UMR Retention Committee Meeting
November 15, 2007
8:15-9:15 AM

Members Present: Harvest Collier, Kim Frazier, Amy Gillman, Larry Gragg, Sunnie Hughes, Mary Ellen Kirgan, C.R. Thulasi Kumar, F. Scott Miller, Barb Prewett, Kristi Schulte, Lynn Stichnote, Laura Stoll, Christa Weisbrook

Members Absent: Jay Goff, Stephen Raper, Suzanne Schroer

Guest(s): John F. Carney III

I. Welcome & Introductions
   Dr. Collier welcomed Chancellor Carney to the meeting and the committee members each introduced themselves.

II. Review & Approve Minutes
    The committee reviewed the minutes from the 11/1/07 meeting. Chancellor Carney noted that the current second to third year retention rate (listed in section III. A.) should be 79/80%. Jay Goff will provide a corrected grid to clarify the 2nd to 3rd year retention rates.

III. New Business:

   A. Overview of the 2007-08 Retention Committee Goals
      Dr. Collier gave an overview and status report of the committee’s goals for the 2007-08 academic year.

   B. Summary of UMR’s Retention Strategies & Tactics (2001-2007)
      The committee reviewed a list of the strategies and tactics implemented during 2001-2007 that have impacted student retention on the campus.

   C. “2nd Year Experience”
      Dr. Collier presented a summary of the proposed components of the Second Year Experience program and held a general discussion for each, emphasizing:

      1. How can we impact more students with the things we are already doing?
      2. What can we do to establish new programs to assist sophomore students?

   Committee Discussion Summary/Second Year Retention:

      • The committee discussed how critical “faculty engagement” is to student success, and the importance of rewarding faculty who are outstanding advisors and teachers. Departments should develop a subset of faculty who are really good at advising, and ask this group to advise the majority
of students. Faculty need to know that advising is important and that it is valued.

- Dr. Carney confirmed the importance of rewarding faculty for excellent advising through the departmental reward structure. Dr. Carney indicated that it would be beneficial for there to be additional discussion on this issue held between the Provost and the Department Chairs.
- Dr. Gragg suggested we hold a discussion with the CET award winners to discover what these faculty members are doing to engage students.
- It was mentioned that our first to second year female students perform better academically than our first to second year male students. Dr. Carney asked if this was true for our second to third year students.
- Dr. Collier proposed the peer mentoring model as an effective way to engage and assist students. Lynn Stichnote mentioned that the PRO peer mentoring activity drops off during the first semester and asked if there was a practical way to bring that interaction back at the end of the second semester. Dr. Miller suggested holding a session in April to bring PRO peer mentor groups back together as a lead-in to the second year experience.
- Lynn Stichnote suggested our current Freshmen Engineering course is broad enough to transition into a campus-wide First Year Orientation course.

The Chancellor asked the committee to clarify whether female retention and graduation rates are higher than male retention and graduation rates.

In closing, Dr. Carney related that we want to make the case that we are among the top 5 technological research universities in the nation. Our six year graduate rate ranks at the bottom of comparative institutions such as MIT, Cal Tech, Georgia Tech and others. If we can get our first year retention rate from 87% to 90%, and not lose 10% in the second year, we can improve our graduation rate.

**D. Retention of International Students** - Due to time constraints, this issue was not addressed. It will be addressed at a future meeting.

**IV. Next Meeting:** November 29, 2007, 8:15-9:15 AM, Silver & Gold Room

The meeting was adjourned.