



## **Student Affairs Committee**

**December 6, 2019**

### **Minutes**

The meeting was called to order at 11:30 a.m. by Governor Busuito in Room BC at the McGregor Memorial Conference Center. Secretary Miller called the roll. A quorum was present.

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

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

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES, DECEMBER 7, 2018**

**ACTION:** Upon motion made by Governor O'Brien and supported by Governor Gaffney, the Minutes of the December 7, 2018 meeting of the Student Affairs Committee were approved as submitted. The motion carried.

### **FALL ENROLLMENT UPDATE**

Due to time constraints, the Enrollment Update was rescheduled for the next meeting of the Student Affairs Committee, and will be presented at the January 2020 meeting.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN - STUDENT SUCCESS**

Associate Provost Monica Brockmeyer was introduced for a presentation on the aspect of the Strategic Plan on Student Success. AVP Brockmeyer began with a discussion of the various components that impact student success, which include more than just the graduation rate. Student success means creating conditions where students can learn a lot, thrive in college, graduate in a timely manner and enjoy the benefits of a college degree throughout their lives. As noted from previous reports, the graduation rate has seen very positive changes, and is currently at 48%. The university's strategic plan goal calls for a 50% graduation rate by 2021. Despite this graduation rate gain, the university continues to experience education disparities, between many population groups. Ms. Brockmeyer noted a chart in the presentation that described the general pattern of

educational disparities over the last 10 or 12 years. While the gap is narrowing, diligence is needed to further narrow/close those gaps/disparities.

Ms. Brockmeyer then reviewed the specific goals under the Student Success strategic area. The first strategic goal is to cultivate a culture of student success, which in this context centers on the undergraduate program. The plan has 21 objectives and the division has already inventoried more than 150 projects across the campus which are complete or in progress driving those objectives. The success of these initiatives has come through changing the culture and communication awareness on student success, and in increasing cross university collaboration. In the pilot year, these efforts focused on closing educational disparities. The cohort group was retained into the second year at a rate of 82%. Students in the third year are being retained at a rate 12% higher than the general population. Teamwork and collaboration have been a key to the success in this initiative.

The second goal Dr. Brockmeyer highlighted was on academic pathways. This goal has brought a significant change in culture for the University. The reform of the university's general education program was a large portion of building a solid foundation for other components of academic pathways to success. Those include assessment, advising, new courses and some experimental programming, which all work together for our students and show forward progress in this area.

Institutional research has been of tremendous help in the collection and analysis of student data, helping to understand student progress and success of these initiatives. As an example of an initiative in this area that was helped by data analysis, a disparity was noticed in the freshman class in the percentage of black students, 45%, who registered early as compared to white students, who registered at a rate of about 70%. Delays in registration can cause disadvantages in the class section availability for students. Outreach to minority students from several different university offices, including OMSE, advising, disability services, and others, helped to boost the registration rate for that group of students by about 20% in a two week period. They are now looking at students in the sophomore class to see if similar efforts will help there as well.

The third goal Ms. Brockmeyer highlighted is to increase retention, progress to degree and graduation rates for all students - emphasis on all students, and on educational disparities. They have seen what has been possible with pilot programs and will look to scale those approaches that have been successful to the larger population. Ms. Brockmeyer reviewed the reach goals she envisions for the next 10 years, which include elimination of educational disparities and moving graduation rates past 50% to 60% or greater. She envisions that in 10 years, Wayne State University will be an example of how access, equity, student success and affordability are met simultaneously for students in a way not yet achieved in the U.S. The floor was then opened for questions.

Faculty representative Naida Simon expressed her public thanks to Dawn Medley and Cathy Kay, the Director of Financial Aid, for their help in working with Ms. Simon on specific students who needed assistance on financial aid and with registration issues.

One of the students is in his last semester, and Ms. Simon really appreciated the assistance provided by the Enrollment Management team.

Governor Barnhill asked whether mental health counseling is being linked into student success programming, and commented on the value of including such services, and the increased need for these services in a population of students that may be associated with socio-economic factors.

AVP Brockmeyer agreed with Governor Barnhill and advised that the university has instituted a wide spectrum of services, some of which have grant funding. These services include basic wellbeing through the food pantry, the clothing closet, emergency grants, social services, and a well-coordinated communication network to provide information on these services to students. She commented further on the support network that students need to succeed and thrive. Provost Whitfield added that prior to Governor Barnhill's election to the Board, the University increased the budget for counseling services to increase the number of counselors available to see students. It previously had an extended waitlist. The changes to the program have allowed better coordination of mental health services and assistance to students with anxiety, depression and stress.

Mr. Stuart Baum, President of the Student Senate, commented on another stressor for students, which was around transportation. The Senate worked on a project to obtain free bus passes on the combined Dart system, and more than 340 students came to obtain a bus pass. It has been a successful pilot and they are looking for ways to expand it.

In response to a question from Governor Thompson on the current graduation rate for African American students and how it compares to the general population of students, Ms. Brockmeyer advised that the African American graduation rate is 24% and the overall graduation rate is 48%. Governor Thompson asked for additional information on the Warrior VIP program, and the plans to scale that program up to address some of these achievement gaps. Ms. Brockmeyer advised that there are about 350 students participating in the Warrior VIP program, as they are in their third cohort of the program. She estimated that about one third of the incoming class, or approximately 1000 students, could be well served by having a VIP experience. It would not be possible to scale a program overnight to meet that need. They have attracted significant donation support and are looking at some grant opportunities for additional funding. She added that with the increased credit attainment and retention, there would be positive return on internal investments in these programs. Governor Thompson commented that outside of first-year students, upper level students would also benefit from these services. Ms. Brockmeyer agreed and asked the director of the Academic Success Center, Michelle Bruner, to talk with the committee about the peer mentoring program.

Ms. Bruner advised that the role of peer mentors in many ways is to normalize the college experience for students, to calm concerns, which are normal for all college students, and to make sure students are staying on track. On average, there are 4-6 students per peer mentor. Mentors meet with students singly and in study groups, and meet with them on a regular basis. The program also allows early identification of social or personal

challenges, which peer mentors identify and refer students to other resources on campus. Peer mentors receive training and professional development to ensure that they are familiar with resources available across campus. Currently, there are about 45 peer mentors supporting mentees in the Warrior VIP program. There are peer mentors in other learning communities, and some mentors who work primarily to support students academically. There are some learning communities where the peer mentor's role is purely social, but mentees come to their mentors for a variety of needs.


Governor Thompson thanked Ms. Bruner, and asked AVP Brockmeyer about plans to scale these resources up, i.e., the 5 year plan, as Ms. Brockmeyer had earlier stated that she hoped by 2030 that all students had access to such resources. Ms. Brockmeyer advised that the plan is in development now - they have added a junior-senior coordinator, which will allow them to cover existing capacity, and that the plan should be completed by January.

Mr. Baum commented that he has seen a remarkable change in the type of support services offered since he arrived on campus in 2016, and believes the university needs to double down on the commitment to take these programs to the next level. He asked Ms. Brockmeyer for the list of the 150 projects mentioned earlier in the presentation, and Ms. Brockmeyer indicated she would send him the list. He commented that there appears to be more progress on the initiatives undertaken centrally by the university versus those initiated at the school/college level, and hopes there will be more efforts concentrated at that level. He mentioned as an example scheduling challenges students encounter when a class is only offered once a year, and that student senators had experienced that challenge first hand when the scheduled class conflicted with their meeting schedule. Ms. Brockmeyer agreed and indicated that they continue to work on clear four year degree pathways, and that she has personally made a commitment to deeper partnerships with the deans. The university's new budget model, RCM, will also be a component in these discussions, so that the deans can see the ways that investments in student success will boost the university's financial health, and help identify specific graduation target rates at the school/college level.

Ms. Coles asked for clarification on the graduation rates, as retention is up, but can we get those students to completion? Ms. Brockmeyer responded that the university has seen more improvement on graduation rates than on retention rates, and believes that providing students with the support they need and deserve will drive them forward to completion, along with removing barriers to graduation.

Upon seeing no further questions, Governor Busuito thanked the presenters, and adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Julie Harshen Miller  
Secretary to the Board of Governors