

Student Success Council Meeting

September 30, 2003

Attending: Alison Anderson, Ken Barclay, Marty Bragg, Stacey Breitenbach, Doug Cerf, David Conn, Donna Davis, Jill DeMers (recording), Judy Drake (for Navjit Brar), Joe Grimes, Jerry Hanley, Dave Hannings, Kimi Ikeda, George Lewis, Cornel Morton, Markel Quarles, Carole Schaffer, Mary Whiteford

Introductions were made.

Announcements

Concern was mentioned regarding a memo from Tom Zuur relating to academic grade rosters in hard copy (item to be addressed with other issues later).

A systemwide task force working with the chancellor's office (CO) has been looking at student progress to degree. A meeting is being held for all campuses in Long Beach the first week in December. David mentioned that up to 12 people may attend from each campus, and that CO would like department chairs to be well represented. The question of inviting students was discussed, and David will check into the intent of the meeting. **Please let David know if you are interested in attending.**

Kimi noted that the Records Office was asked to give a presentation at the conference on PolyProgress. Given its current status, this might be premature; furthermore, other campuses already have software in place that performs essentially the same function.

Review of Past Year's Activities and Accomplishments of the Student Success Council

During the summer, the President's Office asked for a brief report on the council's activities. This was sent out to all in this group via email (Student Success Initiative 2002-03). David went over several items, detailing the three main objectives, primarily leading to progress to degree.

1. Planning inquiry was sent out and returned (all except one). Responses have been compiled and analyzed by Mary Whiteford. Feedback will be given to departments, formally via program review or, for those departments not up for review in the near future, by means of discussions between David and the respective dept. heads/chairs.
2. Developing and modifying administrative processes so that students are better supported in progress toward degree. The registration process was mentioned as a topic for possible discussion this year.
3. Development of a first year experience (FYE) for students. Cornel mentioned that WOW was designed to provide transition into university/college life. This year, Student Affairs is proposing a WOW reunion in mid-October at which the new students will be invited to discuss with the peer leaders the students' experience and performance so far. There may be a motivational speaker, along with games and activities. A FYE need not necessarily involve a common, quarter-long course, but could instead build on an activity such as WOW, along with individual orientation offerings in the departments/colleges. Cornel is suggesting that the WOW group meet with those in the departments/colleges to assist in these orientation courses/activities, possibly in a manner similar to the residence hall living/learning activities. Concerning WOW, there may be a need to reacquaint the campus and community with the justification for, and nature of, this type of program, as many changes have been made throughout the years.

In addition, David mentioned that he had established a Task Force on Diversity in the Curriculum, currently co-chaired by Doug Cerf and Mary Whiteford, to look broadly at how we treat this issue, not only in USCP and GE but also in the majors.

David stated that Academic Support Services has been effective in promoting student success through (for example) supplemental workshops in science and math. David has sent notes to faculty who offer courses with which supplemental workshops are affiliated, suggesting that they encourage students to participate.

Items for Action During the Coming Year

David invited council members to propose items for inclusion in this year's action plan. Among the immediate suggestions:

1. Records Office issues, e.g., decision to stop supplying grades in hard copy.
2. Registration system – desire to develop a vision for (possibly) revamping the whole system, while taking care to avoid unduly raising expectations for immediate change. Need to consider how any proposed changes might affect other features of the system, e.g., workload, financial cost, ability to make forecasts past on historical patterns, etc.)
3. Retention of minority groups. Concern was expressed about the possibility of overlapping committees, task forces, etc. (e.g., UDEC, Diversity in the Curriculum). A suggestion was to coordinate the groups with similar foci through communication and shared leadership.
4. Jerry Hanley would like to report on support that ITS can and does provide for student success, as reported and discussed in the IACC and other committees.
5. Outreach and communication needs to be improved (e.g., about WOW) throughout the university, along with a plan on how and where to send information, all of which affect student success.

Please send suggestions for additional 2003-04 action items to David Conn.

Report from Kimi (PolyProgress Steering Committee)

Kimi distributed a draft document on the PolyProgress project, whose main goal is to meet student advising needs by providing complete, accurate, and timely student information.

Challenges in this project include:

1. Scribbling for the different departmental GE "patterns" (effectively as many as 52 different departmental templates)
2. The large number of transfer credits that have to be entered for our students. Even though the proportion of students admitted as transfers is relatively small, by the end of their careers at Cal Poly, more than 75 percent of all our students have transfer credit of some kind (e.g., AP, community college credit, etc.).
3. Documenting transfer credit equivalencies (i.e., what the credit will count for at Cal Poly, if anything) is difficult because of the large number of feeder schools, including out of state and foreign schools, requiring us to evaluate many different courses. (In the past equivalencies have not always been documented, meaning that our staff would often "reinvent wheels" by repeatedly re-evaluating the same courses. If fully implemented, PolyProgress would prevent this unnecessary duplication of effort.) Also, the flexibility we use in interpreting our curricula may be considered a "good thing" but it is detrimental to the implementation of PolyProgress because of the need to document all changes and exceptions.

To illustrate different ways in which we might implement PolyProgress, three sample evaluations were handed out:

1. A complete evaluation, which shows how transfer credits are used to satisfy Cal Poly requirements (based on equivalencies), allowing the evaluation to specify which requirements are still outstanding.
2. A partial evaluation which lists details of the transfer credits under a single category but does not show how they might be used to satisfy Cal Poly requirements (because equivalencies are not entered into the system); thus the list of outstanding requirements is misleading because it fails to take account of the transfer credits.
3. An even more partial evaluation which lists transfer credits as a total number of units without providing any details about them.

Given the shortage of resources and the workload of those qualified to do the implementation work, it is possible that we will try to implement the system fully for new students while we continue to evaluate manually those on older curricula. Decisions still have to be made about the level of funding that can be allocated to this effort, and David would like the Council collectively to provide input to Paul Zingg on this matter. He is not asking for council members themselves to make the tradeoffs with other University priorities but rather to give the Provost their sense of the importance of this project to the overall student success initiative. **This will be on the agenda for the meeting on Oct 10.**

The next meetings are scheduled for Oct. 10, 3:30-5 p.m., and Oct. 24, 3-4:30 p.m., in 33-285.