those are available on the Web site:

<http://asr.umn.edu/archiveASRWeb/rac/index.html>

Vice Provost's update

Bob McMaster

Bob McMaster, Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education, gave an update on several enrollment management and curricular issues.

The quality of admitted students continues to go up. Dean McMaster highlighted some characteristics of this year's freshman class (this data was preliminary, so final figures may vary):

- 5,404 freshmen went through Welcome Week and orientation.
- Average ACT: 26.6
- Average high school rank: 85%
- Students of color: 18.8%;
- Students from Minnesota: 68%
- Students from Wisconsin: 17%
- 110 National Merit Scholars (up from 79 last year)
- 325 international (6.5%), exceeding the campus goal of 5%
- Number of applications: 33,815 (up from 29,000 last year). Between 2009 and 2014, it is anticipated that the number of high school graduates in Minnesota will drop 9%. It is hoped that the number of applicants may go up, even though the total pool of potential applications will decrease.

Last year, the 4-year graduation rate leveled off at 44.3%. Dean McMaster thinks this will start to go up again. He noted that the goal for the class of 2012 (last year's freshmen class) is a 60% 4-year graduation rate, so there is much work to do. The overall goal is 60% 4-year graduation, 70% 5-year graduation, and 80% 6-year graduation. Last year's 5- and 6-year rates did improve.

The retention of last year's first-year students was 88.5%. Dean McMaster would like to see this increase to 90%. With 90% first-year retention, a 60% four-year rate is more likely.

One upcoming challenge in enrollment management is that the decrease in high school graduates in the upper Midwest means there will be greater competition for the very best students. The University is redoubling efforts at national-level recruitment, starting with the St. Louis area and moving to other metropolitan areas, replicating the successful effort to recruit students from Chicago. There will also be modest growth in some colleges, including IT, CBS, and CSOM, to meet high demand. The issue of transfer students must also be looked at carefully, because they have not received the same attention as new high school (NHS) students.

In regard to financial aid, Dean McMaster gave a presentation to the Regents last month about how students finance the cost of education, and how the institution can work to ensure access to students as the cost of attendance goes up. The institution must be attentive to:

- The needs of lower-income students, who receive Pell Grants, Minnesota State Grants, and the Founders scholarship. The Founders scholarship will be re-named to increase awareness among this group of potential students.
- The needs of middle-income students, who face challenges because of high tuition. A middle-income scholarship was introduced this year in response to these needs.
- The need for the institution to competitively recruit high-ability students with merit-based aid.

Dean McMaster also reported to the Regents that tuition and loan volume have gone up an equal amount (121%). This is one additional reason to stress 4-year graduation; students must borrow even more to stay 5 or 6 years. There is currently a fairly comprehensive curriculum review to discover barriers to timely graduation, as well as efforts to communicate the importance of 4-year graduation to faculty members. Strong state support of the University is also important.

In regard to curricular initiatives:

- There is a goal to increase UROP grants across campus. Currently, there are 650 grants offered, and this could go up because of stimulus dollars.
- There are now 13 departments piloting the Writing-Enriched Curriculum (WEC) model, which will provide a new paradigm for writing where students will take a set of coherent courses within their department. Rather than dismantling the Writing Intensive (WI) model, these departments will embed WI within WEC. So far there are 16 out of 125 departments participating.

The new University Honors Program (UHP) just admitted its second class. The average ACT score of the class is 31, and the average high school rank is the 97th percentile. The students are 57% female; 62% are from Minnesota; and 16% are from Wisconsin. The UHP has developed a new curriculum and a new interdisciplinary model of advising.

Currently, 25% of undergraduates have participated in a learning abroad opportunity; the University's goal is that 50% of undergraduate students will do so.

The certification process for new liberal education courses is ongoing. The Council on Liberal Education met last year and has approved about 180 courses so far. Another 40 have received provisional approval, and about 100 have been returned for clarification and revision. The council will meet every two weeks this fall to complete the review of courses; this needs to be complete by the end of the year so that students can register for fall 2010 courses. Because of the higher standards and rigorous review process, liberal education courses will be taught at a higher level going forward.

The main concerns in undergraduate education are related to raising the student profile while being attentive to diversity. It is critical this year that the University increase retention and graduation; the Regents have asked for a report about graduation rates at their December meeting.

The question was asked whether diversity was staying the same as the quality of students is going up. Dean McMaster answered that this is difficult to judge, because diversity goes up and down year to year. This year, the diversity went down a point and a half, but the ACT score of students of color went up 1 full point. The goal is that diversity would stay at 18-20%, and that we would bring in students who have a high probability of succeeding.

The question was asked about whether the effort to recruit the best students was in conflict with the land grant mission of serving the state's population. Are there efforts to work with other state colleges and universities to ensure that the state is providing higher education access to all students?

Dean McMaster indicated that there is not currently a combined effort with other Minnesota colleges, but the University of Minnesota has kept the percentage of Minnesota students constant. Also, the Access to Success (ATS) program is designed to bring in 425 who otherwise would not have had access, providing additional support to these students so that they can succeed and graduate.

Carol Cline-Hedblom

Notifying new students about transfer credits

Newly-admitted students will now be notified of their transfer credits by e-mail, rather than by mail. The e-mail will link to the TRAC report, with instructions. The e-mail will go out Monday afternoons. With the new process, students will receive notice of their transfer credits 2-3 days earlier.

If students have questions about the TRAC report, they are directed to an FAQ. They can click through to petition information, and to a transfer college contact directory. Student contact is directed to Office of Admissions “Right now” system.

Students can also go to <http://admissions.tc.umn.edu/transfer/sampletrac.html> to see an annotated page of the TRAC report. Some of these annotations include:

- “More information needed from the University,” indicates that students need to send in more information about the course.
- “The following courses are being evaluated to transfer” means that the Office of Admissions is actively working on evaluating the course.
- “Transfer allowed only upon approval of appropriate department” means that admissions cannot make the decision, so the department must approve the course. This refers to the department that offers the course.
- There is a similar category for when college approval is needed. This refers to the college the student is enrolled in.

The e-mail process for newly-admitted students will begin at the end of the month; an announcement will go out in the Record.

A question was asked about whether students understand when they need to take action to petition a course. Carol replied that the Office of Admissions has control over the text that appears in the annotations, and they will look into making this clearer.

Carol also asked the colleges to consider whether they would like to continue getting paper copies of the TRAC reports. It is possible to handle this electronically; CLA has already stopped using paper.

It was mentioned that the colleges would like to receive an electronic report that lists only those courses that the college needs to evaluate, so that the colleges would know when they need to take action. Carol indicated that she will see if this is possible.

Staff are encouraged to talk to Carol about student questions they receive, so that the language on the report can be adjusted or clarified when necessary.

Financial literacy updates

Julie Selander, Nate Thompson, Judy Swanson

Financial literacy efforts have expanded. Nate Thompson noted that efforts to improve financial literacy provide a way to respond to the challenges that Dean McMaster and Mary Koskan mentioned earlier in the meeting.

Nate showed the group a slide show with elements of the new “Live Like a Student” campaign, which is a positive way to let students know that they’re going to have limited means while they are in school.

This is a time when they can learn to be creative and have fun without spending money on the luxury items that can wait until graduation. The campaign is meant to give students permission to say no to the things they really cannot afford, and to not let the spending on little things get in the way of their ultimate goals.

The “Live Like a Student” theme was presented to all students at Welcome Week in a game show format. Students were introduced to things like the average student loan debt and what the loan repayment obligation might look like.

Julie Selander reported that students were very engaged in the session at Welcome Week. The financial literacy team also painted the bridge last week with the message: it is about midway down the bridge. Digital signs are currently on display on the West Bank. An e-mail newsletter, which students opted into at the Welcome Week session, is also in the works.

Campaign materials, including images for digital signage and posters, are available for colleges or departments. The materials point students to One Stop for help or more information. Contact Nate at thom3278@umn.edu to request these materials or for more information.

FATV demo

Judy Swanson

ASR has subscribed to FATV, a Turnkey service and a product of College Media Services. The subscription includes 136 videos related to financial aid and financial literacy, and the University is the first college to embed the videos within the One Stop Web site.

The videos are short and easy to understand. They contain information about grants, financial aid eligibility, and veterans issues. There will be a link from the One Stop home page to a Web page with links to all of the videos. One Stop will also embed about 25 videos directly on the appropriate Web pages.

Project update

Jody Seiler-Peterson

Jody Seiler-Peterson gave the following project updates:

- As of Friday, September 11, the following financial aid was disbursed:
 - Twin Cities & Rochester: \$171 million
 - Crookston: \$5,135,169
 - Duluth: \$38,983,976
 - Morris: \$6,638,902
- The first fall bill went out the weekend of September 13. The due date is October 7.
- ASR-IT has submitted the Quarter 2 workplan to OIT, and they are waiting to hear about resource availability. Jody indicated that requests should be submitted as early as possible. Now is the time to discuss requests for January-March.

- Mid-term alert system enhancements are still on schedule for this fall. This includes the addition of indicators for when an instructor has no alerts to send, or has used another method to alert students.
- The Education Abroad system is still on track to go live in late October.
- The entrance interview system is now automated. Students who complete the Department of Education's online entrance interview will automatically have their financial aid disbursed to their student accounts.

CRM update, Grant Clavelle

The formal kick-off for the CRM project was the day of the RAC meeting (September 14). Project sponsors, the project management team, the consultant, and 50+ representatives from business units across the University will meet to start the process of gathering business requirements. At the kick-off meeting, there is a presentation as to what the process will mean and the time commitment will be.

The current phase of the CRM project is only to determine the University's business requirements. Future phases will look at going into marketplace to find a system, and perhaps at changing business processes. This is a large project that will take at least a couple of years.

The expected benefits of a CRM system are that it would:

- Increase meaningful interaction with staff and faculty
- Unify communication to the student
- Increase access to University services
- Increase staff ability to meet advising needs
- Increase knowledge of what leads to successful graduation and retention
- Increase the ability to problem-solve
- Increase ability to understand what contributes to successful college experience for a variety of student identities
- Monitor engagement and academic performance and their relationship
- Facilitate compliance with Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action laws
- Facilitate compliance with ADA
- Increase staff ability to find opportunities
- Increase protection of private data

Scheduling update

Sarah Kussow

Sarah Kussow gave an update from the Office of Classroom Management.

- Where facilities are concerned, all tablet armchair classrooms now have tables that are accessible according to the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).
- Where scheduling is concerned, all fall classes have been placed. The scheduling unit is now looking at requested changes for fall, including events. They will begin looking at summer

scheduling at the end of September, and fall soon after. Department schedulers will be getting updates as to when they will have system access to begin scheduling for those terms.

Academic policy petition form

Mary Koskan

Mary Koskan distributed the revised academic policy petition form and asked if there were any additional suggestions or questions.

Someone asked about Part 4, under “action taken”: Do all students need to take action here? The consensus was reached that the form could stay as-is, because action is not always needed. When the student does need to take action, the college staff person typically makes that explicit.

Mary reminded the group that they should recycle their old petitions and request the new form from Debbie Henderson at d-hend@umn.edu.

H1N1 and absences

Sue Van Voorhis

Sue Van Voorhis reported that e-mails related to H1N1 have gone out, and the Web site is now available (http://www1.umn.edu/prepared/ahc_prepared/flu/). An FAQ has been created but is not yet posted. Sue encouraged the group to request the FAQ if they would like to see it. If it is not made available on the central site, the FAQ may be posted on One Stop or elsewhere.

The question was asked about what information parents are receiving about H1N1. The University Parent office sent out a lengthy note in early September. The note let parents know that if their students become ill with H1N1, it would be best if they could go home. The University is willing to work with students regarding their absences, so the students should not automatically withdraw. Students should also have a “flu kit” with supplies, in case they get ill.

Students do not need a note from the doctor to be excused from class for H1N1. However, if the student does withdraw and pursues any kind of tuition refund appeal, they will need documentation from their doctor.

Questions were asked about students who take advantage of the policy and “have the flu” during exams, or who report having H1N1 more than once. Sue clarified that faculty members can request documentation from students who report having H1N1 more than once, since it is only possible to have it once. These cases can also be escalated to Suzanne Bardouche in the Vice Provost’s office.

Faculty members have been encouraged to offer course materials and exams in various formats, so that students can stay caught up even if they become ill.

If staff get questions from students about H1N1, please keep ASR up to date so that they can add questions to the FAQ.