

Minutes of the Student Life Committee

Meeting of September 28, 2011
Wheelock Student Center, Room 208

Attending: Lisa Ferrari, Cameron Ford, Rebecca Kuglitsch, Nathan Little, Bruce Mann, Sierra Phillips, Geoff Proehl, Mike Segawa, Hannah Smith, Nila Wiese

Bruce Mann called the meeting to order at 9:05am.

Minutes from September 14, 2011 were approved as distributed.

Lisa asked a followed up question on the number of faculty members in the committee. Bruce reported that Steven Neshyba had been informed and asked to appoint one more faculty member, which he will do in the short term.

The main discussion point for this meeting was to acquaint the committee with the recommendations from the Retention Task Force Report that may be relevant to the committee's work and charges.

Mike provided some historical background on the three years of work of the Retention Task Force (RTF). Key points mentioned included data collection and the early difficulties to locate and consolidate the various sources of information on campus that might be relevant to the RTF's work, understanding of trends and patterns, analysis of potential critical success factors, and finally, the set of recommendations in the third and final report.

Four key areas identified in the recommendations were faculty development, co-curricular activities, information technology/data management, and administrative oversight over retention work. The rest of the meeting focused on specific recommendations that are expected to be most impactful. First, there was initial conversation on a program for admitted students with lower comp scores. Questions from Bruce, Nila, Mike and Lisa explored what the goals of that program might be and what shape it might take. The current idea is to have a short summer program prior to orientation that will acquaint this group of students with academic life at Puget Sound, resources available, and allow identification of challenges these students may face so that they may receive the support needed during their four years here. In terms of retention, the first and second years were identified as most critical for addressing any academic, personal, and/or financial challenges. The second initiative posed by the RTF report was early intervention measures, ideally at the mid-term point. Mike shared that the alert group is notified of students who receive two or more U's or F's, and that peer and academic advisors are also notified as we seek the most appropriate source of intervention for said students. Challenges related to this initiative ranged from faculty who do not issue mid-term grades, a lack of clear understanding by students and advisors as to what the mid-term grades mean, and the need to make students aware of the heavy percentage of their grade that is concentrated in the last 2-3 weeks of the semester, as opposed to the total accumulated at the mid-term point.

The committee will continue discussing the RTF recommendations at its next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00am.
Respectfully submitted by Nila Wiese