From: Bruce Szelest
Sent: Tuesday, December 14, 2004 3:53 PM
To: Carolyn MacDonald
Cc: Marjorie Pryse; Jeryl Mumpower; John Pipkin; William Hedberg; Sue
Faerman; Sheila Mahan; Christine Bouchard; Vesna Gjaja; Wendell Lorang
Subject: follow-up on 1998 task force recs

Dear Carolyn,

Attached is summary of recommendations of the Subcommittee on Institutional
Effectiveness of the 1998 Task Force on Retention and the Quality of
Undergraduate Student Life. This summary also lists subsequent
institutional actions that address many of the recommendations.   The
"Action(s) taken" column in the attached tables were developed by informally
surveying various colleagues in relevant areas. Please keep in mind that
the list of institutional actions is not intended to represent the entirety
of policies, operations, or intentions in these areas - but rather to
provide some specific examples of ways in which issues have been addressed.
Finally, you will no doubt have additional information regarding actions by
faculty governance and/or the academic departments in areas under their
respective purviews to supplement the actions already listed.

I would also like to note that this summary only pertains to recommendations
made by the Task Force's Subcommittee on Institutional Effectiveness. While
there is some overlap with the recommendations of the other subcommittees
(e.g., subcommittee on teaching and learning; subcommittee on freshman year
experience; advisement subcommittee; and student life subcommittee), it does
not include all of the recommendations made by these other subcommittees.

Hopefully this particular summary, despite its limited scope, can contribute
to ongoing discussions in a positive manner. With Dr. Pipkin's approval, I
am attaching his 1999 follow-up report that addresses these issues as well.
Please let me know if I can provide any additional information.

Regards,
Bruce

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Bruce P. Szelest, Ph.D.
Assistant Vice President
Strategic Planning and Assessment
University at Albany
UAB 406
Albany, NY 12222
phone: 518/437-4928   fax: 518/437-4927

Instruction

Recommendation	Action(s) taken
1. Change the culture of the institution by communicating through word *and action* the importance of teaching: a. When recruiting new faculty, give heavier weight to teaching skills.	
b. Weight teaching effectiveness heavily in merit raise decisions.	
c. In tenure decisions: hold a separate vote on teaching contributions.	
d. For untenured faculty: conduct a peer evaluation of teaching for contract renewals.	
e. Increase the number, prestige, and monetary value of teaching awards. Make teaching awards annuities (increase on base salary). Tangible, non-monetary awards may also be appropriate.	Teaching award values have risen slightly.
f. Give teaching a more central place in the Faculty Handbook.	
g. Create a Teaching Committee in each College or Department, to promote attention to teaching and carry out peer evaluations.	
h. Over time, give enhanced support to departments that invest in institutional enrichment programs (e.g., Project Renaissance).	
2. Communicate to faculty the direct linkage between teaching quality, student retention, and state/tuition funding of the institution.	
3. Raise the stipend for teaching summer courses, to send a signal to all about the "value" placed on teaching.	
4. CETL offers many valuable services. They should be better publicized. Give chairs an orientation on CETL, so they can make referrals to help needy faculty.	CETL now reports to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies
5. Encourage faculty conversations about alternative instructional methods, and ways to evaluate their effectiveness.	CETL workshops and occasional faculty fora address this recommendation.
6. Put students' local phone and e-mail information on the class roster.	Now available on PeopleSoft data warehouse.

Teaching Evaluations

Recommendation	Action(s) taken
1. Improve the student instructional rating forms (SIRF) to allow for more meaningful comments.	Possible if SIRF moves to a web administration
2. Make timely distribution of SIRF results by *departments* to *faculty* a higher priority.	Institutional Research redesign of SIRF administration and reporting processes accomplished this.
3. Allocate up to one additional graduate student or advanced undergraduate computer science major to allow the *Institutional Research office* to more quickly process SIRFs.	Institutional Research redesign of SIRF administration and reporting processes made this unnecessary.
4. Allow alumni input into recognition of meritorious faculty.	
5. When they apply for graduation, have students fill out a brief "satisfaction" form. The final question should be, "Would you like to speak with a University representative about your observations?"	
6. Implement midterm teaching evaluations for inexperienced instructors (perhaps also for experienced instructors teaching a given course for the first time). The survey instrument should be designed by departments in consultation with CETL and Institutional Research.	

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Advisement

Recommendation	Action(s) taken
1. Provide realistic guidance to students about their grade status by the drop deadline. (e.g., in some courses, certain graded items are consistently better predictors of final grades than others.)	Undergraduate withdrawal data changed.
2. Departments should hold regular "student interest meeting" to introduce students to majors.	On to do list of Advisement Task Force.
3. Make degree audits available online to students and faculty.	Addressed by DARS/MyUAlbany.
4. Make advisement mores customer-oriented, more user-friendly.	ASC/US redesign and investment in staff, development of advisement learning outcomes, current Advisement Taskforce
5. Better coordinate advisement services for double-majors and minors.	Addressed by DARS and on to do list of Advisement Task Force.
6. Improve/put in place advisement on insurance and financial aid matters to service each individual student as they contemplate dropping individual courses.	
7. Institutional Research should maintain a database of aggregate grade information from sequences of "difficult" courses. (e.g., if a student receives a grade of C in PHY120 and plans to continue pursuing a Physics major, the advisor can offer statistics on how many students who have earned a C in PHY120 in the past and earned a C or better in PHY124. Currently, "tracking" statistics like this are not available for advisement.)	Departments can access such data from the PeopleSoft data warehouse
8. Institute a second mandatory advisement session each semester in addition to the one now required for registering students. This session, held during "down" times from the beginning of the semester until the start of pre-registration interviews, would focus on long term issues such as careers and graduate school selection, and the role of internships and co-curricular activities.	Addressed for freshman ASC/US. On to do list of Advisement Task Force, which includes working with academic departments to provide this for declared majors.

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Academic Policies

Recommendation	Action(s) taken
1. Increase faculty accountability in the following areas: a) Enforce vigorously a policy of requiring significant feedback to students before the final drop date in all undergraduate courses.	
b) Faculty who teach courses in early warning systems: hold instructors to their responsibility to provide mid-term warnings.	
2. Lengthen *slightly* (e.g., 5 class days) the drop period from the current policy, to improve feedback to students.	Addressed.
3. To decrease the workload on the Academic Standing Committee, streamline/make more objective the process by which the committee determines if late drops can occur on a course-by-course basis.	
4. Lengthen the amount of time a student can make up an incomplete course from one semester to one year, so grades do not revert to an "E" in cases when courses are offered only once per year.	
5. Begin (from scratch) to develop a new set of academic regulations and policies that students can be expected to understand.	Advisement Task Force recommends re-working the Undergraduate Bulletin from student-centered rather than rule-centered perspective.

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New Faculty and Staff Orientation and Development

Recommendation	Action(s) taken
1. Develop a more effective reward system for recognizing dedication and innovation among the professional and classified staff.	
2. Involve department chairs more heavily in communicating the importance of teaching (e.g., have department chairs attend teaching orientation sessions with new hires).	
3. Include junior faculty (still untenured or recently tenured) in the orientation teaching discussion. Let them discuss how they have maintained professional balance.	
4. Increase the institutional investment in adjunct instructors' training and support.	Addressed. CETL development workshops, part-time faculty teaching award
5. Assist graduate assistants in improving their English language and teaching skills.	Addressed. CETL and OIE programs.
6. Communicate institutional objectives more effectively to all faculty and staff, and make them integral players in a strategic plan.	Beginning to address with development of the Institutional Assessment Plan
7. Identify places where staff and student employees interact with carious constituents (e.g., protocol for answering phones and dealing with prospects).	
8. For new faculty, hold a teaching orientation at the level of the College. CETL should coordinate these orientations.	

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Freshman and Transfer Student Life

Recommendation	Action(s) taken
1. more extensive orientation for frosh, and evaluate its effectiveness on a ongoing basis: a.) Give mandatory evaluation exams to determine preparedness.	
1. Discuss majors/careers.	Addressed in SPC
2. During the orientation, hold a mandatory study skills course, to minimize attrition due to a lack of knowledge of how to study. In such a course, students will: • Gain an understanding of the values of higher education. • Learn how to take good class notes. • Acquire skills needed to prepare a research paper. • Be exposed to various library resources. • Begin to conquer any computer phobias. • Do extensive self-analysis, consider planned major and career.	Not during orientation, but advisors identify students that could benefit from these types of courses during orientation and recommend them to students, as available (e.g., ECPY 101). Success 101 introduction in SPC. Information Literacy Gen Ed requirement, Library course.
2. Change the mix of students in the residence halls. Put freshman together with sophomores, and juniors together with seniors. Maintain a separate floor or residence hall for transfer students.	
3. Assign formal study groups within freshman classes.	
4. Develop enhanced orientation program/services/amenities for transfer students.	Ongoing and on Advisement Task Force to do list.

Student Recruitment

Recommendation	Action(s) taken
1. Sponsor lectures in local high schools by current UAlbany students/faculty, using the occasions as opportunities to market the institution.	Ongoing by Undergraduate Admissions.
2. Promote the fact that UAlbany's enhanced research emphasis truly makes a difference in the classroom. How does the fact that we're a Carnegie Research-II institution translate into increased educational value to an undergraduate?	Ongoing by Undergraduate Admissions.
3. At recruitment events, assign prospective students/faculty to tables based on academic discipline (for those students who know their major), to facilitate a more lively interchange.	Ongoing by Undergraduate Admissions.
4. Make advisement services more accessible to prospective students (frosh and transfers) visiting campus.	Ongoing by ASC/US, also participate at Open House
5. Communicate to prospective and current students that the following are *myths*: a) "Students can't graduate in four years." (The proportion of students requiring more than four years to graduate has remained constant in recent years.)	
b) "Freshman students can't get into the classes they want." (Freshman can get into virtually any class they need, but getting into any section they want is sometimes problematic.)	Addressed. College of Arts and Sciences and ASC/US manage course availability during SPC and Fall advance registration.

Involvement of Students' Parents

Recommendation	Action(s) taken
1. Augment the concise university directory now sent to parents, with answers to specific questions. For example, "If your student thinks there has been an error in his/her course grade, here is the appeals process," or "If your student wants information on summer internships, here is the place to go."	Handbook and other info available at http://www.albany.edu/parents/
2. Prepare, for parents, a guide to extracurricular activities (clubs especially) available at UAlbany so they can give better-informed advice to students.	Handbook and other info available at http://www.albany.edu/parents/
3. Designate liaisons (and backups) for each department for parents, someone in the department who can be contacted if questions arise.	
4. For parents who are not comfortable speaking English designate a faculty/staff contact who is fluent in the parent's language.	

General Quality of Life on Campus

Recommendation	Action(s) taken
1. Ensure that a live person is available to answer (courteously) each departmental phone between 9am-5pm.	
2. Clean and repair drinking fountains.	Extensive renovations to the physical and technology infrastructure have taken place, and more are planned going forward.
3. Clean and refurbish overhead projectors.	
4. Repair of replace broken desks and chairs in classrooms.	
5. Repair leaking classrooms.	
6. Take steps to improve the level of technology available in the Lecture Centers.	
7. Make the Lecture Centers more aesthetically appealing learning environments.	
8. Improve the climate control throughout campus, and especially in the classrooms.	
9. Make it easier for current and prospective students to make inquiries after 4pm (many classes end at 9pm) and during the summer.	

Finances / Advancement

Recommendation	Action(s) taken
1. Establish and maintain regular contacts among Advisement / Career Development / Alumni Relations directors.	Advancement activites: o Web-based "Spirit Zone" joins the work of these offices. o Promote events and programs of these offices through marketing features on the homepage of the University's website. o Worked with Advisement on print materials. o Senior Salute Program which works with Advisement and Career Development to help students make the transfer from academic life to the workplace.
2. Hold occasional meetings between academic units and advancement office personnel, to encourage information interchange.	o Advancement Development Officers assigned to each school/college. o Advancement senior staff participate in monthly deans meetings. o Deans and Chairpersons are invited to attend regularly scheduled development officers meeting to exchange information about their school/college.
3. Take steps to reduce turnover in the development office.	o Compensation and salary issues haven been addressed. o Provide necessary state of the art resources to support advancement activities. o Establish more realistic goals with measurable results.

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4. Communicate with students, faculty, and alumni on a regular basis: a) the necessity of having a sizable university endowment fund to smooth out the fiscal effects of political cycles and compete in the higher education marketplace, b) the current status of UAlbany's endowment, and c) how they can help improve the situation.	o Accomplished through campaign direct marketing. o The *UAlbany* magazine and the *Update* maintain a continuous flow of information encompassing the Foundation's Annual Report which details our endowment and articles that re-enforce our need for private support by featuring donors who have made a difference with their philanthropy.
5. Ask young alumni/ae to participate in summer planning conferences. For students (parents): "Here is how you (your son or daughter) will look in 5 years." This also reinforces the idea that the UAlbany / student relationship continues even after graduation.	o Alumni Relations Program works to identify alumni hosts for freshmen recruitment. o Alumni Relations facilitates mixers that bring younger and accomplished alums back to campus to interact with current students and parents.
6. Use alumni/ae more intensively in various academic clubs.	o Alumni Awareness Initiative - a marketing campaign (in-development) to showcase our highly accomplished alumni and provide more opportunities for current students to interact with alumni. o Establish Alumni Ambassador Program where alums serve as mentors as well as spokespersons at high schools. o The UAAA is building constituent groups affiliated with schools/colleges, as well as with student groups. o Many alums serve as visiting lecturers.

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7. Hold *departmental* receptions at class reunions, and invite a few current majors to participate as well.	o Done with individual schools. o Donor-based receptions have invited current students to attend.
8. Initiate a charitable giving program by students.	o Established the Senior Class Gift Program.

Career Development Center (CDC)

Recommendation	Action(s) taken
1. Update the CDC's computers.	Done
2. Create a system for soliciting feedback from interviewers after on-campus interviews. Items should include (1) satisfaction with the CDC, and (2) general comments on the student performance. Whenever possible, (2) should be communicated back to relevant departments.	Satisfaction surveys are generally monitored within the CDC. This information is not routinely shared with departments except on a need to know basis.
3. Follow up aggressively when organizations do not return to recruit in subsequent years.	Yes, especially with larger companies.
4. In coordination with the Alumni office, use UAlbany graduates to help identify job openings and encourage employers to hire UAlbany students. Highlight success stories in Albany magazine.	Alumni network system.
5. Replace graduate student career counselors with professionals.	CDC continues to rely on the equivalent of one FTE graduate student, typically from the doctoral program in Counseling Psych
6. When recruiters are scheduled to come on campus, send news to the relevant departments.	Done
7. Work more closely with departments to communicate news of and coordinate internship opportunities.	Done.
8. Develop formalized channels of communication between the CDC and ASC/US to improve coordination in dealing with organizations offering internships. Alternatively, make only one office fully responsible for representing the University in this respect.	Coordination between CDC and ASC/US continues but internships are not centralized in one office.
9. As the CDC improves its services, consider moving in years to come toward a model where employers pay to recruit on campus.	Modest fees are charged for Career Fairs and room/equipment usage. Larger companies make contributions to CDC operations

Future of the Retention Process

Recommendation	Action(s) taken
1. To get maximum institutional "buy-in," the subcommittee requests that all Task Force recommendations be transmitted, *unedited*, to (a) the Enrollment Initiative Group, (b) Noel-Levitz, (c) the University Senate, (d) and Dean (and possible Chairs) before the final recommendations are submitted to the Provost.	
2. The subcommittee requests that the Provost or Provost's representative report back to the Task Force with responses to specific recommendations, and plans for implementation.	

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