ACADEMIC SUPPORT RESOURCES
Office of Undergraduate Education

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Registrar's Advisory Committee

Monday, October 7, 2019
Walter 402
9:30-10:50

Approval of the September minutes and announcements

- Minutes were updated to reflect the correct anticipated launch date for a new Grad Planner, i.e. 2007 vs. 2006.

Announcements

Sue Van Voorhis noted that Academic Support Resources will continue working with OIT to try and learn what is happening with students having their email accounts deactivated and how it can be fixed. If you have examples of students that this has happened to, please share with us.

She also discussed the University of Minnesota's support for two students from the Bahamas. Academic Support Resources and the University community try to work with students affected by unique situations, including natural disasters. If you hear of other students that we may have missed, please reach out and let us know.

MyClasses/MyLA presentation and discussion

Lauren Marsh and Shane Nackerud from the Office of Information Technology presented on learning analytics at the University of Minnesota, and the MyClasses pilot that has started recently.

The group leading and coordinating these efforts on campus is the Learning Analytics DiaLOG group (Digital Learning Operational Governance group). DiaLOG wants to socialize, operationalize, and prioritize learning analytics at the University.

Leadership around this type of work is a little bit fuzzy at the University, but OIT is working through pilot projects to assess and define how this work can move forward and how lessons learned can be shared.

The University of Minnesota is part of the Unizin consortium which represents 14 institutions and more than 900,000 students. Unizin promotes a culture of sharing and collaboration, and hosts and facilitates the use of data to improve teaching and learning. With this group the University of Minnesota is building an infrastructure and a way to share or inform better research, improvements, and innovation.

MyLA is a student-facing dashboard that presents data about resources planning, assignment planning, and grade distribution for students who are part of the pilot courses. MyLA will hopefully launch on Wednesday, October 9.

- The resources planning dashboard highlights what a student has looked at in Canvas, what their peers have looked at, and allows for filtering based on current grade (e.g. show me students with 90% grade in the class, what files have they looked at).

- The assignment planning dashboard shows the relative value of an assignment in a students total grade as well as what they can achieve for a final grade given their current graded assignments.
- The grade distribution dashboard shows a student how they are performing relative to their peers.

The ManyClasses Research Project is an experiment exploring educational interventions across multiple sites. U of M has 6 classes and 300 students participating. There are 40 total classes from different universities currently participating in the experiment. The project hopes to address an ongoing issue in educational research: that they are hardly ever reproducible because of limited settings and small population/scope.

Question: It appears that the tool will give a lot of information to faculty, but how can the same information be shared with advisors as well?

Lauren: Actually, that is a question we had for you all. We want to know how to better access advisors and students to share info.

Shane: Some of the dashboards are actually student-facing only, so the faculty may not have any more information than advisors.

Feedback: Having this info tie into APLUS will be valuable. Making sure advisors are given alerts when there are concerns with students, etc. It's something we lost a little bit of transitioning from Moodle to Canvas.

Question: Can this information be shared with or expanded for advisors?

Shane: This is only student-facing for right now but an enhancement we can consider moving forward would be an advisor-facing dashboard.

Feedback: It would seem to be odd to give information to students but not advisors as we have to have those conversations about what a student sees, but then we can't see it.

Question: How are faculty participating?

Shane and Lauren: Faculty helped build this tool at Michigan, we are only piloting that tool at the University of Minnesota. Our pilot will be involving lots of different faculty and getting feedback from them throughout the pilot process.

Question: Where will students see this dashboard?

Shane: They will see it in Canvas for the course that is participating in the pilot project.

Lauren: 9 classes are participating this fall, representing 2,100 students. Including students in CLA, CEHD, and Duluth.

Policy update

Stacey Tidball, from Continuity and Compliance in ASR, followed up on items from last month's Registrar's Advisory Committee meeting.

The Course Enrollment Limits and Cancellation policy may be receiving some adjustments in this review cycle by adding language about the impact on financial aid and who is responsible for discussing or approving these course cancellations.

Stacey: Who should be involved in this process from a college's perspective before it comes to ASR?

Feedback: Director of Academic Advising would be one option.

Feedback: Dean of Curriculum, but they consult with us in advising.

Feedback: Associate Dean of Undergraduate Education.

Question: How does this differ from OCM's policy about course cancellation?

Stacey: We've had it come up where we receive a request, but there are good reasons not to do it. Currently, the policy doesn't provide language to prohibit cancellation prior to the fifth day of classes. Not all colleges or campuses have a process in place where the college gives feedback on a course cancellation.

Question: Who is responsible for assessing impact?

Stacey: ASR, probably (for financial aid impact). We have access to information that isn't available outside of ASR. But it would be good to have college contact and a connection to advising units to better assess the overall impact on students (scholarships, graduation, replacement courses).

The Posthumous Degrees policy survey showed that most institutions that responded have a requirement of a particular benchmark for percent of degree completion before a posthumous degree will be granted. Our practices are similar but we don't have a limit written in policy.

The Student Education Records policy is due for review. MSA is interested in limiting directory information and what students can or cannot suppress and from who.

Question: What issue would that solve?

Stacey: The MSA has highlighted that students are not aware of their opportunity to suppress their information. One example is College in the Schools students and their information appears in the online directory. This policy change would also start to help the University by providing additional limits on external data requests.

One Stop start of fall term statistics

Richard Campo, from One Stop Student Services, presented an annual check-in about One Stop's start of term traffic. The big, overall trend was that One Stop's traffic is down which is expected as ASR invests more and more in online forms, My Finances updates, etc. These are better tools for students which hopefully get them the information they need where they need it, instead of them having to come to us for support.

Top 5 categories that One Stop was contacted about:

- Financial aid - packaging
- Student account - billing/payment
- Financial aid - loans
- Financial aid - scholarships
- Referrals (to colleges or advisors)

One Stop Student Services will be providing all-access tours to the One Stop offices for financial wellness demonstrations, tours, customer relationship management systems, etc. Contact Richard Campo or Julie Selander if you are interested.

My Finances update in MyU

Tina Falkner, from the Office of Student Finance, presented on the success, so far, of the recent My Finances revamp project and showed a demonstration video of the My Finances tab.

Since the new My Finances launched, the University has had an increase of about 15% for students filing an insurance waiver. For context, that's approximately a savings of $600,000 for our students. There has also been a large increase in students filing for reciprocity, which again saves students on average $15,000 per year to attend the U of M. Other highlights from the revamp project:

- The SAP color-coded status messages and improved access to see how their personal SAP is calculated has been of great help to our students. We also started using a new icon within this information: shifting from circle with "i" to a "?" has led to more students knowing when to click if they need help or additional information.
- The Financial Aid history section pulls together a lot of information for students that would have needed to come from many sources in the past. For example, seeing the interest rate and terms and conditions of different loans. Students can also see where they are in terms of their 'time-bound' gift aid usage (e.g., Pell, MN State Grant and UPromise)
- Degree progress tab shows a student's progress toward degree measured against benchmarks and is consistent with changes made in the My Finances project.

Assistantship best practices

Tina Falkner shared two documents available to help guide decisions about how, why and when to put an assistantship on a student. If assistantships (or scholarships or fellowships) are added after the term starts and the student has had financial aid disbursed (and if they have their full Cost of Attendance met), the Office of Student Finance must return some funds to 'make room' in the financial aid for this new set of funds. This can be very upsetting for students and departments. So, please make every effort to add all aid to a student account before financial aid is disbursed (which is about 7 days or so before the start of the term).

- Tax Management Office guideline - Payments to Students
- Gift Aid for Graduate Students best practices

The Tax Management Office guidelines document outlines how to pay students for certain activities and delineates when the payment should go through accounts payable or student finance.

Graduate School online orientation modules

Tina Falkner mentioned that the Graduate School has new online resources and orientation materials. These resources are valuable for students and covers a wide array of topics. OSF and One Stop were involved in the production of some of these resources. The resources are available to students who enroll in the orientation online course via the Graduate School's website. If you have additional ideas about what should be included, let us know.

TADA project update

Santiago Fernandez-Gimenez, from ASR, presented a TADA project update. Currently, the team is doing a lot of work defining how to bring source and target Transfer courses into PeopleSoft, as well as Progress Toward Degree (PTD) encoding on system campuses. The PTD encoding will give advisors more Degree Progress reports and data. The Transfer Details work is designed to help transfer students register for classes. It should improve prerequisite and repeat checking for transfer students..

The APAS reports for discontinued students are now live. The team worked with the vendor to make this happen as it was a priority item.

Most of the outstanding issues from the Phase 1uAchieve, implementation have been resolved. The TADA team is working now to make sure that the software is used consistently across campuses so that the information can be better utilized, and then we'll work with the vendor to make improvements or enhancements based on real use cases.

Visit z.umn.edu/tada for more information about the project.

Graduation Planner pilot project

Lindsay Bork Nichols, from ASR, discussed the pilot project for a new Graduation Planner tool from Stelic. As part of that work the project team is working to gather feedback so they can best assess the new tool. Lindsay asked the RAC meeting a series of questions:

#1 Is Grad Planner used in your departments or units? 4 raised hands.

#2 If a new tool were implemented, would you support its use?

Question: Would there be reporting functions available?

Lindsay: Yes, there is an analysis component to the Stelic tool but that may not end up being the tool we use.

Feedback: Being able to track course usage and recommendations to see how course planning actually happens for students could be really powerful for advisors and colleges.

#3 Is there anyone who is just not interested in the existing tool or a new tool?

Feedback: If any of this info is pulled from PS, we have departments that don't update that information enough to be a valuable tool for students. We aren't comfortable sharing bad data with students, or data we can't trust.

Feedback: We always used the data to explore how additional courses could fit into a students current progress or if they could.

Adrienne: I would like to see a new grad planner tool implemented with transfer course work, and I'd like to see how folks use or decide how to use pre-reqs.

Feedback: We used the ability to write comments quite a bit, it would be nice to add comments that are student-facing so they can interact with any feedback given during a meeting or thoughts that an advisor has.

Feedback: It would be nice to have a way to save courses because students aren't sure if they want to take them or explore them for later planning. Another helpful support tool would be some kind of tie-in with career planning services or something that colleges can push out to students via the tool.

Lindsay is planning to demo the tool at a future RAC meeting.

Academic alerts

Adrienne Bricker, from the Office of the Registrar, discussed the current progress of how this tool can be used. Internal meetings have been held, but we are sure to have additional meetings moving forward.

Initial working group meetings have happened. We are currently working on how to address transparency and what actions generate communication, especially to students. The project team wants to ensure that we are creating the best user experience for instructors, the fewest clicks possible, and giving users the ability to upload spreadsheets. On the Twin Cities campus we will need the communications to be generic or from do-not-reply email addresses.

Some of the issues we are currently working through are: should we be limiting noted concerns with this to academic performance only, and what would instructors report if they had an opportunity to? One thing we are looking into is expectations around reporting concerns and appropriate next steps (mental health issues, etc.).

NACAC changes

Tina Falkner talked about recent changes in the Ethics Standards for members of the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC). These changes were driven by an investigation by the Department of Justice that alleged some of the ethics standards were anti-competitive and therefore illegal. Changes in the Ethics Standards include:

- Not making early decision admissions binding.
- Changes to recruiting around students who have committed or are attending another school.

The Office of Admissions is reviewing and assessing the impact of these changes and what it means moving forward for the University of Minnesota.