RAC minutes

March 1, 2010

Attending: Gary Andersen, JoAnn Ash, Deb Basarich, Frank Blalark, Laurel Carroll, Pam Cook, Maggie Cosgrove, Molly Diethelm, Tina Falkner, Tracy Fischer, Jennifer Franko, Marci Freundschuh, Laurie Gardner, Pam Klopfleisch, Jennifer Koontz, Anne Lawrence, Linda Lindholm, Emily Mraz, Margo Mueller, Ingrid Nuttall, Keri Risic, Genny Rosing, Cindy Salyers, Jody Seiler-Peterson, Nathan Tesch, Sue Van Voorhis, Donna Weispfenning, Kasi Williamson, Kris Wright

Announcements

Kasi Williamson announced that three new OTR forms are available or will be soon. These include:

- The degree application for professional programs, which is available online now.
- The additional undergraduate degree program application, which will be available online soon. The revised form has better instructions, so that students can better understand the purpose. This form should be used for current undergraduates who want to complete an additional degree in a different college at the same time that they are completing their current degree. Students returning after some time away should use the change of college or the readmission form, depending on their circumstances.
- The name change form, which will be available online soon. This form now directs all students to submit their forms to 160 Williamson, instead of One Stop locations. Students must include a photocopy of their Social Security card with this form, so the change in business process is meant to cut down on the transport of this private information. Please do not accept these forms in your department offices; send the students to 160 Williamson Hall.

Frank Blalark announced that the Office of the Registrar (OTR) may be making an effort to gain consistency between the diploma name and the name on the official transcript, in order to facilitate the verification of degrees.

Margo Mueller announced that changes went in production on February 28 to speed up Graduation Planner and APAS reports. A lot of changes have been made that should make a difference. Margo stated that users will experience some slow times, but she hopes that things will not go down. Staff have done a lot of work to make things better.

No changes to February minutes.

Freshman packaging, Kris Wright and Keri Risic

Kris Wright from the Office of Student Finance and Keri Risic from the Office of Admissions' freshman recruitment unit clarified how financial aid estimation and packaging work for incoming new students.

Keri coordinates freshman academic scholarship awards. A few months ago, some questions came up in RAC about the financial aid awarding process for freshmen, so Keri provided an overview of the freshmen academic scholarship awarding process and timeline.

Freshman academic scholarships range from $1000 - $12,000 per year for four years. In general, about 15% of freshmen enroll with some type of academic scholarship from the University of Minnesota. Those scholarships could be from private sources, through the college, or awarded centrally. Most go to Minnesota residents. The Office of Admissions coordinates the awarding with colleges and departments so that students receive one scholarship packet with all scholarships included.

Freshman scholarships are highly competitive and based on the admission application. A small number of freshman scholarships do require a separate application, like some from the Office of Equity and Diversity and CLA.

Each application is reviewed individually. Primary factors in this review are the academic components, including GPA, rigor of curriculum, ACT/SAT scores, high school transcripts, and other academic information. Other factors may include leadership, activities, and so on.

Applications are reviewed beginning in September. Beginning in October and November, the Office of Admissions mails letters of admission and academic scholarship packets; these are mailed on an ongoing basis. The priority application for freshmen is due December 15; applicants are told that if they reply by the priority deadline they will get a decision by the end of February. On March 1, the majority of freshman academic scholarships are awarded to admitted freshmen. During the week of March 1, freshman scholarships are loaded into PeopleSoft for freshman financial aid packaging; this happens as soon as FAFSA data is loaded to student records.

Kris Wright gave an overview of the timeline for freshman packaging based on when information is in PeopleSoft. First, the Institutional Student Information Reports (ISIRs) must get loaded into the system; these reports come from the federal government, as a result of what students included in their FAFSAs. This generally happens at the end of February. Then, the system must be tested to ensure that computations are being done correctly. The departmental and admissions scholarships are also loaded into PeopleSoft. All of this happens in time to meet the deadline of the third week in March; this is when estimated Financial Aid Award Notices (FAANs) should go out for new freshmen.

As this goes on, OSF is running packaging simulations to make sure certain University funds run out correctly. This testing also ensures that students' Expected Family Contributions (EFCs) are calculating correctly. Certain students' awards must then be adjusted manually; for example, the NCAA has different rules than the federal government. All of this is for new freshmen. In July, "real" packaging begins, and this process is repeated for all students.

Financial aid awarding for new freshmen will continue from the end of March through June, as the students' ISIRs are loaded and other information becomes available.

A question was asked about continuing student scholarships. When students are Pell-eligible and receive the U Promise scholarship, should departments be cautious about awarding them additional money from another source?

Kris Wright replied that there is not one simple answer. From a federal and state point of view, there are three kinds of funds that students can receive. Some of these funds are entitlements, including Pell and State Grants. Students total award package can be more than the cost of attendance, and they will still receive these funds. Then there are need-based funds. This includes the U Promise and the Achieve scholarships. These cannot go over the cost of attendance. Admissions and departmental scholarships can go over the cost of attendance. The total picture really depends on the mix of funds the student has. In reality, there are not a lot of students whose award packages take them over the cost of attendance--maybe 15, total. It may be that students have exceeded their "need" as the federal government defines it. There are certain funds that cannot exceed the students' need, which means that OSF may need to replace a loan with gift aid. It would be good to write down simple rules for this issue; Kris will plan to talk about this topic at a future RAC meeting.

A question was asked about changes related to the new Truth in Lending Act (TILA) rules.

Kris replied that the federal government, in the higher education act, created some new regulations in which they attempted to regulate the kind of private loan debt that can have worse terms for students than even credit card debt. In these regulations, the federal government did not account for the fact that the government and universities often loan their own funds. TILA calls everything that is not a Title IV loan—including federal health loans and energy loans—a "private loan." This includes University trust fund loans. With TILA, prior to lending money, the lender has to disclose the terms of the loan twice. Then, they have to hold the money 4 days, and disclose again. The timeline can't be changed. This is very time consuming for students and for OSF, and it deserves an additional discussion.

Sue Van Voorhis commented that, at a previous RAC meeting, Les Opatz stated that other institutions were awarding sooner to freshmen, but given PeopleSoft and Banner (another student information system) "regs" updates, it is difficult to see how they do it. They must be providing estimates.

Kris Wright stated that some institutions send estimated awards without having the correct information from the ISIRs. OSF, however, does not want to estimate award packages without the correct information about the students' expected family contribution.

Project update, Jody Seiler-Peterson

<u>Completed projects</u>: Jody Seiler-Peterson reported that a build went into production on February 28. It included a few small waitlist enhancements. The student records training and support team is offering a

workshop for people who want to learn more about online waitlisting. The workshop is on March 16 from 11am – 12pm in B20 Fraser. Registration is not required.

Current projects: ASR-IT is planning for work in Quarter 4, which starts in April. They are waiting to hear back from OIT on estimates of how long particular work will take. Graduate education changes might be a high priority and supersede other projects.

Student financials is in the process of setting up summer tuition.

Work on the pillar upgrade is ongoing. OIT is making steady progress on upgrading pillar applications. They have encountered a few technical roadblocks. A few applications should move to production in March; the majority will go live on the last Sunday in June. When the upgraded applications move into production, they will have new headers and footers, as required by University Relations.

Analysts are currently working on some enhancements to the online student account so that it will calculate tuition whenever a student logs in, and the student will always see updated information.

Related to the Constituent Relationship Management project, the team has just received several RFI responses from the community, which indicate what various companies can provide. The team will use this to create an RFP. They are also working on the business case to justify the large investment this project will require.

The Institute of Technology's name is changing in July. ASR is preparing for the system and setup changes that will require. Changes in the systems will appear for fall 2010. (There is currently some question about the acronym for the college's new name.)

Tina Falkner updated the group on a current project involving emergency contact information and enrollment in TXT-U. ASR is working with student affairs, emergency management, HR, and OIT to change the personal information application to:

- Display TXT-U information, so that if a person has opted in to TXT-U it will display the subscribed numbers; if the person has not opted in, they will be invited to opt in (this will be the default selection).
- Undergo a concerted effort to collect emergency contact information and to encourage faculty staff and students to enroll in TXT-U. This spring, when faculty, staff, or students log in to any University application using their Internet ID and password, they will get a pop-up that says they need to verify their contact information. If a student has a cell phone number, there will be a radio button defaulted to enroll the number in TXT-U. Unless someone updates or confirms their contact information, they will continue to get the update message whenever they log in. There will be a communications plan to launch this effort.
    - Usability testing for this project will take place on March 12.

Closed classes handout and Web information, Ingrid Nuttall

Each year, Ingrid Nuttall puts together a special departmental procedures document for gaining admittance into closed classes and sends it out to RAC listserv; all of this content is also on the One Stop website. Ingrid believes that the intent of this document is to help incoming students during and before orientation.

Chemistry and math have a significant amount of content in this document; biology, physics, and writing studies have less.

Ingrid asked the group whether her assumption that this information is for incoming freshmen is an accurate assumption. Dan Delaney from One Stop indicated that he refers non-degree students to this content on the website. Carla Claussen from the School of Mathematics stated that they have updates on their website for each term, so they do not use the handout. Pam Cook from CEHD stated that they have used the handout, but she is not sure if they will this year. CEHD also uses the handout throughout the year, as students change majors and need the information. Advisers usually use the information. The information may need to be updated more than once a year.

Carla Claussen asked if the One Stop content could link to Math department's website, since they update the content regularly.

Ingrid indicated that she would be happy to continue to put the handout together, if it is still used, but it appears that she needs a broader survey. There may also be a better way to present the information in the handout, to decide which courses are included, and to determine which student audiences use the information (including ICT and transfer students).

Ingrid will follow up with Lonna Riedinger to gather more information and with Beth Lingren Clark, who meets with the Orientation Advisory Committee on March 22.

Ws and repeats update, Sue Van Voorhis

Sue Van Voorhis recounted the background of the policy discussion surrounding Ws and repeated courses. There are students who repeat a particular course multiple times, and students who withdraw multiple times. This has a negative impact on high-demand courses. However, the overall numbers of students who exhibit these behaviors are relatively small.

Sue hoped to speak to the group of associate deans before going back to SCEP, but the meeting of associate deans was canceled; Sue will try to get their feedback in another way.

The suggestions that came out of RAC discussions focused on whole repeat issue. The first option the group would like to pursue is to enforce the repeat policy, where the second grade counts; Ws will be factored into that. For example, if a student received a C the first time she took a course, then withdrew the second time, then got an A- the third time, the C would count. Of course, students do petition to exceptions for all policies when there are special circumstances.

Option 2 is where grades for every attempt at a course will count. Grades would no longer be bracketed. This is what most institutions around the country do—they calculate an average grade for the course into the GPA (students only get credit once). This approach is getting mixed reactions. It would help the issue where students are trying to move to a B or A- to an A. However, students would still be able to withdraw multiple times.

When it comes to withdrawing from courses, the recommendation is to put the high-demand courses into a special group, where students would get a W at an earlier date, and where students would need scholastic committee approval at an earlier date. This is also going forward as a recommendation, so that every single course would not be affected. A couple of institutions control withdrawals by capping the maximum number of credits at 16, so students cannot "shop" for courses, planning to drop some after the term begins.

ETS could also be programmed to alert advisers if a student has withdrawn multiple times for the same course, or is enrolling the second or third time in a particular course. The programming for that should be fairly straightforward.

Someone asked whether ETS would check if a student earns lower than a C- in a major course; Tina Falkner replied that this is on the list of proposed enhancements, but it is not in the system at the moment.

Graduate education update, Sue Van Voorhis

The two graduate education work groups have finished soliciting feedback on the draft report; Ingrid Nuttall sent this out to the RAC listserv.

RAC members will be affected where processes related to master's and Ph.D. students will move to colleges, or, if the college determines it should be so, down to the department level. The spreadsheet at the end of the report includes an overview of the high-level processes. It indicates what should be moved to departments, the difference between master's and Ph.D. processes, and so on. Now, it must be determined how those processes can be moved, what can be automated, and how we can make that as efficient as possible.

The work groups are now going to revise the report based on the feedback they received. One next step is exploring the issue of policies and who should review them, so that they can be included in the policy library.

ASR will work with the groups who are creating processes in a facilitating role, then step out of the way. Currently, ASR would like to begin to pull a few people together to start looking at the processes and to determine what systems changes will be needed. Communication will be important to making this work. As issues and questions come up, they need to be documented. If you are doing a process and notice something that will be affected, please begin making a list. There are still questions about how we will pull people together; if you have questions, please contact Sue. Issues surrounding graduate education will be a high priority.

ETS update, Tina Falkner

Tina Falkner reported that college student services offices are currently in “sandbox” mode in ETS; this is a “view only” mode. So far, the colleges have requested five or six additional programming items, and all are fairly straightforward.

There is also an ETS advisory committee—CSAA will be the decision-making body. The advisory committee put forward a proposal to CSAA that advisers will be able to comment on and see comments for all undergraduate students in all colleges. This is a small step in a larger governance issue of who will have access to see what data, when. A part of this governance issue will be to create some guidelines for what should and should not be in advising comments. Tina will present a draft framework to the ETS advisory committee on Wednesday, March 3; they will send something out for others to comment on, as well. Comments in ETS/PeopleSoft should be useful, but not embarrassing or problematic for students.

The question was asked whether individuals who support advisers will have access soon. Tina replied that currently access is based on the rules for who has access to transcripts. In the future, there will be some additional administrative access for particular people.

Advising audit, Sue Van Voorhis

Sue Van Voorhis started a discussion on the systems-related issues that appeared in the recent advising audit. She would like to identify any “quick wins” in terms of systems enhancements that could be delivered in quarter 4 of this year.

Further discussion will take place in April; Laura Coffin Koch also wanted to attend.

Systems components of the advising audit include Graduation Planner, APAS, and various reports. Sue encouraged the group to think about systems-related things that could help the advising community. Are there new reports that are needed? How could Graduation Planner usage increase? Comments and ideas included:

- There is some doubt about how Graduation Planner could be useful for undecided students.
- ETS will be helpful. It would be helpful to be notified when students don’t get a high enough grade in a major course.
    - Cindy Salyers commented that two existing UM reports can also be helpful in this area. To find grades by term for students in a particular college or major, use the Grade Selector under Student & Instruction > Student Records. This would be the report to use to identify Journalism majors who earned grades of C-, D, F, or N for example.

To find grade distribution by class, use the Grade Distribution Report by College/Academic Group and Course Level under Student & Instruction > Grade Reports. This would be the report to use to see the distribution of grades in classes owned by a particular college, e.g., CLA.

Sue asked the group to think about what pieces are lacking or would be helpful in Graduation Planner. For example, would it be helpful for a student to be able to "capture" their graduation plan and send it to their adviser? Also think about any APAS issues. Are there ways that we could more proactively identify students who are ready to graduate? Are there any degree clearance reports that would be helpful, any class schedule information we could provide, or anything else that would make your jobs easier?

Liberal Education Updates, Laurel Carroll

Laurel shared the following reminders:

- The liberal education lists are expanding. Please review the lists and notify Laurel if you notice any critical courses are missing.
- Departments are not proposing every course for recertification; some courses are also switching categories. Do not assume that courses will be the same. If you see problems, contact Laurel.
- Laurel is already aware of some problems and some areas where exceptions are necessary. For example, one physiology course will be "grandfathered in" for one year, so that BMEN students are not negatively affected.
- Remember that all instances of a cross-listed course must be proposed through ECAS.
- Transfer courses are still handled by Maggie Gardner in the Office of Admissions.
- When it comes to Writing Intensive courses, Leslie Zenk is now the staff contact for the campus writing board. WI proposals come into the liberal education queue in ECAS, then Laurel notifies Leslie. Until changes are made to the system, please email Leslie Zenk when you propose a WI course, to ensure that things are being coordinated properly.
- Margo Mueller reported that they are setting bulletin years on undeclared freshmen sophomores, to ensure that they will see the correct liberal education requirements in their APAS reports. One program is revamping their requirements, and they are assuming that current students will move to the new requirements. As a result, Margo is setting an alternative bulletin year for these students, so that they can have the new major requirements and the current LE requirements. Let Margo know if any of your programs will be in a similar situation.

Financial aid update: Move to April.