

## **RAC**

March 7, 2011

**Present:** Gary Andersen, Bonnie Anderson, Kristeen Anderson, Rockne Bergman, Rhonda Bjurlin, Frank Blalark, Robert Bode, Sheryl Bolstad, Brad Bostron, Hannah Carney, Cortney Carlson, Lolita Davis Carter, Agnes Chagani, Carla Claussen, Kelly Condit-Shrestha, Pam Cook, Gary Cooper, Dan Delaney, Constance Hessburg-Odland, Tina Falkner, Renae Faunce, Vicki Field, Tracy Fischer, Carol Francis, Mary Vincent Franco, Jennifer Franko, Teresa Fruen, Kellie Greaves, Stacey Grimes, Kevin Havard, Jeremy Hernandez, Jason Holscher, Lisa Hubinger, Jill Johnson, Kara Kersteter, Charleen Klarquist, Michelle Koker, Jennifer Koontz, Mary Koskan, Stephanie Lawson, Linda Lindholm, Aileen Lively, Jo Ellen Lundblad, Gayla Marty, Heather McLaughlin, Heidi Meyer, Emily Mraz, Margo Mueller, Ingrid Nuttall, Margie O'Neill, Cindy Pavlowski, Heather Peterson, Sarah Ihrig, Ann Rausch, Jim Rowan, Cindy Salyers, Jody Seiler-Peterson, Mary Ellen Shaw, Deanne Silvera, Karen Starry, Susan Suchy, Susan Summerbell, Nathan Tesch, Terri Tuzinski, Sue Van Voorhis, John Vollum, Kathy Walter, Susan Westacott, Stefanie Wiesneski, Kasi Williamson, Ellyn Woo, Emily Wood, Peter Woxland

### **Announcements**

Mary Koskan, reminded the group that all One Stop Student Services locations will be closed beginning at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, March 9 for a staff event. This information was also included in the *Ugrad Update*.

Mary Koskan also announced that a student veteran approached her about having a "Tunes for Troops" drop off location in One Stop Student Services. The student and a group of classmates in Writ 3577 are trying to collect at least 100 new or gently used CDs or DVDs to send to troops overseas. The Veterans Services office is providing space for a box for individuals to leave these items. If you have any items you would like to donate, please drop them off in the box upstairs. The box will be available until April 8<sup>th</sup>. There is a link where you can find more information about this project: <http://www.wix.com/operationtroopdonati/operationtroopdonation>

Sue Van Voorhis announced that the planned upgrade of ImageNow has been postponed until further notice.

Sue Van Voorhis updated the group on federal regulations and changes that are currently under discussion and might have an impact on the institution. First, there is some concern at the federal level over how credit hours are defined; the University's definition is compliant; however some of the language in ECAS or ECS might need to be refined.

Second, the Department of Education (DOE) has discussed imposing limits on the number of times a student can repeat a course. The University has a lot of repeatable courses in music, directed studies, and other areas. The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) is working with the DOE to clarify exemptions to this regulation. The Office of the Registrar will also review the University's repeat policy as it continues to monitor the conversation.

Finally, there is also talk about how consumer protection rights are implicated by distance education courses. There is some discussion that would require courses to be approved by the state in which a student is a resident. If any staff member is contacted by the DOE, they should forward the inquiry to the Office of the Registrar. Again, this issue will be monitored and the group will be updated as more information becomes available.

## **U Promise**

Kris Wright provided an overview of the current status of changes to the U Promise Scholarship. Communication about the changes has already been sent to current U Promise recipients and to date, One Stop has not received many calls. Details about the current program are available on the Office of Admissions website. Estimate award packages will be sent at the end of March to incoming freshman. There is still much uncertainty about tuition for the upcoming year and changes to the Pell program; these will both have an impact on final award packages that will be sent later in the summer.

## **Project updates**

Jody Seiler-Peterson (ASR-IT) provided an update on current and future project from Academic Support Resources' information technology unit.

### Completed:

- As of Monday, February 28, the Pillar upgrade for ASR-supported student and staff-focused web applications is done. All ASR web applications are now on the Pillar II server and reflect the new University web template standards.
- Behind-the-scene technical changes were made last weekend to the APLUS system to replace the source of the near-real time PeopleSoft student data. This change allows APLUS to continue to display updated student data (like enrollments and program/plan) within 10 minutes of a change. It also allows APLUS to switch from day-old data from warehouse tables to current data for advisors, student groups, and admissions, and is expanded to include 13 credit-exemption waivers and mid-term alerts. ASR played an advisory role in this project, finding a means to determine recent changes in PeopleSoft to all this data, but the real kudos go to the APLUS staff in the College of Liberal Arts who made this change work.

### In progress projects:

Frank Blalark (ASR-OTR) provided an update on upcoming changes to online transcript request and delivery. ASR has signed a contract with [AVOW](#) to facilitate transcript ordering for current and former students, as well as provide additional delivery options. Once the conversion is complete, former students without an Internet ID will be able to request a transcript. All students will be able to request their transcript be sent by secure PDF. The current pillar application supporting transcript request and delivery will be retired this summer when the conversion to AVOW is complete.

Students will still be able to receive official transcripts in paper form

Sue Van Voorhis noted that a recent survey of other AAU schools who have already converted to PDF deliver revealed that over 30 percent of transcript requests are PDF requests.

Other updates included:

- The University has contracted with Oracle to assist in planning for the PeopleSoft upgrade. Beginning later this spring and going through the fall, ASR, OIT, and other units from around the University will work with Oracle consultants to produce a specific plan for implementing the next version of PeopleSoft. The plan will include information about the tools and features that are available and what the system will look like as a whole. According to the project manager, Andy Hill, the plan is to have the planning phase completed towards the end of 2011.
- ASR's Student Financials team is working on set-up of summer tuition; it will show up on student accounts after mid-April.
- The financial aid team aid began loading student FAFSA information for the next aid year. The first run included about 26,000 student files, with about 20,000 being from Twin Cities.

### **“Departmental exams for proficiency or credit” policy update**

Ingrid Nuttall (ASR-Admin) provided the group with an update on changes to this policy that went before the Senate Committee on Educational Policies (SCEP) for a second time. The information provided by the Registrar's Advisory Committee regarding the impact of expanding the eligibility of who can take these exams informed SCEP's decision that only admitted and enrolled University students should be eligible. This policy, as well as the “Credit for Nationally Recognized Exams” policy will both move forward in the policy approval process.

## **Readmission and criminal history**

Mary Koskan (One Stop) informed the group that One Stop Student Services continues to meet with the Office of the General Counsel to determine the readmission process for students who indicate they have been convicted of a prior criminal offense. It is likely that a question regarding prior criminal history will be added to all admissions forms; however, the University does not want to collect this information from non-degree students.

## **Course Guide**

Hannah Carney (Disability Services) and Kasi Williamson (ASR-Admin) presented findings from a study on Course Guide usage that has been underway for the past year. The goal of this study was to investigate current Course Guide participation and see how we can encourage more faculty and departments to use it this tool to its fullest for the benefit of students. The Disability Services staff who do document conversion for students with print disabilities rely on course syllabi to prioritize and begin their work converting textbooks and other documents for students. Students are under no obligation to disclose their disability; therefore, working with syllabi information is a crucial step to providing important course materials to students. The Course Guide is an existing tool that could make syllabi available for everyone, including document conversion staff.

A survey of over 2,000 students (both graduate and undergraduate) was administered and 681 students responded. 94 percent of undergraduate respondents and 82 percent of graduate respondents indicated they use the Course Guide to choose courses and/or prepare for registration. The data also show that most students consult friends and classmates for course information as they make registration decisions.

A series of focus groups of instructors revealed that most were unaware that their syllabi were used for document conversation and, had they known this, they would make an effort to have that information available more quickly. More information on this topic will be shared at the April RAC meeting.

Carol Francis noted that she was surprised that so many graduate students use the Course Guide, since graduate course information is largely absent. Kasi Williamson noted that there was no distinction in the survey between graduate and professional students (though the survey was only send to students in the UGRD and GRAD careers in PeopleSoft).

Kasi Williamson asked the group what they would like to see the project team do with the information they had gathered.

Mary Vincent Franco said she would like to have access to the results so she could share it with her department. She believes it will be powerful for faculty to understand how students are using the Course Guide. Individuals may contact Kasi at [will2026@umn.edu](mailto:will2026@umn.edu) for the survey results. Mary also noted that instructors in her college do not seem interested in taking advantage of the ability to upload a video.

Cindy Pavlowski agreed that disseminating this information would be helpful. Many instructors don't understand that they can still make changes to the syllabus after the term has started. Also, some departments work with community faculty whose contracts don't start until right before the semester begins; these instructors would not be able to get the Course Guide in two weeks before the start of the term because their contract doesn't begin until after that.

Mary Ellen Shaw asked if it is possible to highlight classes that have quality Course Guide information and then see how student course choice correlates (or doesn't). Terri Tuzinski noted that some of this analysis has been attempted, but since Course Guide participation is still quite low, it is not really a useful evaluation.

Deanne Silvera noted that exchange students completely rely on the Course Guide and use it to provide information to their home institutions as well.

The group also agreed that the Course Guide could be very helpful when students are choosing electives, in particular. So many programs offer little room for flexibility, and the Course Guide could help maximize the flexibility that exists. It might also be used as a recruiting tool, especially for transfer students.

## **Graduate education**

### **Announcements**

Frank Blalark reminded the group that the project spreadsheet is updated weekly. Frank highlighted the crosswalk of data conversion and OTR staff will communicate with IT directors about how the conversion will affect queries.

Kasi Williamson announced that the email informing students of the change to their academic record will be sent to collegiate contacts and communications directors on Wednesday, March 6. The RAC group will receive a preview and a link to the FAQ.

Kasi also announced that she is working with University Relations on worksheets that will facilitate the update of PCAS information with current content. This information will be sent first to the college catalog coordinators, and then distributed to the individual programs.

Cindy Salyers (OIT) announced that the two central admissions reports are picking up fall 2011 applicants in programs that have already been moved to their new program codes.

Sue Van Voorhis noted that it is the assumption of ASR staff that the updates provided at RAC and other meetings are being disseminated; she asked for suggestions regarding how to further share information. Katherine Murphy noted that some of the contacts might be too high level to do the kind of dissemination required. Sue said the contacts might need to be reviewed.

### **Graduate School/general graduate programs tuition rate**

Sue Van Voorhis stated that Dean Henning Schroeder was working with deans and provost at different tuition scenarios. All programs that charged the Graduate School general tuition rate in 2010-2011 will charge a “general graduate programs” tuition rate in 2011-2012. This rate will be subject to the regular year-to-year increase, as approved by the Board of Regents. More substantial changes may be in place for next year.

### **ImageNow: What records will be available?**

Brad Bostrom (Graduate School) gave the group a preview of the information many graduate education staff will have access to in ImageNow later this summer. Users can search on the name of students if the ID number is not known. Information includes documents that are received when a student first matriculates (i.e., application and all supporting documentation converts from Apply Yourself). Registration reminders are also included, but this practice may be discontinued in the future. Users can also sort on the headers.

Sometime after the start of fall term, staff will also be able to add documents. The first step is granting access to the information already in ImageNow.

Access will be granted based on the completion, review, and approval of an access request form (ARF). Currently, all staff would have access to all students; Sue Van Voorhis said this broad access would need to be reviewed.

### **Graduate policies committee update**

Tina Falkner (ASR) asked for feedback and discussion regarding the proposed draft of transfer credit policy. Tina Falkner noted that SCEP had no comments on the policy.

Someone asked for clarification between the 8 credit limit for University courses versus courses transferred from other institution. The policy suggests that more credits would be accepted from outside the University than from within, and this doesn't seem right.

The current practice is to accept more than 8 credits; Tina indicated she would follow up on this question.

Julie Harrold noted that there used to be a limit of 40 percent of courses being transferrable, which included non-degree. The revision limits non-degree to 12 credits, which is 40 percent for some programs but not for others; colleges will have the option of being more structured and proscriptive in their requirements.

There was a question regarding the definition of a “university graduate program” and how the evaluation of transcripts will be conducted. The current process is centralized and this will not change; there may be an initial review by the program but there will also be a Graduate School evaluation. Karen Starry noted that ultimately, the evaluation process will depend on how degree programs are reviewed and approved.

Katherine Murphy asked for more clarification regarding the transfer of thesis credits and what plans they apply to. The proposed language seems less specific than current practice and is therefore unclear; specifically, do limits apply to Plan A programs only, or Plan A and Plan B?

Under the “credits in common,” there is language about sharing between two masters or a doctoral and a master's, but not two doctoral degrees.

Additional comments should be directed to [Tina Falkner](#).

### **Express readmission process discussion**

This item was delayed until the April RAC meeting.