

TO: Janet Wilson, Faculty Senate President  
FROM: Robert Parrent, Vice President for Enrollment Management  
DATE: November 15, 2011  
SUBJECT: Retention Committee Annual Report

The charge for the Retention Committee is to serve as an advisory group to the president regarding retention issues. More specifically, the committee is charged with researching retention issues nationally and on campus informing the president of key issues, and making recommendation regarding possible response options to the issues. The first meeting of the semester was October 28, 2011. Minutes from the meeting are included below.

Retention Committee

October 28, 2011

MINUTES

Members in attendance: Robert Parrent (Chair), Elaine Corum, Balraj Menon, Penny Hatfield, Phil Frana, Rick McCollum, Amber Hall (for Meliisa Goff) and Andy Winkelman (for Hank Phelps).

Absent members: Billy Smith, Ernest Ness, Jack Gillean, Kendra Regehr, Monika Alson-Miller, Lisa Daniels, Jesse Butler

Guests: Julia Winden Fey, Suzanne Massey

It was decided the committee would meet once per month. This day and time is convenient for all members that were present.

Dr. Parrent read the "charge" for the Retention Committee. He further added that the charge may be changed to something more direct and metrically driven.

1. SEMWorks

Dr. Parrent summarized the Strategic Enrollment Management audit performed in August by the consulting firm of SEMWorks. The audit results were presented in September via webinar to the SPARC Committee and the Executive Staff. UCA has plans to partner with a consulting firm to further develop and implement Enrollment Management Goal Setting and Customer Relationship Management. These are efforts to improve student retention and recruitment.

2. First 90 Days Initiative

The Division of Enrollment Management worked with Ronnie Williams and his departments to welcome students and help them connect with the university. Welcome tents were located across campus to assist students with questions. Cookies and drinks were provided. Campus maps, game schedules and lists of FAQs were distributed. A similar second program, called January Jumpstart is planned for the spring semester.

3. BearsCare Phone Call Program

During the last week of September volunteers from both faculty and staff made friendly phone calls to the parents of newly entering / traditional freshman students. The volunteers were able to make contact with over 73% of the parents. The overwhelming response from the parents was one of appreciation and pleasant surprise. Follow up phone calls were given within 48 hours to any parent that had specific concerns or additional questions.

4. Calling New Cubs Phone Call Campaign

During the second week of October the Office of Enrollment Management rolled out another retention effort via a second phone call campaign. These calls were made by upperclassmen students to freshmen students. The purpose of the call was to determine if freshmen are connecting and getting involved on campus and to also ensure the freshmen are visiting with their academic advisors so they will be prepared to register for the spring semester. The student volunteers were able to connect with over 61% of all freshmen students. Students that were identified as being "at risk" for leaving UCA were contacted further by advisors and in some cases, Resident Masters, if they lived in a residential college.

5. Retention Report

Retention statistics compiled by the IR Department were distributed to all committee members. Retention rates fluctuated between 69% - 73% for the past five years. Members were asked to email Amber Hall with requests on how to further dissect the information.

6. EBI Mapworks and Grades First

Grades First is already being utilized by the athletics division. This program enables advisors to use multiple modes of communication with students. EBI Mapworks is an on line survey sent to students within the first three weeks of school. Local norm results are compared with national norms to identify and correct student behaviors that could interfere with academic success. Committee members were asked if they thought taking attendance in class is important and if pre-tests are important. Members agreed that both items are important.

7. Exit / Withdrawal Survey

Dr. Parrent distributed a draft of the survey compiled by Dr. Roden. Members were asked to share the survey with their colleagues and to determine (1.) how the form might be improved (2.) is it the right form and (3.) the who, what, when, where and whys of using the form. Phil Frana mentioned that a similar form, although a bit more complicated, was submitted last year for approval / implementation.

Dr. Parrent suggested a Retention Survey to poll students asking "why did you stay"? This could enable UCA to create the "right student profile" so we could recruit more of the same.

8. Academic Advising

Members were asked to obtain from their Deans and Department Chairs the academic advising strategy employed within their colleges as it relates to retention. They need to assess if the process can be improved.

9. Other

- Rick McCollum discussed the Six Week Challenge designed to engage students and get them out on campus.
- The next meeting is scheduled for FRIDAY, November 18, 2011 at 11am.

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Additional retention activities this semester:

1. Fall Group Advising Sessions

The Academic Advising Center piloted a new program during the 2011 summer registration for all new students. Each student was booked into a group advising session during the middle of September. The group advising sessions were designed to assist student transition from high school to UCA by explaining UCA academic policy and teaching the learning objectives outlined in the Academic Advising Syllabus. All University College students received this same information when their advisors visited their UNIV 1100 class.

Items covered during these sessions include, but was not limited to:

- UCA's academic advising requirement
- The importance of a syllabus
- Advising learning objectives
- How to decipher a course number
- When & how to drop a class
- Calculating GPA
- UCA Grade Forgiveness policy
- Academic integrity
- Student Resources in myUCA
- Undergraduate Bulletin and PCP information
- How to check pre-requisites
- How to make an advising appointment
- Understanding learning style and study skills
- Group sessions were lead by each Academic Advising Center advisor, including the faculty advisors from each college. Jessica Dulac and Berdie Eubank presented for the students declaring a major in the College of Health & Behavior Sciences. Whenever possible, students were assigned to a group session with their freshman year advisor.

Results for UCA Student Group Sessions:

1136 appointments were scheduled

563 students attended for a total of 49.56%

Although just shy of 50% attendance does not sound good, the Advising Staff believes this is excellent turn out for a new program. Results of this program which cannot be measured includes the fact that the advising appointments are mostly booked during early October, when this type of activity usually does not happen until early November.

2. Academic Blitzkrieg

The first full week of fall classes was declared "Academic Blitzkrieg Week" and 44 faculty associates from Residential Colleges, CLA, CNSM, CHBS, and CFAC participated by each conducting an intensive class/discipline-specific workshops on how to succeed in his/her specific course and by providing strategies to increase student comprehension. The second "Academic Blitzkrieg Week" was held after mid-term grades were reported in mid-October. Students were identified by Residential Masters and Academic Advisors as being "at risk" for failing a class or showing academic distress. The students were encouraged to take advantage of tutoring services and to attend evening academic workshops.

Retention plans for next semester and the following year:

1. January Jump Start

This is another initiative designed to mirror the success of this past fall's Welcome Week activities. Our plan is to have welcome tables set up inside the College of Business, Mashburn, Thompson Hall, and the Lewis Science Center during the first week of classes for the Spring 2012 semester. Faculty and staff "welcome back" the students by providing them with refreshments, directions, instructions and any other needed information to make their return to campus a warm and welcoming experience.

2. Academic Advising

We have begun and continue to work with the College Deans and Department Chairs on their academic advising strategies employed within their colleges as it pertains to retention. This committee will study enrollment patterns and institutional processes which influence student persistence and graduation.

3. Recommendation for EBI Mapworks & Grades First

With the interest and support of the Retention Committee, the recommendation to purchase EBI Mapworks and GradesFirst was forwarded to the Strategic Budget Advisory Committee on November 11, 2011

4. Exit / Withdrawal Survey

In the previous year a draft of this survey was created however, it was determined to be a little complex by the Executive Staff and needed revision. This committee is looking at the next invention of this tool.