AQIP Retention Team
Meeting Notes
January 22, 2014

Attending:
  Cheryl Bassett  Steve Robinson
  Janis Block  Lynn Wandrey
  Mike Cieslinski  Pat Ward
  Mara Fulmer  Kirk Yaros

Absent:
  Troy Boquette  Gail VanEtten
  Bernie Cunningham  Emily Varney
  Dan Thomas

Guest: Bruce Dutra

Meeting began with review of project charter and specifically, the goal and definition of retention in the charter. Charter Goal Statement: “Increase graduation and successful goal completion using existing data, research, term based and long range strategies.”

Kirk and Mike directed discussion so the group could begin fleshing out the categories within the two distinct groups identified as probable recommendations to the Executive Cabinet (EC).
  1. Student Experience and Cohort/Learning Groups
  2. Technology/Policy

Following is discussion and/or questions raised concerning those topics:

Student Experience and Cohort/Learning Groups

- **Ombudsman/Representative Advocate**
  - Serve as “single point of contact” for students.
  - Person/office would be neutral party who could address issues or direct student to the person/office who can best help with problem (counselor, etc.)
  - Discussion of name: what does ombudsman mean? Is there a better name?
  - Would this person/office be a point of contact for students before or after problems occur? Hopefully before problems become big.
  - Need to specify how this addresses the charter problem/goal.

- **Reward System**
  - This topic has not been fleshed out in how it would work/what it would be.
  - Isn’t obtaining a degree the reward?

- **First Year Experience** – there is work going on with this idea in Counseling
  - Needs to be fleshed out with program related suggestions
  - Steve noted that Achieving the Dream (AtD) has a database of initiatives related to this topic. Information can also be found for similar projects on the AQIP action project directory. ([http://www.ncahlc.org/AQIP-Action-Project-Directory/aqip-action-projects.html](http://www.ncahlc.org/AQIP-Action-Project-Directory/aqip-action-projects.html))
  - A program specific module could be offered as part of first year experience; Cohorts could be formed from these.
- This might be helpful in directing students out of/into programs based on what they learn in the module (e.g., students who don’t like blood—steer away from pursuing the nursing program, or students learning that because they like playing video games doesn’t mean they are suited to developing them).
- What is the difference between a “College Survival Skills” course and “1st year experience” course?
- Would course be required for incoming freshmen? What about transfer students?
- Would student have to pay for course and would financial aid be available?
- Expansion of orientation? Steve discussed Al Perry’s expanded orientation for student athletes and its success—longer; interactive; active learning

- **Cohort Learning Groups**
  - Cohorts could be formed based on the program specific modules from first year experience
  - Cohorts based on interest, for students not in specific programs

- **Mentors/Peer Tutors**
  - Suggest not using “Peer Tutors” as that is a paid position through the Learning Center
  - How would they be identified? Possibly come from “senior level” students
  - Motivation—give some type of award/recognition for students who have served in capacity (such as pin, notation in graduation program, etc.)
  - Possible overlap with role of Ombudsman, but this could be positive.
  - Might be a natural fit for mentors/peer tutors to work under direction of Ombudsman
  - Help/encourage students dealing with stress, life issues. Be source to direct students to Ombudsman’s office or Counseling for problems.
  - Someone to talk to who are not faculty or paid staff.

**Technology/Policy**

- **Priority Registration**
  - This would be a reward!
  - Need to investigate if and how other community colleges implement.
  - How big a problem is there that students are getting locked out of classes they need for graduation? Cheryl noted that in the past there have been “pockets” of classes where this is an issue due to class size and degree requirements/offers.
  - Would students be given priority based on credits attained or how close they are to degree completion?
    - Mara noted that in (a school or schools?) in California priority reg backfired as priority spots were taken by students not on a degree path but with high credits due to “enrichment classes.”
  - A great deal of care would need to be used in setting up priority registration.
  - Popular idea, but with implementation difficulties.
  - Steve noted that while this proposed policy recommendation would have a huge impact on current registration policies, which does not mean it should **not** be recommended to the EC. It isn’t the team’s role to work out how it would/should happen.

- **Financial Dashboard – graphical interface**
  - A concept with lots of ideas for how it could be used:
    - Financial Aid “gas gauge” – how much $ is left/how many credits needed for degree. Knowing how far you are from a goal can be very motivating.
Completed/Attempted credits
Student/Course Planner - There are several products available. Datatel has a component but it is expensive.

Other Questions/Discussion
Question: Does Mott currently have a program to look at students who've earned degrees but not applied for them? As part of Project Win-Win the Registrar’s Office has been looking at these students and contacting them to proactively award degrees unless the student opts out.

Mott also pursues students who are close to a degree but haven’t completed final course requirements.

There aren’t currently resources available for distribution to faculty/staff that detail this effort. Coordinators should refer students to the registrar’s office for degree audit when they may have earned a degree they haven’t applied for.

Steve encouraged the group as work is winding up, to review the presentations to EC by prior AQIP teams for examples of how recommendations and presentations have been formatted. Presentations/recommendations can be found on the MCC AQIP web page.

Mike and Kirk will begin working to draft the recommendations and will post on shared drive for comments and input and will bring to the next meeting for further discussion.

***I realize there was discussion about auto drop, but I somehow missed recording any specifics about it in my notes.