RAC Minutes
December 3, 2007
215 Blegen Hall

Present: Gary Andersen, Frank Blalark, Steve Carnes, Laurel Carroll, Carla Claussen, Grant Clavelle, Pam Cook, Scott Davenport, Dan Delaney, Laura Ericksen, Tina Falkner, Tracy Fischer, Jennifer Franko, Teresa Fruen, Laurie Gardner, Kit Gordon, Carol Gross, Sarah Groskreutz, Lucy Hartel, Kevin Havard, Jason Holscher, Emily Holt, Pam Klopfleisch, Mary Koskan, Linda Lindholm, Aileen Lively, Kathy Nolan, Linda Norcross, Peterson, Lonna Riedinger, Andrea Raich, Vickie Roberts, Genny Rosing, Jody Seiler-Peterson, Mary Ellen Shaw, Pat Sherman, Kendra Weber, Kasi Williamson, Kris Wright

Announcements: Mary Ellen Shaw is looking for good examples of collegiate scholastic committee procedures; she's been put in charge of coordinating CEHD's new procedures, and would like to see examples of what is working well. Please contact her with examples.

Mary Koskan announced that there are some new "tabs" on the One Stop Web site, for faculty, staff, veterans, and non-degree students. Eventually, the faculty and staff buttons on the left side of the page will go away and be replaced entirely by the tabs.

Kasi Williamson announced that there are two new forms posted on One Stop: an updated Leave of Absence form, plus the "Request for non-degree enrollment in CCE after suspension" form. With questions, contact Kasi or Vickie.

Sue Van Voorhis asked staff to encourage faculty to enter their information into the new Course Guide system.

Approval of November minutes: There were no changes to the November minutes.

Office of the Registrar (OTR) Project update: Jody Seiler-Peterson provided the group with an update of current OTR projects:

- Recent usage stats for Graduation Planner: As of Dec 3, 9587 students had created at least one plan and there were 12,356 plans in the system.
- Certification letter enhancements: to go live Tuesday, December 4. These are the options to include degreeGPA, and Date of Birth.
- Report for students' borrowing history: goal is to have that live by Gradfest
- Scholarship Search tool: in performance testing; target is beginning of spring semester (Kasi, the target date for this has changed to early February)
- Learning Abroad Prospect and Application: currently examining where they could store the data; they expect to have recommendations on that point by the end of the week
- Engagement Planner: University review committee will review it in December; Self-Service student account: currently gathering business requirements
- EFS: testing began November 12; Carolee Cohen's area is engaged in this testing

Sue Van Voorhis reported that this was the worst registration period for students since 1999. Transaction times for the Web registration system were much slower than they should be. OIT staff is looking into the issues we experienced, so that these issues can be resolved before orientation in January. The source of the problem always appears to be something different.

Linda Lindholm asked about issues related to the registration queue, where nongraduating seniors register before graduating seniors, and cause problems for graduating students who need to get into the classes. Sue Van Voorhis replies that issues with the queue would have to be brought to CUD. Mary Koskan clarified that students can be moved up in the queue by student services personnel.

A comment was also raised that, on the online class schedule, it's difficult to decipher class times for classes that have variable meeting times. Mary Koskan said that she would look into it

Graduate non-degree (99PRD) brochure and Web content: Heather Peterson from One Stop communicated that it is time to make updates to the graduate non-degree brochure and Web content. She asked the group to take a look at the brochure and e-mail her at peter909@umn.edu with any comments.

Heather will also contact some key people in CCE, CEHD, and the graduate school, who are highly involved in this process.

Please also forward any changes regarding your department's DGS or authorized signer to Heather Peterson.

Update on classroom building: Mary Koskan updated the group on the current status of the "Science Teaching and Student Services Building." (Note: plans were being negotiated and changing as this update was made.)

The concept of the building is to include certain student services functions, paired with state-of-the-art classrooms. The building is up for funding from the state again this year; it is #1 on President Bruininks' list of priorities. It is also a "signature building," which means that it would eventually bear his name.

The U has been working with an architecture firm (HGA) on the first part of the process; an additional firm, Kohn Pedersen Fox Architects, has been added. They're a New York firm that has worked internationally with signature buildings.

The location for the building would be on Pleasant and Washington, where there is a high level of pedestrian traffic. The current (preliminary) version of the plan includes five levels, with six 177-seat classrooms, six 90-seat classrooms, and 7 seminar rooms. The classrooms would all be on the Pleasant St. side of the building. The curved class side of the building would face the River Rd. On that side of the building, the following student services personnel would be distributed as follows: 1st floor, One Stop workstations, part of OSF, and the Bursar; 2nd floor (bridge level), One Stop counter, self-service computers, information desk for Twin Cities campus; 3rd floor, advising students in transition; 4th floor, career counseling, student leadership and engagement.

If funding is received in 2008, the building could open in 2010.

Mary related several of her concerns with the current version of the plans. The One Stop counter would be situated in open space, and classrooms would let out into this space. That creates concerns about both noise, and privacy and security of student information. The One Stop workstations also need to be on the same floor as the counter, as those staff members depend on being able to access one another quickly in order to serve students.

Meetings are ongoing, changes are likely, and Mary will continue to update the group.

A question was raised about whether there would be auditoriums in the building; would the space define the pedagogy? Mary responded that the current plan is to make this flexible classroom space. Steve Fitzgerald, director of the Office of Classroom Management, has been working with this topic and getting a lot of feedback from many groups. There has also been a faculty committee involved.

Degree certification letter updates: Mary Koskan informed the group about a certification letter that will be available for students who have completed degree requirements, but whose degree can't be awarded because they have financial obligations to the University. Students should be sent to One Stop with questions about this letter.

Reminding students to apply for graduation: Kasi Williamson reported that Kevin Havard from CSOM contacted her with questions about reminding students to graduate. Kasi was curious about others who might be having this issue, as the related navigation on the One Stop Web site has changed. Responses indicated that this is an ongoing issue; numerous e-mails are sent, but students still miss it. Kasi will propose that the "Graduation" top-level link on One Stop is restored (this information currently lives under "Degree Planning"). She will also send out a pdf that colleges and departments can print out and use to remind students to apply for graduation, until the final position on the Web site is decided and new "G is for Graduate" postcards can be printed.

Adviser toolkit update: There is a meeting scheduled today (December 3) to get approval to move forward on the Adviser Toolkit project.

The next step will be gathering business requirements; advisers will be involved in this process. The goal is that this would present information in a way that is integrated and meaningful, but not overwhelming. The hope is to model the tool after the health care system's "continuity of care" model, where information is gathered once, stored centrally, and available for all "providers" who work with a person. In our case, "providers" would be advisers and student service personnel, to name a few. Tina distributed a very rough draft of the toolkit home page, which would show flags that indicate whether students are meeting or not meeting particular indicators of success.

Financial literacy activities: Kris Wright updated the group on the Office of Student Finance's (OSF) financial literacy initiatives. OSF is beginning to provide more information for students about financial literacy. This year during October's Financial Literacy Month promotions, 3,462 quizzes were submitted by 2,019 participating students. (The link to the financial literacy information on One Stop is: http://onestop.umn.edu/onestop/Services/Money_Management.html)

The impression is often that it should be the parents' role to provide this kind of financial literacy information to students. However, it's apparent that students who struggle financially also struggle academically. We're trying to identify some early warning signs of students who are facing financial difficulties, so that advisers could be informed about that and assist students by directing them to the needed resources.

CLA is doing some interesting midterm alerts; this could be taken to an even higher level, particularly with financial matters.

The question was raised: how are students finding this information now? Kris replied that we're talking about it at orientation; it's now required by state law that we provide first-year students with this information. If the students get in trouble during the first six weeks, it can be difficult for them to dig themselves out. We're looking for ways to make the information more prominent to students.

Tina Falkner informed the group that there are also links to the information on the University Parent's Web site (http://www.parent.umn.edu/money.html). It was asked that we put this link in the body of the e-mail with the meeting minutes.

Someone comments that they see 13-credit appeals from students whose parents have been laid off from their jobs, changing their financial situation. Kris said that they should send the students to talk to someone in One Stop; it may be possible to appeal and adjust their financial aid status. Kris also noted that 10% of students who could qualify for a Pell Grant don't apply; for Minnesota residents this means they could be missing out on the Founders Free Tuition program, which would cover all of their tuition and fees. You also have to apply for financial aid to qualify for federal loans.

The question was raised about whether there could be a program that would give some kind of scholarship to children of University employees. Tina noted that CAPA, the faculty senate, and the Civil Service organization have brought a proposal forward several times to President Bruininks.

The question was raised about what kind of financial information advisers should be able to see. Kris said that she would like them to see whether students are receiving financial aid, and some indication of how needy the students are. Statistics show that the lower the income, the lower the graduation rates (at a certain point, high academic achievement reverses the trend). We also need to talk about what's behind the data, and what students need more help, so that students don't leave with $20,000 in debt but no degree.

The question was raised about what we can do for students who might qualify for need-based aid, but don't apply. Kris responded that this is one of the purposes of the scholarship search, to make scholarships easier to find and to let students know that they need to fill out a FAFSA in order to find out if they are eligible.

A comment was raised that, until now, this hasn't been a part of the advisers' agenda. Kris acknowledged this, and responded that with this new information, it's important that we make this a part of the advising vocabulary. Work will have to be done to communicate to advisers about how critical this is to students' success. Our recent graduation rates for Pell recipients are only 22%. When the Expected Family Contribution is above $5000, those rates go up to 40%. So it's time to reverse the trend on who is able to talk to students about these issues.

Kris noted that it's important that we find out what's behind this issue, in order to find a comprehensive way to address this.

One department adviser noted that they have only recently been able to look at students' eligibility for need-based aid. Students with a 3.75 GPA and above tend to not have need. What's the connection?

Steve Carnes reinforced the need for advisers to participate in the discussion. Research regarding students of color points to the fact that full ride financial aid doesn't necessarily lead to students graduating. Connection with community is incredibly important. He "could not oversupport" a strong investment by the advising community.

Student Committee on Educational Policies update: Tina Falkner reported that a group is looking at all of the policies that the Senate has approved and "ripping them apart" in order to communicate them more clearly. Much of what is written there is rationale, and not actually "policy." There are also many redundancies, and it can be difficult to tell which version of the policy is the most recent and where the "addenda" might be. The plan is to get them into a sense of order, and in some kind of search-able format.

That group has met six times, and is getting into the core of what needs to be re-written. However, if language is taken out or substantive language is added, it needs to go back to the Senate for approval. So the hope is to get the revised text to the Senate for approval by the end of the academic year.

The question was raised about what they do if they find policies that are in conflict with each other. Tina replied that conflicting policies have to go back to SCEP.

Tina also asked that people send her information about particular policies that seem unclear. Several questions were raised about particular policies:

- The repeat policy—exceptions to this include when students need the course to graduate with their major, or topics courses. Also, how do W's factor in? Tina replied that the consensus seems to be (without speaking for SCEP) that a W does not constitute "taking" the course.
- Exceptions to policies—when are there and aren't there rights for colleges to override a policy?
- What about repeats for higher grades when the first grade was okay?
- Sue Van Voorhis noted that we have to be careful about making new policies for something that only affects a small number of students affected is small
- A question was raised about the S/N grading policy, where a C- is considered "satisfactory," but a student could get suspended for a C- GPA.

- Pat Sherman raised a question about the residency requirement and the number of upper-division credits required for graduation. This will be added to the next RAC agenda.

E-Degree for graduation and professional school students: Vickie Roberts updated the group on the status of this project; the project will go to OIT for project review this week. Vickie is not able to answer questions about the timeline at this point, but the business requirements are solid.

Request for special exam form: Vickie Roberts distributed and discussed a draft of the revised Request for Special Exam form and fee. This form was revised to match the new fees process. The new fee process allows colleges to get the revenue, and saves extra steps for students.

The question was raised about what happens if the student is taking the credit by exam from a college that isn't their own. Who administers the fee and takes care of adding the credit, in that case? Vickie and Kasi will have to look into this and revise the form to be more clear.

The question was raised about whether this means departments have to give the exam, or have to charge the fees. The fee is optional. And special exams are at the department's discretion.

Vickie and/or Kasi will keep the group updated with developments.

Rochester update: Sue Van Voorhis communicated that a report was recently given to update Rochester's Chancellor. A team is currently analyzing the records in PeopleSoft, trying to find a way to incorporate the new status with the least amount of changes. This will take a significant amount of time.

Kendra Weber reported that CBS has agreed to be their sponsoring college for accreditation. The first degree they will offer could be a B.S. in Health Sciences, beginning fall 2009 (this is tentative; the goal is to present it to the Regents for approval in spring 2008). Rochester will not be admitting first-year students in fall 2008.

With the new Chancellor, they are looking at new pedagogies and new approaches to undergraduate education. They are hiring faculty and staff.

In the meanwhile, they will be actively recruiting and supporting the current degree programs that are offered at Rochester.