

Drake University Faculty Senate

Admissions and Financial Aid Committee

Minute 12-6-2013

- I. **Members present:** Sandy Henry, Kevin Lam, Andrew Welch, Tom Delahunt, Susan Ladd, Laura Linn, Cody Edwards (for Megan Franklin), Bob Soltis, Kevin Saunders (guest), Bruce Gilbert (guest)
  
- II. Bruce Gilbert (**Cowles Library**) reported on the new presentation practice space that will soon be available to students in the library (first floor). He then gave the Committee a report on the Library's Springer Initiative. Drake now has access to all of Springer's imprints for the 2014-2015 imprint year. This equates to roughly 6000 titles. The titles are available for free as e-books via the library and students / faculty could purchase a hardcopy of each title for no more than \$24.99. This represents a significant cost discount for students (the median price of an introductory environmental science text, for example, is \$80). The library is exploring additional titles. Springer's depth of texts is in the STEM disciplines and the social sciences. The committee discussed this as a very positive step for the University and a tangible way that faculty could pass along cost savings to students. By unanimous consent, **the committee recommended that Bruce be invited to a forthcoming Senate meeting (with a faculty member and perhaps a student that have used the Springer products).**
  
- III. Tom Delahunt gave an update on Admissions. Applications to Drake are up  $\approx$  18%. This puts us ahead of many "peer institutions" including Bradley, DePaul, Valparaiso, Butler, and Evansville. Creighton, Marquette are also up in applications. Denver appears flat. We expect that schools that are "down" will become increasingly dependent on increasing discount rate to land their target EFR classes. This will increase the frequency with which Drake is asked to "match" offers from other schools – a situation that we have avoided for years but probably cannot completely ignore any longer. Additional good news is that the quality of applicants is also up – there are 50 more NAS candidates. These students are sought-after by many other schools and it is hard to discern whether Drake is first-choice among our applicants. Thus, focusing on admitted student programming in the spring will be a big priority for faculty and staff alike.
  
- IV. Kevin Saunders provided another update on his work with regards to predicting success of students at Drake based on both the usual quantitative metrics (high school GPA / ACT score) and some other non-traditional metrics. It's been difficult to find inter-correlations among factors that improve the models we discussed at

the last meeting – how a student does in high school and how they perform on the ACT are the best predictors of EFR GPA – but those two variables explain only about 36% of variation in EFR GPA.

Discussion turned towards predictors of retention. CAAD has also been discussing retention – it appears the following groups of students are retained at percentages below the all-University rate of 87.3%: health science majors, students that did not attend June orientation, commuter students, and African-American students. A large number of non-returnees do not “wash out” academically; they choose to transfer for myriad reasons but many end up at a different 2-year or 4-year school. Involvement in experiential learning also seems to be important for retention, although the data to bear that out need additional analyses. Students appear to be retained when they engage in service learning, research, etc. – things that connect the academic experience to activities beyond the classroom. **The committee discussed the need to work in conjunction with CAAD on issues of retention because this committee can address the faculty piece of the equation better than CAAD. Furthermore, the committee noted that impacts of experiential learning on retention should be studied in greater detail to inform the pending general education curriculum reform.**

- V. Keith Summerville initiated a discussion about the scope of the Committee’s charge. We spend nearly 50% of each hour-long meeting discussing retention and this seems to be an area where faculty have an important role (and thus there is a role for Senate). We also discussed how we can communicate about and offer useful feedback on financial aid decisions without micromanaging the processes used to allocate funds to students (which falls outside the Senate’s purview) . The committee agreed that it would be useful if this committee could synthesize information and report to Senate every November-December about enrollment targets, tactics to meet those targets, and discount rate. Annual, consistent reporting will improve how faculty understand and contribute to their role in the Admissions process. In addition, faculty can have a role as advisors in alerting students to continually work with the Financial Aid office should finances become tight. It might also be useful to have this committee (or its chair) participate each Fall in the Noel-Levitz meeting. Discussions on adding some language to the committee charge that specifically calls out retention issues will be the topic of the January meeting.
- VI. Agenda for January meeting (date forthcoming)
  - a. Report on improvements to transfer student process (this is something we asked for at the November meeting) – Laura Linn
  - b. Continued discussion of the Committee’s charge – Keith Summerville

- c. Report re: admissions numbers – Tom Delahunt
- d. Update on CREW? – invite Melisa K. or William H.?
- e. Anything else for you all – let me know!