**Minutes**

Student Success Council Meeting

February 12, 2014

**Meeting Start Time:** 1:45

**Members Present:** Matthew Keller, Don Culberson, Meg Smith, Billy Kavula, Natalie Finnorn, Lori Aultman

**Members Absent:** Bob Stewart, Stephanie Harris

**Visitor:** Tracey Childs

**Visitor Remarks:**

* During the summer, the Board of Trustees met and felt that a special focus was needed on retention. Tracey Childs has been managing different projects for retention.
* A council of twenty people was formed composed of faculty, students and board members. The council meets twice a semester to help promote and work on projects for retention. They then assess these projects. Meg Smith and Billy Kavula serve on this committee so can update the Student Success Council after meetings.
* The council set up for retention decided to adopt a theory for retention based on Tinto’s theory.
* The theory states that there are four conditions for success.
  1. Setting high and clear expectations
  2. Providing support
  3. Providing early and frequent assessment opportunities
* The efforts the school is making have to do with one or more of the conditions.
* The council has been looking at different surveys and student responses. They are focusing on what makes students stay rather than what makes them leave.
* The school needs total campus participation and institutional support.
* The stakeholders prioritized three different strategies to focus on:

1. **Modify advising for undecided students and strengthen training for advisors**
2. **Work on developing early alert programs; reach out to students who may be thinking about leaving but are not necessarily in a crisis**
3. **Financial aid models focused on retaining students**

* The next step is to commission different working areas to research and layout a plan to move forward.
* The idea of having coaches for first year students has been thrown around. Every student at the point of deposit would have a coach through graduation. It would be a contact person other than their advisor.
* Who would be a coach? (Billy Kavula’s question)
  + Academic services may be restructured, but it would be a professional staff member not a student. We still don’t know for sure how it would work.
* At the board meeting, they talked about making sure there is someone on campus who is in charge of retention communication and making sure efforts are being made.
* Retention is student driven and we want students to have a fulfilling experience. The Student Success Council can give input about retention to Billy and Meg who attend the stakeholder’s meetings and know what is going on.
* Matthew Keller: Is there a way we can make summer classes more affordable? This may help students finish in four years.
* At one time, housing was free for students taking summer classes. This has changed and so enrollment in summer classes has declined.
* Lori Aultman: It has been shown that retention is higher when students are able to take classes on campus.
* Natalie Finnorn: Is exit counseling available to students who leave Spring Hill?
* Exit counseling is available and the process is being streamlined. The school is making it so it will be on a computer, and students can do it in the office before they leave.
* Matthew Keller: Is there a way we can improve the communication between departments or implement a universal calendar?
* Spring Hill should have an application with a menu, calendar and contact sheet to make it easier for students and faculty to communicate and find out what is happening on campus.
* BadgerWeb needs to be made easier to navigate.
* Online presence needs to be addressed since students are in to technology.
* Dr. Culberson: Having a coach would be really great because it would allow them to help student with career advice such as when they need to change their major. It would be easier for a coach to talk to them about maybe taking a different path other than medical school if they don’t have the grades.
* Meg Smith: I have seen the progress that Tracey has made as many services have been consolidated. I think we are going to see changes with retention.
* Matthew Keller: I think career services is a big issue for a lot of students.
* Tracey Childs: Career services is right behind retention as a point of focus and for what is to come.
* Also we are focused on retention during the first and second years because these are the most important periods where students are most likely to leave. After the second year of college, most students feel a connection to the college and are more likely to stay.
* Meg Smith: I think different strategies should be kept in mind because some students are having a harder time and are at risk for failing while other are not having an issue and can therefore be challenged more.
* Matthew Keller: I think keeping students entertained on campus the first two years is important. I feel like there are a lot of redundancies in campus organizations and clubs that could be consolidated. Also, CPB needs to be examined because they get the largest portion of the budget, and students are not that satisfied with it. I also run into a lot of issues when trying to plan events and stuff like that because of the communication issue. If that could be improved, it may help these organizations plan events.