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Scholastic minutes 04/18/2012

Scholastic Committee

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Minutes
Scholastic Committee 2011-12, Meeting #20
April 18, 2012

Present: Michelle Page, chair, Holly Gruntner, Chad Braegelman, Steve Gross, Luciana Ranelli, Peh Ng, Peter Wyckoff, Hilda Ladner, Dennis Stewart, Jennifer Zych-Herrmann, Tammy Berberi, Erin Christensen

Guest: Bryan Herrmann, director of admissions

Absent: Judy Korn, executive staff, Allison Wolf, Dillon McBrady, Clare Dingley

Minutes from April 11 meeting were approved.

Bryan Herrmann presented information to the committee related to the following topics.

- Students flagged for extra advising
- Transfer students
- International students
- Fourth-year math requirement for admission to University campuses

History on students flagged for extra advising (EADV)

In 2004 EADV was called “conditional admit”. We were flagging students whose files suggested special circumstances (a period of academic difficulty, personal/emotional issues, etc.). We saw many students leaving registration with too many courses or a problematic mix of courses, and we had concerns about their success. The goal was to help students start off successfully, taking into account some areas seen in their admissions application or file. The “conditional admit” flag began being placed on the record, and people were using the flag inappropriately—for example, suggesting that students not be readmitted if they had left the University. So the flag was changed to “extra advising” (EADV). An original goal also was to put the student into the academic alert system early, so that if there were issues we could intervene right away. We wanted to ensure that students had the right course load (not too many credits). There was some stigma attached to “conditional admit” that turned off some students—this wasn’t the message we wanted to send.

ACT comparison of EADV-flagged students

There seems to be correlation between EADV and ACT of 17-21; generally these students have high high school ranks or GPAs or speak English as a second language. There is support in the application for an admission decision. Students may also be flagged for disproportionate test scores (really high in one area, low in others) or mismatch between scores and goal (low math scores but want to be pre-med). There may be other private issues that are in the application to alert staff to the benefit of EADV (e.g., friends committing suicide, something causing emotional upset). A primary goal is to help students transition to University smoothly.

EADV retention (fall 2009, 2010, 2011)

Fall 2009 cohort saw approximately 69 percent retention from first to second year, 73.5 percent for fall 2010; the rate from sophomore to junior year was 60.56 percent for the fall 2009 cohort. One committee member notes that this is a lower rate than for the cohort as a whole, and so this subset reduces the overall retention rate. Herrmann points out that one cannot predict retention at the point of admission and the EADV cohorts being evaluated are small, so the percentages are skewed quickly

EADV-GPA comparison

Fall 2009 cohort—the number of sophomores above 2.0 is 44, sophomore average GPA is 2.41; the number of juniors above 2.0 is 39, average junior GPA is 2.53. We do not know the average GPA of the whole sophomore or junior class cohorts for comparison (not in this chart).

Why do we lose students? For academic unpreparedness or other factors? Herrmann says other factors (medical, emotional, etc.) are key; these do affect academics but other risk factors are usually the issue. What is the nature of the early advising EADV students are receiving? (e.g. if they come in with family issues, etc.) The structure has been shifting. Starting fall 2009, these students were registered in separate groups in the first registration session with “master advisers” (though they weren’t called that then); now they are put into the academic alert system right away so they are on the appropriate care team’s radar, and we can be more proactive. One committee member notes the value of both institutional supports and

informal, mentoring supports and systems of care—how can we foster this culture? There is always a question of balance between supporting students and labeling students—we don't want to label students because most will be just fine. There is a tension between labeling and not labeling and our ability to be intrusive without being overly domineering. One way to balance is to have resources available for everyone so it's not "weird" for some students to be encouraged to take advantage of these resources. We don't want the process to be mysterious but do want to reduce or eliminate stigma.

Transfer students

We admit groups for fall and for spring. Data was presented on applications, offers, confirmations, and enrollments. Trends are 65-70 percent of our admitted students enroll. This is not surprising since transfer students are making very intentional and purposeful decisions. There was an application spike in fall 2011 due to a change in the application. We saw a big increase in applications, but we ended up not enrolling the majority of those. It was asked, are we still recruiting domestic transfer students? Yes. We still travel to community colleges, etc. Minnesota State Colleges and University (MNSCU) schools have tightened up relationships with community colleges as feeder schools. They are signing more articulation agreements. Some schools are delivering other schools' curriculum or courses. We do not have articulation agreements, but we do have some transfer guides (begun in 2009). UMM has good customer service, but we are not seen as transfer friendly. Historically, we used to say our emphasis was freshmen and didn't want transfer students. That perception remains, and we are working hard to combat that. Sometimes the issue for transfer students is credits not transferring (from tribal colleges, for instance). Some of that is changing as schools are becoming accredited. We've been working with tribal schools (and other schools) to do more transfer guides.

Inter-University transfer and top feeder schools

We can't recruit aggressively within the University—just as we would not want our students "poached," we will not "poach" others. Enrollments vary from one to twelve students from other University campuses, depending on the semester. Some of our top feeder institutions include Ridgewater, Minnesota State Community and Tech College (in Fergus Falls), Normandale Community College—these have significant numbers. There are several other feeder schools, but they yield smaller numbers. The majority of transfer students come from community colleges, not other four-year institutions. Of our top 10 feeder schools, we have several transfer guides but not for all schools or all programs.

International student enrollments

The proportion of international students to total enrollment varies from 3.6 percent (2008) to 8.49 percent (2011). The primary increase is in degree seeking and transfer students who are international. Retention rates for international students vary—total international student group (new high school [NHS] and new advance standing [NAS] together) retention rate was 79 percent in 2007 and around 90 percent in 2008 and 2009 (first-year to second-year retention). Retention of international students compared to all students is comparable or even slightly higher in some cohorts, but the "n" has been small, so there can be some large variations. (This data was compiled by Pilar Eble, international student program coordinator). There has been somewhat of a drop-off between sophomore and junior year (which mirrors all UMM students).

Four-year math requirement for admissions, high school prep for college

There is no new data from last year. This year, we have started tracking how many students have four years of high school math and what type of math it is (we are allowed discretion in this area and can accept consumer math, math-intensive courses such as physics, statistics, etc.) The requirement goes into full effect 2014. Students who have four years of math have slightly higher retention rates but again "n's" are small, so we will need to continue to track. Data also supports a correlation between four years of math and graduation rates. One committee member pointed out that this might be due to an emphasis currently on math and science (rather than language, for example).

Any charts or slides submitted will be for private committee viewing only and will not be publicly available due to concerns over context for and interpretation of the raw data.