

Admissions, Retention & Financial Aid Committee (ARFAC)

Notes/Fall 2017

Prepared by: Nancy Reincke, Chair

Membership:

Through May 2018

Lourdes Gutierrez Najera (A&S)

Kelly Bruhn (SJMC)

Andrea Kjos (CPHS) [chos]

Through May 2019

Nancy Reincke (A&S)

Samantha Becker (Cowles)

Sean Severe (CBPA)

Megan Franklin (CAAD)

Jerry Parker (Dean of Students)

Melissa Sturm-Smith (Associate Provost)

Susan Ladd (Director of Financial Aid)

Anne Kremer (Dean of Admission)

Students:

Caroline Hogan (Junior Public Relations/Writing)

Maegan Valencia (First Year Strategic Political Communications)

Ian Klein (First Year Politics/Economics)

Description

The Committee reviews the admissions and financial aid policies and practices of the University. It shall recommend change in these policies and practices when, in the Committee's judgment, such change is appropriate. Additionally, the committee will collaborate with administration in developing and assessing University-wide retention strategies. The Committee will deliver a report on admission yield, discount rate, and annual retention data to Senate during the Fall semester of each academic year.

September: "Stabilizing Is the New Up"

We met twice in September; the first meeting was organizational and we identified equity and inclusion as a priority for the academic year. The second meeting, Keith, Annie and Susan gave us a "state of recruitment/admissions" overview, including an explanation for why enrollments have been trending down at Drake and our competitors. They outlined their strategies for increasing enrollment for Fall 2018: in a word, "volume!"
Strategies:

a larger buy of names from our search vendor;
Dean's application that is "pre-populated" and essay optional;
information to parents earlier;
enhanced marketing: sending more hard pieces of mail; Facebook live; counsellors on the road for coffee houses and receptions; better branding (fyi: Drake's marketing budget is 40% less than our competition);
on-campus visits tailored to prospective student interests (theme programs);
predictive analytics;
more contact with prospectives during yield season;
training for faculty and staff on recruiting;
increased alumni engagement;
getting athletics involved;
outreach to high school counsellors;
a CRM program (customer relations management technology);
an additional recruiter who will be located in Dallas, TX.

We identified three issues for which ARFAC could be of service in responding to Admissions Office projects: a new transfer student strategy; changes to the National Alumni Scholarship program; international students.

October: Transfer Students 'R (not so much) Us

Between Fall 2012 and Fall 2017, the average number of transfer students enrolling was 133 with a high of 156 (2014) and a low of 101 (2017). For Spring semesters, the average is 47. Goals of 110 for Fall 2018 and 50 for Spring 2019 have been established for the Office of Admissions to reach.

At our October meeting, Annie shared with us the Office of Admission's Transfer Recruitment Strategy document. This document is attached.

Committee members responded positively to the steps outlined in this document. We did, however, wonder how the goals were determined (110 + 50) and if the increased effort needed to reach these goals was worth the relatively small numbers of transfer students that it would yield. Might the already overworked Admissions staff be better off focusing on recruiting first year students? We also wondered what the faculty role should be in this process, especially with articulation agreements, since there are curricular implications for transfer students. We reflected on how the transfer population could contribute to a diverse student body at Drake. Another question to follow up: are there particular majors at Drake that have greater potential than others for drawing transfer students?

November: "Underspending and Overdelivering"

Committee member Sean Severe shared with us a summary of data he analyzed on Drake students from Fall 2010 to Fall 2015. This PowerPoint slideshow is attached. Keith and Susan were present to help us understand the trends and make sense of numbers such as the amount of unmet financial need. Among the topics discussed in relation to the data Sean shared:

the Drake student body is 84% white (+ or - the 2% who don't identify); what is the "tipping point" for a self-sustaining minority population of students? Keith reported that

20% is considered the necessary level and that in 2017 Drake's incoming class was 18% nonwhite;

on average, Drake students lose .5 points on their GPA between high school and their first year of college; this creates a problem with managing the psychological effects for students who experience this "loss" (30% of Drake incoming students have a 4.0 high school GPA);

how can we increase enrollment of low-income students and shift financial aid from merit to need (the maximum Pell Grant award this year is \$5,900)?

Questions about retention led us to asking Melissa Sturm-Smith to present to us at our December meeting, including on the "six noncognitive factors" that influence student success in the first year.

Finally, Annie and Keith reported on changes made this year to the NAS scholarships, including raising the award for participating from \$1,000 to \$3,000 and reducing the number of full-ride scholarships. Annie invited our participation at the NAS events in February and our ideas for how future NAS events can be made more of a celebration of scholarly achievement and less of a competition. The NAS scholarships will be on the agenda for a Spring 2018 meeting. Attached are questions from the chair of the NAS committee, Laura Stoller.