



BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Student Affairs Committee

February 2, 2018

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 11:59 by Governor Trent in the Room BC at the McGregor Memorial Conference Center. Secretary Miller called the roll. A quorum was present.

**Committee Members Present:** Governors Busuito, Gaffney, Nicholson, O'Brien and Trent; Faculty Representative Naida Simon and Victoria Dallas, Faculty Alternate Representative; and Stuart Baum Student Representative

**Committee Members Absent:** Kristina Curtiss, Student Alternate Representative

**Also Present:** Governors Dunaskiss, Kelly, and Thompson, and President Wilson; Provost Whitfield, Vice Presidents Decatur, Hefner, Lanier, Lessem, Lindsey, Staebler and Wright, and Secretary Miller

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES, December 1, 2017**

Ms. Simon asked that the faculty representative names in the draft minutes be corrected to reflect Ms. Simon and Ms. Dallas as present. Secretary Miller will make that correction.

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Ms. Simon and supported by Governor O'Brien, the Minutes of the December 1, 2017 meeting of the Student Affairs Committee were approved, as corrected. The motion carried.

**STUDENT SUCCESS ANNUAL REPORT**

Governor Trent called on Provost Whitfield for the introduction to the annual Student Success report. Provost Whitfield talked about the change in culture and number of investments that have taken place as the University intensified its focus and efforts on the success of its students. A number of the positive outcomes that have occurred have begun to attract national attention. He lauded the efforts of Associate Provost Monica Brockmeyer, and introduced her for the presentation.

Ms. Brockmeyer indicated that the first portion of her presentation would focus on data, and she will then review the work that has been underway for the past year and what's ahead. She began by reporting that the University's six year graduation rate has risen to 47%, representing a real shift in the student experience and a transformation of University culture. They have an interim goal to reach 50% by 2018, and are monitoring the data

closely. Graduation rates have increased 21 percentage points over 6 years. In response to a question from an earlier meeting, there is no evidence that the change in the math requirements impacted graduation rates. The implemented changes in the Gen Ed program, to be instituted this fall, will have quantitative experience established, and confidence in college level math skills of our students will be enhanced.

Ms. Brockmeyer next discussed progress with Pell Eligible students, where the change in 6-year graduation rates for this student group improved from 18% to 38%. Nationally, Pell recipients have a 51% graduation rate compared to the 65% for non-Pell students, but many universities have closed this gap, and that is WSU's goal as well. In addition to graduation rates, students in this demographic have also increased the number of credit hours they are successfully completing, up 2.5 credits in their first semester from a decade ago.

Another data point reviewed is GPA attainment. A study done about 4 years ago showed that students who finished their first year with a GPA above a 3.0 are significantly more likely to graduate within 6-years, which is why the emphasis on continued support of first year programs, especially in the introductory courses, has translated to significant improvement in the GPA of students in their first year, now above 58%. First to second year retention rate is another data point examined. That number dipped from 82 to 81% this past year, and Ms. Brockmeyer and her team are examining the factors that impact retention. Examining students grouped by ACT entering score also provides interesting data, showing that students very nearly across all bands have seen improvement. The focus on student success and retention are now a part of the culture of the institution. Ms. Brockmeyer further added that these efforts to get students to degrees need to focus on the students' intellectual engagement, their social belonging and emotional flourishing, what she describes as "thriving" - she wants students to thrive on campus. Efforts can also focus on career readiness, career engagement and outcomes.

The University has much better tools at monitoring progress than it did, and now has the ability to connect advising, whether students are going to tutoring, are connected to other offices to help make sure that students are not falling through the cracks. This will be fine-tuned later this year, to add some risk levels, so that students who have an elevated level of risk are provided services that are well-matched to their need. A number of these tools come through the partnership with EAB, which has provided a campus-wide advising platform, not only for advisors, but for tutoring and other support systems and offices. Students have one place where they can make appointments for all of these services. A mobile app has been launched for students, and training is in place to support the changes. There is better collaboration between the financial aid office, bursars' office, the student services center and advisors. Financial holds have been reduced. With the app, students can see their course schedule, schedule an appointment with their advisor, and analytics in this system will help identify the four to eight courses that are statistically predictive of whether a student will graduate in a timely manner. This information will be available to advisors and will help them see whether a student is on or off track.



In addition to the tools provided through the EAB, Ms. Brockmeyer also spoke of the University's efforts for better collaboration for students of color, first generation students, and other students who may need more support during their transition into the University, and throughout their time here. The Warrior VIP program, Vision and Impact, is a coalition of more than a dozen programs on campus, some of which are familiar to the Board. They include the Apex Scholars program, the Network and Rise learning communities, the Center for Latino/Latin American Studies, the Rising Scholars Program, the Workforce Diversity Program in Nursing, the Engineering Bridge in Engineering and many more. They expect to be serving about 500 students of the freshman class through these coalitions. One of the new first-year seminars is a class where 500 freshmen are taking a one-credit class to use brain science to learn how their study skills and learning strategies can be improved.

Mr. Baum asked about the timeframe for the roll-out of the mobile app. Ms. Brockmeyer advised that they are working with the EAB partners to tailor the email campaign that will announce it this semester.

Governor Nicholson asked, with all of these efforts, how the university will continue the mission of access, retention and degree progress with all of these additional programs and requirements. Ms. Brockmeyer responded that they found many ways that people can change the way they do work, rather than just adding new requirements. People have been excited about the possibilities, and some of this is looking at better ways to utilize current resources. Requests for new resources are made carefully, with new and/or revised business processes outlined.

Governor Thompson asked whether the tools they are now using will help them understand the small dip in retention rates between 2016 and 2017, and secondly, how these tools can be utilized to help close the gap between African-American retention and graduation rates with the rest of the campus. Ms. Brockmeyer advised that they are studying the dip in retention rates, and she will be better able to respond to that question after the analysis is completed. In terms of closing the gap, they have undertaken a systematic review of various populations, including one group of African-American students with more than 90 credits who have not yet graduated. From those reviews, a set of recommendations has emerged that should have a positive impact not only on the students who are continuing but have not yet graduated, and for those who may have stopped out after the first year.

Governor Dunaskiss asked how faculty are engaged in this initiative. Provost Whitfield advised that he is currently holding town hall meetings at each of the colleges, and one of the biggest messages is that student success is faculty success, and vice versa. This is not often connected. The work of people performing support services for students has sometimes seemed disconnected from the faculty. This messaging of the importance of student success comes not only from the Provost but from the President as well, and will also be coming through the Deans as a priority for faculty.

Ms. Dallas commented that there appears to be a drop in the graduation rate for students with very high ACT scores, and asked whether that may have anything to do with the shift in financial resources from merit to need. Ms. Brockmeyer advised that these students entered the University before the shift in financial aid strategy, and argued that by spreading financial aid dollars more broadly, the university can continue being a university of academic success and opportunity, and boost graduation rates across the board. In some instances, when the scholarship levels are too high for students in the high ability range, it can be tempting for their parents to have them attend Wayne State for two years and then transfer to another more expensive institution.

Governor Trent was pleased with the progress toward the strategic goal on improvement in graduation rates, and asked if there was any thought to adjusting the goal, since it may be reached before 2021. President Wilson agreed, and indicated that when the 50% goal is reached, they will keep pushing for continual improvements. Ms. Brockmeyer added that the 21% improvement over a six year period is the largest improvement noted in IPEDS data over a 10 year review period, and a break away accomplishment.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Julie H. Miller  
Secretary to the Board of Governors