

MINUTES

Missouri S&T Retention Committee Meeting

January 29, 2009

8:15-9:15 AM

Members Present: Harvest Collier, Amy Gillman, Jay Goff, Larry Gragg, Mary Ellen Kirgan, C.R. Thulasi Kumar, Rance Larsen, F. Scott Miller, Rachel Morris, Kristi Schulte, Carol Smith, Brad Starbuck, Lynn Stichnote, Laura Stoll, Summer Young

Members Absent: Sunnie Hughes, Barb Prewett, Stephen Raper, Suzanne Schroer

Agenda Items:

- I. **Review and Approve Minutes:** The committee reviewed the minutes from the 1/15/09 meeting and approved the minutes as written.

Dr. Gragg commented on Item II from the 1/15/09 minutes—"Suzanne Schroer asked if a new question could be included in the senior survey to determine if students feel their course content is valuable." He indicated this information is available in the CET evaluations.

- II. **Committee Assignment from the last meeting:** The committee was asked to continue evaluating the survey results and to share suggestions for improving student retention.

Discussion items:

A. Dr. Collier indicated some students are not comfortable engaging with faculty outside the classroom. He surveyed freshmen Chem. I students and learned that the majority of students prefer on-line/virtual resources, rather than face to face communication.

B. Dr. Miller suggested we need a better formal advisor training program developed through the Undergraduate Advising Office. We need a one-stop student/parent information center to guide students to the academic resources and engagement opportunities that are available. We could provide all the information on one web site and call it "Ask Joe Miner".

C. Regarding student social skills: Dr. Morton said the COC survey results confirm the senior survey findings. Of the five pillar weaknesses, our students are weak in "verbal/oral communication" skills and "engagement".

D. Mary Ellen Kirgan commented that appropriate and inappropriate conduct/communication with faculty impacts student success.

E. Jay Goff mentioned if you look at the demographics of our students, there is not a high degree of communication sophistication. If we focused on communication, would it help us retain more students? The survey data tells us no-and it may cause more anxiety in students.

F. Dr. Collier said approximately 21% of our students are undecided and already do not feel owned because they have not declared a major or a home department. How does this impact student retention?

G. Jay Goff said if we did a gap analysis of our retention services we would find that our Family/Parent Association is a major weakness. Our weakness is not that we are not engaging the student- it is that we are not engaging the parents.

H. Amy Gillman indicated our discussions and meeting minutes reflect five common themes relative to student retention: 1) Financial Resources, 2) Parental Involvement, 3) Developmental Advising, 4) One-Stop-Shop for student/parent information, and 5) Student-Faculty Engagement. She suggested we discuss action items for each of these.

In closing, Dr. Collier asked for ideas and suggestions from the committee. Dr. Gragg suggested we share the survey results with the academic advisors. Due to time constraints, the committee was asked to email their suggestions to Amy Gillman so they can be discussed at a future meeting.

III. HLC/NCA Accreditation Site Visit: Dr. Collier announced the dates for the upcoming NCA accreditation visit on February 23-25, 2009. He provided a copy of the Self Study At-A-Glance document to the committee for their review.

IV. Next Meeting: February 12, 2009, 8:15 AM, Silver & Gold, Havener Center

The meeting was adjourned.