RAC minutes

January 4, 2010

Present: Suzanne Bardouche, Sheri Beck, Frank Blalark, Sheryl Bolstad, Laurel Carroll, Carla Claussen, Grant Clavelle, Carolee Cohen, Pam Cook, Maggie Cosgrove, Kathy Evenson-McDermott, Tina Falkner, Renae Faunce, Tracy Fischer, Teresa Fruen, Laurie Gardner, Joe Goggins, Kit Gordon, Stacey Grimes, Carol Gross, Lindsay Gundecha, Becky Hall, Holly Hatch-Surisook, Kim Hindbjorgen, Emily Holt, Paula Jewell, Nancy Killian, Jennifer Koontz, Anne Lawrence, Helen Li, Anny Lin, Linda Lindholm, Aileen Lively, Tracene Marshall, Heidi Meyer, Margo Mueller, Jan O'Brien, Laurie Pape Hadley, Cindy Pavlowski, Heather Petereson, Lonna Riedinger, Genny Rosing, Cindy Salyers, Brooke Sawyer, Jody Seiler-Peterson, Pat Sherman, Susan Suchy, Ellen Sunshine, Nathan Tesch, Tasia Tigue, Fran VanSlyk-Zaslofsky, Sue Van Voorhis, Laura Walker, Kasi Williamson, Kris Woll

Announcements

Sue Van Voorhis announced that grades were due on Wednesday, December 30, 2009. This year, 94.5 percent of grades for undergraduate courses were submitted on time, compared to 92.5 percent last year. For graduate courses, 83.4 percent were submitted on time, as compared to 79.6 percent last year. Sue thanked the group for their help in supporting this improvement.

Frank Blalark announced that the University's diploma will be changing, with an improved design. The color of the transcript paper will also change to maroon in January or February; this change will improve readability and correspond with school colors.

December minutes

There were no changes to the December minutes.

Education Abroad demonstration, Nancy Killian

Sarah Groskreutz was out sick, so Nancy Killian presented the demonstration and overview of the new Education Abroad tool.

Like the Web registration system, the Education Abroad system is an easy-to-use Web interface for students to get data into PeopleSoft, where staff can review and act on the information. The tool makes things much easier for students, who used to have to complete a paper application for education abroad programs. It also makes processing applications more efficient for staff, and creates additional transparency for the institution.

Staff on all University of Minnesota campuses will use the tool, including education abroad centers in Duluth, Crookston, and Morris, as well as the Carlson International Programs and the Learning Abroad Center.

The online application is available for programs in fall 2010 or later. Since the system went live in November, there have been nearly 100 applications submitted.

Students access the system through each of the education abroad Web sites. The system itself is very generic, so that it can be used by all campuses. All of the specific information about programs offered by the different education abroad centers can still be found on the centers' individual Web sites. You can continue to tell students to go to the appropriate education abroad Web site to explore programs.

Currently, students have access to the online profile and application, and education abroad staff have access to the PeopleSoft pages. The education abroad business owners are also talking about what kind of access might be made available to advisers to view certain PeopleSoft pages.

Nancy demonstrated how the student system works. It looks the same for students on every University of Minnesota campus. When students log in, they have two choices: create a profile or apply for a program. The profile lets students share their interests and questions with an education abroad adviser. They then use the application to apply for a specific program.

The profile and application are simple for students. Nancy showed how a student would edit his or her profile. The students' information is already pulled in from PeopleSoft. Students give some basic information about their experiences living abroad or with studying another language. Students can indicate if they are interested in a specific program; they can also mark one or more items from list of topics they would like to discuss with an education abroad staff person.

On the PeopleSoft side, users click on "UM Education Abroad," and search for a student's ID number. The information that students entered into the online profile is now in PeopleSoft. This gives the education abroad adviser a chance to preview the profile information before the student comes in.

An application is similar to a profile, except students must fill it out in one sitting, and they cannot make changes to their application after they complete it. Once the student submits an application, he or she is immediately issued an application checklist and told what additional information or documents they need to provide. In the sample case that Nancy demonstrated, the student needed to submit various transcripts, forms, and essays. Many items can be uploaded directly into the checklist.

Once an application is accepted, students go into the system and click "proceed" to indicate that they still want to participate in that program. Then, students get a confirmation checklist with more items they need to take care of before their departure. Education abroad center staff can view all of the checklist items in PeopleSoft as the student uploads them.

A question was asked about whether advisers could currently receive training to get access to the Education Abroad PeopleSoft pages. Nancy replied that the business owners are still sorting out the process for this, and a view-only training class will need to be developed. Advisers can periodically check the ASR training Web site to see if training courses have been made available: http://training.asr.umn.edu/records/

Another person asked what happens when a program is closed or full, or if students are on the waitlist. Nancy replied that this process is still being reviewed (for the Carlson School, in particular). The system is still brand new, and as with any new system, enhancements will be requested in an ongoing way.

Education Abroad reports, Cindy Salyers

Cindy Salyers gave the group an overview of the new education abroad reports for collegiate advisers. There are also many reports for education abroad centers, including an application status report, but Cindy's presentation focused on the reports for the colleges or collegiate advisers. These reports contain information about students who have been confirmed or accepted to go abroad.

When you review these reports, be aware that in terms prior to fall 2010, statistics will not be complete. Individual education abroad centers decided how far back they would go in converting historical data (see the handout for details). For example, UMD is not converting any historical data, while the Twin Cities Learning Abroad Center converted data from the 2001-2002 academic year through the present. Because the new application is available for fall 2010, all statistics will be complete for fall 2010 and forward.

To find the reports, go to UM Reports. Click on "new reports" link (on the left or in center of page). Click the check box next to reports that you want to add to your home page. Click "include." Then, the "education abroad" category will be added to your home page.

Detailed information about all of the reports can be found in the help documents.

1. EA Confirmed Student Statistics

You do not need private student data access to view this report; any faculty or staff member can view it. First, choose college, EA center, or "system wide," depending on the data that you would like to view. Then, pick the campus, year, and college. Students are counted in these reports in each of their active colleges; Graduate School students are counted in the college that owns their academic plan. "Non UMN" refers to students who have been admitted to the

University in a special non-degree plan, which is used for non-University of Minnesota students who participate in University of Minnesota education abroad programs.

Note the number of “distinct students” at the bottom of the report. This number excludes students who are double-counted because they are enrolled in more than one college.

2. EA Confirmed students by colleges

You must have private student data access to access this report. To view the report, choose an academic year. You can choose one or more terms, then choose the college and major (graduate-level majors are included in the list).

The left-hand section of the report contains student academic information. The right-hand section includes education abroad information, including: application status, program, track, term, city, country, start date, end date (historical data before fall 2010 does not include start and end dates), program type, and admin type. These terms are all defined in the help documents.

Click on the “customize” button to hide columns you do not want to see on a regular basis. Three filters automatically appear at the top of the report. You can also customize the filters you see.

3. My advisees with confirmed EA programs

If you are an adviser of record in PeopleSoft, you can see a list of your advisees who have been confirmed to go abroad. This report contains the same student information as that in the My Advisees report.

The report contains students who are currently abroad or who are going to go abroad in the future. Once the term in which the student went abroad is over, the student will drop off of this report. The education abroad center is listed on the report because Twin Cities students may go on programs offered by centers on other campuses.

4. EA Confirmed students by location

This report allows you to find out which students are abroad in a particular location. Because historical data was converted for all of the education abroad centers, it is not possible to get a systemwide list of all students who are currently abroad. This option will become available in fall 2010, when all applications are in PeopleSoft.

Project update, Jody Seiler-Peterson

Jody Seiler-Peterson reported on completed and in-progress projects from ASR-IT.

Completed projects include:

- The Education Abroad system
- Report change: Add milestones (including Honors) to the Academic Record report

- eFAAN and FA Steps enhancements, which make things more clear for students

In-progress projects include:

- Pillar upgrade and redesigned banners on the Web application. This is in testing. Some applications will move into production in February.
- 1098-T forms will begin printing in a couple of weeks.
- Address corrections. 5,000 addresses are corrected a day. All home addresses from 2007-2009 are complete; currently, the system is cleaning up addresses from 2005-2006.
- Reading and writing comments into PeopleSoft: currently in testing. This will be especially useful for ETS, but will have other applications, as well.
- Enhancement for student account: if students have been referred to an outside collection agency, they will not be able to view their student account; instead, they will receive a notice about who they can contact.

There are other enhancements planned for quarter 3; Jody will report on them when they are live.

Future projects, Grant Clavelle

Grant Clavelle reported on upcoming projects. The work for Quarter 3 is in three areas: PeopleSoft, Web, and reports.

These projects will continue, start, or be considered this quarter:

- CRM: This is beginning the second phase. The Request for Information (RFI) was sent out to vendors, and results are expected by the end of January. The team hopes to select vendor by mid-year. Funding must also be secured, as this is a large system.
- Graduate education changes: Grant anticipates that systems changes will be needed to support the forthcoming recommendations on graduate education, which need to be implemented by a particular date. ASR placed "placeholders" in quarters 3 and 4, so that OIT could anticipate this work.
- Institute of Technology name change: The college name change will need to be reflected in PeopleSoft, on One Stop, and in other places. Though the name change is officially effective July 1, it will be in place in PeopleSoft for the fall 2010 term.
- Emergency contact information fields are to be added to the personal information application for students and staff.
- eDegree for graduate and professional students. This includes PeopleSoft and Web components, as well as UM Reports.
- Online exit interviews for student loans.
- Early notification system: This is an expansion of the mid-term alerts system.

- Add notification on subject changes in ECAS: When there are changes in ECAS, the APAS team is not currently notified about course changes and credit changes. With this enhancement, the APAS team will get notification e-mails, so that they can automatically update APAS reports.
- Preparation for PeopleSoft 9.0 upgrade: There will be no development in this quarter, but there is a need to evaluate what changes will need to take place. ASR hopes to have a PeopleSoft 9.0 demo shortly.
- Scholarship search and management: the current phase in this project involves the online application for students.
- Student engagement project: The next steps in this project involve integrating the Engage! search with Graduation Planner and building in the functionality for reflecting and reporting on experiences.

Catalog production, Tina Falkner

Suzanne Bardouche, Laurel Carroll, Sue Van Voorhis, and Tina Falkner have put together a timeline for associate deans and others that explains why it matters that programs follow the catalog production schedule. The reason information on program changes is requested so early is because of the catalog production schedule.

The PDF of the undergraduate catalog for an academic year becomes available online in mid-May. Current students register in February (UMD) through April (UMTC). Orientation starts in mid-June. Catalogs that are effective in the fall are actually used the preceding spring.

On the Twin Cities campus, liberal education course proposals should be submitted to ECAS by March 1 so approved courses are available on One Stop in time for fall 2010 registration.

Work is in progress to create sample plans with the new liberal education requirements and courses. Tina Falkner has sent "sample" sample plans out to contacts in the colleges; these are based on current LEs. These sample plans we're creating are based on real course-taking patterns. CLA is creating their own sample plans and will enter them into PCAS. ASR can also help colleges enter sample plans into PCAS, at the colleges' request.

In addition to the sample plans, Tina will send University Relations' list of catalog key contacts to her colleges contacts, so that they can assist where necessary with catalog content.

Undergraduate education, Suzanne Bardouche

Suzanne Bardouche shared an overview of selected information from several presentations that have recently been given to the Regents and from a presentation to a group of visiting Chinese academic leaders.

First, she summarized the fall enrollment statistics. In fall 2009, there were 29,921 undergraduate students enrolled. The University has a larger proportion of graduate students compared to peer institutions.

Of the undergraduates in fall 2009, 27 percent are new to campus, including: 5,400 new freshmen, 2,508 transfer students, and 272 who transferred from other University of Minnesota campuses. 21,741 are continuing students.

52 percent of undergraduate students are women. 5 percent are international students. 18 percent are students of color. 71 percent of undergraduates are from Minnesota, and 16 percent are from Wisconsin.

As far as enrollment trends are concerned, there are more undergraduate students enrolled on the Twin Cities campus than at any time in the past 10 years. Over the past decade, the percentage of first-year students from Minnesota has remained relatively constant. The average ACT score and high school rank have gone up for new freshmen over the past decade.

As of fall 2009, the second year of the University Honors Program, 578 students were enrolled. The students had an average ACT score of 31, and they were on average in the top 5 percent of their high school class. 109 of them were National Merit Scholars. This year, 16 percent of new honors students were students of color, up from 13 percent last year.

Of the 578 new international students in fall 2009, it is interesting to note that 40% of them are transfer students.

Vice Provost Bob McMaster also reported to the Regents on transfer student enrollment and trends. There has been a larger proportion of transfer students admitted in recent years, which may be evident in course enrollment and advising workloads. 36 percent of transfer students come from Minnesota community colleges; 7 percent from Minnesota state universities; 10 percent from other University of Minnesota campuses; 9 percent from the University of Wisconsin system; 8 percent from Minnesota private colleges, and 31 percent from other sources (e.g., Iowa State, North Dakota State, and others). The top “feeder schools” are Normandale Community College, UMD, and Minneapolis Community and Technical College. This ranking is based on where students have the largest number of credits. Of the transfer students admitted at UMTC, more than half have 59 credits or fewer.

The Regents have asked Vice Provost McMaster to update them more than once this year on graduation and retention efforts.

In 2008, more than 6,500 students earned a baccalaureate degree. 31 percent of these were transfer students, and 69 percent entered as freshmen. About 1/3 of these degrees were in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines. 778 students earned two degrees.

The institution has reached its first-year retention goal of 90 percent, but our four-year graduation rate is only at 46.7 percent. There is still work to do to reach the four-year goal of 60 percent. There is also a big difference in the first-year retention rates among Twin Cities colleges. At 83.7 percent, however, the first-year retention rate for ATS students was very strong.

Four-year graduation rates also vary by college. A goal was established for each college and provided to the dean of that college.

Overall, student-athletes have higher 6-year graduation rates than the population of undergraduate students as a whole.

First-year GPA and credits earned during the first year appear to be predictors of timely graduation. Students who take fewer than 30 credits have a 13 percent chance of graduating in 4 years and a 30 percent chance of graduating in 6 years, compared to 58 percent and 78 percent of students who take 30 credits or more. Students who have a GPA under 2.5 have a 12 percent chance of graduating in 4 years and a 30 percent chance of graduating in 6 years, compared to 61 percent and 82 percent of students who have a GPA of 2.5 or higher. Someone asked if the "30+ credits" in the first year includes the credits a student may have come in with. Suzanne will follow up with Ron Matross on this question. (Note: Ron Matross later confirmed that for this graph, the 30 credits refers to credits earned during the freshman year, and excludes credits the student may have entered with.)

In each of the Access to Success (ATS) programs (programs are in three separate colleges), the first-year retention is over 80 percent, and the average first-year GPA is above 2.5.

In comparing new freshmen and transfer students, first-year retention is strong and went up for both groups (87.5 percent for transfer students, 90.6% for freshmen). The graduation rate for external transfers is 23.1 percent after 2 years (i.e., two years after entering the University of Minnesota), 57 percent after 3 years, 66.5 percent after 4 years (compared to 46.5 percent for New High School students) and 73.6 percent after 5 years (compared to 66.1 percent for New High School students).

Compared to our peers, the University of Minnesota's graduation rates are below the norm, although Indiana, Iowa, and Purdue are lower. A 4-year graduation rate of 60 percent would put us between Florida and Illinois in the rankings. The gap between the University and our peers is not large when it comes to first-year retention. However, that gap in retention widens in each subsequent year; therefore, attention also must be paid to retention beyond the first year.

Concerns in recruitment and admissions relate to the demographics of high school graduates in the future. Minnesota and many states we recruit from are predicting a decline in the number of high school graduates. The University plans to offset those numbers through enhanced national-level recruitment. These efforts will also enhance the recognition of the University, increase the geographic diversity of our students, and help build the workforce for the state.

Current recruitment efforts are focused in St. Louis, MO; Kansas City, MO; Kansas City, KS; and Omaha, NE. These areas do not have a large number of prestigious universities, and students who live there would be somewhat familiar with Midwest culture and weather. Similar recruitment efforts in Chicago have been successful.

The number of applications the University receives has skyrocketed, as students are applying to more and more schools. This also leads to some unpredictability in the numbers of accepted students who will confirm: In 2001, 45 percent of accepted students confirmed; this dropped to 32 percent last year.

As tuition has gone up, financial aid has become more important for students. The University's focus has been to maintain affordability, especially for Minnesota residents. The U Promise scholarship helps to maintain affordability through two programs that give some kind of aid to students with an income under $100K: 1) the U Promise Free Tuition Scholarship for Pell-eligible students; and 2) the U Promise middle income scholarship.

The cost of attendance for Minnesota resident undergraduate students living on campus is $22,052 annually. In general, Minnesota resident students get different amounts of money from different sources, based on three income levels. The Pell grant amount is the same, no matter what the student's residency classification; many other kinds of aid go only to Minnesota residents. Middle-income students from out of state do not have a lot of options for aid. (See the handout "2009-10 COA and packages 10 30 09" for details; the handout does not include merit-based aid.)

The typical aid package contains different amounts of funds from different sources, based on income and residency categories. Students who do not file a FAFSA have funding from private sources only. Typically, students at the median state income level and above receive much of their money for school from parent and student loans. Student employment on campus is very important for students in all income categories.

There was an increase in the number of Pell-eligible students this year. This is because of changes in the economy and the federal criteria for Pell Grants. More students were Pell-eligible this fall than the entire last academic year. The number of Pell-eligible students has not yet been calculated for spring 2010.

The Office of Student Finance also noticed an increase in the number of special circumstances reviews because of changes in family circumstances. There were also more special circumstances reviews in fall 2009 than the entire previous academic year.

One reason for the institution's attention to four-year graduation is the increased debt that results when students take more than four years. 60 percent of students who graduated in four years borrowed money to pay for school, with an average amount borrowed of $24,062. 68 percent of students who took five years borrowed an average amount of $27,284. 74.6 percent of students who took six years borrowed an average amount of $27,468. In particular, Minnesota state aid is only available for four years, so students have to fill the resulting gap in years five or six by borrowing money.

Looking ahead, the Twin Cities campus would like to see 60 percent of students graduate in four years, 75 percent in five years, and 80 percent in six years. Current strategies to help reach this goal include the 13-credit rule, which encourages students to take sufficient credits; financial aid for students most in need; first-year programs; early intervention; Graduation Planner and other tools; attention to curriculum and course scheduling; and increased education in fiscal literacy for parents, students, faculty, and staff. In particular, faculty members are often not aware of the high cost that students face.

Reaching these goals calls for a shift in culture and expectations: the institution must value intellectual exploration, but within certain boundaries. We must see 30 credits per year as the norm, and urge students to make an informed decision about their major by the end of their sophomore year. We should help students to see themselves as part of a defined cohort, and to use Graduation Planner. We need to make sure everyone understands the pressure on University resources when students take longer to graduate, as well as the financial concerns it creates for students and their parents.

Les Opatz indicated that CLA heard from several prospective students last spring that they did not receive their financial aid award letter from the University of Minnesota, but did receive award letters from other schools, first. As a result, they decided to go elsewhere. Sue Van Voorhis replied that the Office of Admissions determines when estimated award letters will be sent out, based on what scholarships they are awarded . Heidi Meyer from the Office of Admissions stated that, because tuition is not set until the summer (based on the legislature and the state budget), students receive an "estimated" award letter. Sometimes, they do not understand that this is a very good estimate, so it may be a matter of student perception. The Office of Admissions is working closely with the Office of Student Finance to better communicate this to students.

Student records cube demonstration, Aileen Lively

Aileen Lively gave a demonstration of the “student records cube” of reports, noting that it has been a couple of years since the last demo, and usage of the data cube has been fairly small. Recently, it has been helpful in pulling specific information related to the proposed change in the policy on Ws.

A data cube allows users to look at data from multiple perspectives, to mine data from various angles, and to drill down to core and detail data.

The enrollment cube takes aggregate course enrollment data and allows you to look at it from different dimensions, including: academic year, academic program, institution, and academic career. Some of these dimensions have layers and hierarchy within them.

The data is organized according to several parent-child relationships, including: Institution, Academic program, Subject, Term, Session, and Class section.

Course enrollment data is categorized by year, institution, course level, program, career, academic level, grading basis, and enrollment status. (Note: If you filter by “academic program,” you are filtering by the students’ college. If you filter by “institution,” you are filtering by the college that “owns” the course.)

There are several additional cube functions. Data can be viewed in several kinds of charts. Data can also be displayed as numbers or in percentages. The “swap” function allows the X and Y axis to switch in the report view. “Zero suppression” will omit rows or columns that only contain zero values. “80/20 suppression” omits values that account for less than 20 percent of the data set.

To access the student records data cube, go to UM Reports. Search for “Cube.” Click on “course enrollment cube (cognos).”

In the first screen, you will see the total number of registrations across the system. To avoid double counts, go to “grading basis,” and choose “graded.” If you do not choose “graded,” students who are enrolled in the lab (or other ungraded) component and the graded component of a particular course will be double-counted.

To “drill down,” click on the filters across the top of the screen. For example, if you click on “enrollment status,” you can choose “withdrawals” to see only the number of withdrawals for a particular course. You can also see additional data fields by dragging and dropping those fields from the left-hand column into the data chart on the screen.

You can click on the question mark at the bottom of the screen to see what filters you are currently using. You can also go to the help documents to find descriptions and definitions of the data in the report. You can also export data into Excel, and click “prepare bookmark” to save a

URL to a particular report. Cindy Salyers advised that users jot down the steps that they took to get to a particular data set, so that you can re-create reports.

The data in the data cube is current as of the previous day.

Policy of the month: W's and repeating courses, Tina Falkner and Sue Van Voorhis

At the last meeting of the Senate Committee on Educational Policy (SCEP), the committee raised the topic of amending the policy on withdrawing from a course (found in the University's Grading and Transcripts policy: http://policy.umn.edu/Policies/Education/Education/GRADINGTRANSCRIPTS.html). Sue Van Voorhis has the opportunity to gather feedback to bring to the next SCEP meeting.

The proposed policy is on the first page of the handout "Ws language for RAC discussion 1_10" (attached to minutes). The proposed new language reads: "Section F(6)(a) of this policy prohibits students from repeating a course more than once without special permission. Taking a W in a course nonetheless constitutes one registration for a course that falls under the provision of Section F(6)(a)."

Based on the available data, this new policy language would be created for a small proportion of students.

Frank Blalark gave an overview of the data gathered to investigate the issue of repeated withdrawals from the same course. The first data set expands on the repeat data presented at the December RAC meeting. Based on the number of students who dropped the course and received a W, if students received a W the second time they took a course, they most likely got a W the third time they took the course. Students who earned an F the second time they took a course, often got a W the third time.

Frank looked at the number of Ws granted in fall 2008 compared to fall 2009, and in fall 2004 compared to fall 2005. According to this data, seniors have the highest number of withdrawals.

Frank then showed the top 10 list of courses that have the highest percentage of students who withdraw more than one time. Over 10 years, no course had more than 1 percent of students withdraw from the course more than once.

The list of top 10 courses changes when it includes courses with the highest percentage of students who withdrew only once. (Though both lists include many math and chemistry courses.)

Overall, within even the list of top 10 courses, less than 0.5 percent of students are withdrawing more than one time from a single course.

Tina Falkner stated that proposals related to the policy must address the withdrawal issue (and not the repeat issue as a whole), because that is the issue that SCEP has been most interested in addressing. She referred to the options on the handout, which had been distributed to facilitate the discussion, and invited the group to add more options to the discussion.

Les Opatz commented that some language could also be clarified in the rest of the policy, as item 1(a) does not specify when students receive a W, and 1(c) seems to imply that the college does not need to take any action for a student to take advantage of the one-time withdrawal, when the college does need to process the request.

The group then discussed several options for revised policies or procedures on the handout.

Option #1: "Develop a report to identify students who have earned a "W" grade in a course and are repeating it; place a hold on to prevent future withdrawals."

Tina noted that she had already received some objections to this proposal, including the fact that this would affect more students than necessary, and it would cause a high adviser burden. Les Opatz echoed these concerns, stating that there are only a small percentage of repeat withdrawals, but about 15 percent of population would have a hold placed on their record that would prevent them from dropping anything else. Teresa Fruen asked about how advisers would determine what would warrant lifting the hold, if a student did come in with that request. Ellen Sunshine noted that there are times of year where a student would not be able to get an appointment to meet with an adviser for two weeks, and so they would not be able to get the hold lifted in a timely manner. Nancy Killian noted that students who did get a hold lifted in order to withdraw from one course could drop additional courses, which they did not get approval to drop. Overall, the consensus on this option was not positive.

Option #2: "Change the date for when a W is given (earlier or later?) (currently W is added to the record when a student withdraws after week two)."

The group did not favor giving students a W for withdrawing immediately after the start of the term. Jan O'Brien noted that, if a student withdraws after the first week, the likelihood of another student taking that seat in the course is pretty small. She asked if it was likely that students joining the course in the second week were actually able to persist and succeed.

Mike Galegher stated that, in the Law School, students do receive a W at the beginning of the second week. This does seem to change student behavior. Aileen Lively noted that, if this were only to be changed for certain high-demand courses, those would have to put into a separate "session" in PeopleSoft.

The question was asked about how this would this address student behavior, in terms of repeat withdrawals. Sue Van Voorhis replied that students who withdraw late and leave empty seats create problems in high-demand courses; other students can no longer get in. In this scenario, both groups of students are negatively affected in terms of progress-to-degree.

Frank Blalark indicated that he and Emily Holt had looked at a few of the students who withdrew from a course more than once. Some of these students may share a particular profile.

Someone asked whether concerns about revenue were being balanced appropriately with students' best interest and students' ability to figure out whether a course suits their needs.

Sue Van Voorhis stated that, if students continue to withdraw, then they are impacting their progress to degree. This is not in their best interest. The purpose is to help students make the best academic progress.

Tracene Marshall commented the negative consequences of the policy for students should be considered. What happens if a student is unable to drop a course that they are failing?

Laurel Carroll stated that she checks high demand courses for students who have repeated or withdrawn multiple times. Advisers often comment that they have spoken to the student about it, but the students don't understand the consequences. Ellen Sunshine observed that students sometimes understand the consequences of multiple repeats, even financially, but they will choose to repeat a course multiple times, anyway. Advisers cannot prevent the students from registering for the repeat; there is no systematic way to enforce the policy that is currently in place.

Pam Cook stated that, from reviewing petitions, she has noticed that students who repeat and withdraw from courses multiple times are often determined to get into a major that isn't realistic for them. Some policy preventing this would be useful, because it would force students to make a decision.

Laurel Carroll noted that this issue is also related to the problem of not enforcing prerequisites.

Tracene Marshall observed that students are repeating courses because they are often prerequisites for courses in the major that students want to pursue. She questioned whether advisers should deny students the ability to pursue the major that the student wants to pursue. Sometimes a student has passed all prerequisites but one, and it seems that the major may still be appropriate for them.

Tina Falkner noted that students could petition for an exception to the repeat policy, as they do with all other academic policies.

Sue Van Voorhis stated that, if a student is repeating a prerequisite multiple times, maybe that major is not an appropriate choice for them. Otherwise, the student could petition for an exception to the policy.

Option #3: "Charge students a service fee for repeating a course in which they have previously withdrawn."

One person observed that this policy could promote going to other institutions to take the course.

Mike Galegher observed that, when he worked with undergraduate students, most were withdrawing from courses in order to get into particular majors. The criteria for admission to the major is based strictly on GPA, and the W doesn't count in the GPA. If people making decisions also looked at the number of Ws, it may cut down on the number of students who would withdraw multiple times in order to get the required grade.

Sue Van Voorhis indicated that a faculty member wants to be able to drop a student from his or her class if the student is in the class for the third time. Sue indicated that it is possible for a faculty member to request that a student be dropped from his or her class, even without the revised policy. The faculty member needs to work with ASR to accomplish this.

Sue clarified that, under current policy, a faculty member can ask to administratively drop a student who has repeated and withdrawn from the course more than once.

Someone raised the idea that students who are repeating the course could be made to wait until the open registration period to sign up. The Institute of Technology (IT) does this with some courses, for students who have earned a C or better and still wish to repeat the course. This practice is implemented manually by IT staff.

Jan O'Brien noted that it is not always the case that students are repeating a course multiple times to get into a major. Juniors and seniors also repeat courses multiple times when they need a particular course to complete their major.

Option #3 was not recommended by the group.

Option #4: "Institute a new grade "W/F" or "W/P" to indicate when a student withdrew when failing a course vs. when passing a course; W/F carries GPA points (counts the same as an F)"

Tina Falkner clarified that the instructor would be responsible for assigning the grade, and would calculate the student's current grade based on what was available to assess the grade at the time that the student withdraws. If the student withdraws before any points were offered or awarded, then the student would receive a "W/P." Linda Lindholm commented that this would create a large number of student complaints for instructors or department administrators to handle. Pam Cook raised the question of whether there would also need to be W designation for extenuating circumstances or medical issues, and if students who withdrew for these reasons would be allowed to repeat the course without restrictions.

The group was particularly concerned that it would be difficult or place an undue burden on instructors to determine the W/F or W/P grade at the time of withdrawal.

Option #5: Students must get instructor permission to repeat a course in which they have previously withdrawn.

The objection was raised that a student may repeat a course from a different instructor, so instructor permission might not be relevant. Also, this would have to be enforced manually.

Option #6: Leverage ETS to generate a warning if a student registers for a class in which he/she has previously withdrawn.

The group indicated that this would be a good idea.

Option #7: Limit the number of Ws a student can use throughout his/her academic career to 3 (or specific number of credits); the student would need to get Collegiate Scholastic Standing permission to withdraw from another.

Les Opatz commented that, if there was a way to enforce this option, then it seems better than some of the other options. It addresses the issue of students withdrawing from multiple courses.

Option #8: Require students to obtain collegiate scholastic standing committee permission to withdraw from any course after week two.

The group consensus was not in favor of this option. Les Opatz commented that practices related to this vary throughout the Big 10. It is common that students are allowed to drop without permission through the second week of the semester. Michigan allows students to drop through the third week. Only a few schools place earlier deadlines. UCLA has different deadlines for "high demand" courses.

Sue Van Voorhis stated that the points from the discussion will be summarized and shared with the group.

Remaining agenda items

Because time was limited, Sue Van Voorhis gave brief updates on the remaining agenda items:

- Graduate Education update: the committees are in process of writing their reports. The reports will go out on the Web for a feedback period. Sue reported that the committee had already received feedback on the draft process document from the Graduate School and other groups. That document dealt specifically with moving the administration of masters degrees to the departments. The next stage in the process will involve getting more feedback on processes.

- IUT advisers group: This is still on hold, pending discussion by the Council of Undergraduate Deans.

- Transfer student issues: The Regents would are taking an interest in the transfer student experience. ASR will help by gathering information from RAC.

- ETS update: Tina Falkner and Colin DeLong have been busy giving demos to collegiate advising offices. They are currently looking at what would be required to get some colleges up and running with the system.

- Distance education coding: OTR and ASR-IT are working with digital campus staff to adjust the delivery modes of delivered online and delivered partially online in PeopleSoft. They are trying to categorize which courses have only 1-3 meetings face to face, so that individuals could determine if they could travel from a distance for limited class meetings for particular courses.

- Withholding degrees policy change: This is in the 30-day review policy. Currently, OTR is posting the degrees of students with financial obligations of greater than $100, but these students will not be able to obtain official transcripts or diplomas.

Finally, Sue announced that, effective spring 2010, students can no longer bracket an F grade with an N grade. An e-mail related to this was sent to RAC and AAN on January 4, 2010.