Summary of Activity: Student Retention Committee

- The committee will coordinate the development of the overall retention plan for undergraduate students at KU.

Members:
James B. Carothers, David Ambler, Alan Cerveny, Ken Stoner, Mary Ann Rasnak, Kathryn Nemeth Tuttle, Justin Mills, Barbara Ballard, Kathleen McCluskey-Fawcett, Robert Page, Michele Eodice, Richard Johnson

In August 2001, Page and Eodice, as co-chairs of the Retention Planning Committee, asked the Student Retention Committee to consider a number of changes in the language to describe committee roles, in the membership, and in the tasks and goals of the committee.

As of Fall 2001, the sub-committees and study group topics:

Academic/Curricular
- Includes oversight of PRE 101, LAS 292, Math 002/101 and other academic components to retention efforts

Living/Learning Communities
- Studied the effectiveness of FIGs; could provide guidance on design and facilitation of FIGs, should these be developed to a greater extent at KU

Recruitment & Retention of Students of Color
- Includes oversight of HawkLink, Diversity in Engineering and other campus programs

Sophomore Programs
- Includes assessment of second year student needs in terms of advisement, special interest groups, etc.

Career & Employment Services Task Force
- Includes designing ways to integrate career pathways activities into overall retention effort

Activities

Recent reports

1. Retention Programs for Students of Color at KU
2. Honors and Mt. Oread Scholars
3. Residential Retention Programs Master Plan
4. PRE 101: Impacts on Retention & Graduation
5. Special Task Force on Career and Employment Services: Career Services Blueprint
6. Standardized Withdrawal Procedures

Consensus
- Agreement that the Student Retention Committee can and should focus on existing and new information from the sub-committees to create concrete goals, to sponsor recommendations directly, and to keep the Provost apprised of efforts related to retention
- Agreement that institutional readiness, a shared responsibility, and a concerted cross-institutional effort will be required for recommendations and implementation of any programmatic efforts
- Agreement that current assessments (within programs and from OIRP) are valuable resources as we move to prioritize issues and ideas
Recommendations of the Committees:

Institutional/cultural recommendations:

1. Adopt an institutional statement that invites all members of the University community to participate fully in the University as a dynamic living and a learning community, with retention as a primary goal.
2. Make a financial commitment to support and provide incentives for retention efforts – to support programs, conduct research and ongoing assessments, and reward examples of extraordinary engagements with students, e.g. expansion of PRE 101 sections; incentives for teaching.
3. Establish a well-funded office under a retention director to ensure the establishment, coordination and continuation of multiple efforts; this person would require institutional support to work to build the multi-disciplinary and cross-organizational connections required for success of multiple retention efforts.
4. Recognize and reward the scholarly efforts of faculty and staff that include personal connections with students; create a climate in which teaching and connecting with students is viewed as scholarship; honor advising; explore the potential of the co-curriculum; provide teaching grants for the development of credit-bearing service learning and research opportunities for undergraduates; cite other examples of connected teaching.

A common conclusion of all reports was that a continued effort by individuals and individual programs is limiting and confusing; a holistic, comprehensive, and more centralized resource – in the form of a retention services office—would better serve the needs of the faculty, students, and staff as they join to focus on student retention.

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<tr>
<th>With a dedicated budget/leadership . . .</th>
<th>Without such support . . .</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ clear statement/message regarding retention would emerge</td>
<td>➢ duplication of services/inefficient referral system</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ coordinate efforts of all retention programs</td>
<td>➢ difficult to make budget decisions</td>
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<td>➢ provide ongoing assessment of programs</td>
<td>➢ mixed messages to parents/public</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ disseminate data for public via web/newsletter</td>
<td>➢ lack of attention to groups with particular needs blocks diversity efforts</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ focus on various cohorts with particular needs</td>
<td>➢ systemic problems are not uncovered</td>
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<td>➢ invite collaborative leadership</td>
<td>➢ Minimal progress toward sustained improvement of retention rates</td>
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<td>➢ revive internal and external interest in the issues of student development</td>
<td>➢ No retention mission + low priority=little incentive to improve</td>
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<td>➢ interface outreach efforts with technology (PeopleSoft)</td>
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