

# Retention Committee Meeting

06 AUG 2020 / 2:00 PM

Attending: P. Sharma; S. Leghld; MJ McIntosh; J. Britt; K. Aulick; S. DeLuca; K. Patterson;

Excused: R. Spurlock; T. Becker; J. Loveless; T. Edwards; C. Hippensteel; R. Roper

Minutes recorded: C. Farnsworth

## Minutes

P. Sharma requested, on behalf of the President, 2 items be moved to the top of the agenda:

Ornt-90 and returning student enrollment strategies to the top of the agenda

Discussion of ORNT 90 involved the following issues:

- Registration HOLDS due to ORNT 90 as an enrollment barrier
- The need for an ORNT 90 course
- The outcomes/goals of the ORNT 90 course
- The issue of students not enrolling in the course during the first semester/the course becoming a barrier to graduation
- Other course structures
- Other ways to meet the outcomes/goals
- Inability of Northern Navigator to accurately reflect whether the course requirement has been met

Many ideas were suggested and discussed:

- P. Sharma shared she has done much research on what other institutions do
- On online checklist/activity based structure was suggested
- Targeting specific student demographics
- Eliminating the course as a graduation requirement
- A 1-day seminar or workshop
- A more robust and intensive NSWE/Orientation
- The ability for advisors to override the requirement if appropriate
- Program-specific sections led by program faculty

Other considerations mentioned were:

- The course as one of the only opportunities for co-curriculars to connect with students (they don't have the built-in course connectivity that instructors do)
- The relationship and connectivity aspects of the course which research shows is central to retention/success
- The need for students to have a robust Bb experience up front to be prepared for their coursework
- The ability to use the course as an advising/registration tool
- The reminder that ORNT 90 HOLDS were not intended to be a barrier, only an indicator

Regarding new student enrollment strategies, much of the discussion centered on HOLDS as a barrier...many observations were made, including:

Faculty and meta-advisors seem to lack information and access regarding HOLDS and how to address them in an efficient manner; there was mention of FERPA concerns

Registration processes still seem to be unclear and inefficient in some regards, many wondered if a better understanding of the processes might lead to opportunities to clarify and simplify the processes

Discussion of the Unmet Requirements Checklist as part of the process and how that's working and/or not working

Some students have multiple HOLDS

With regard to financial holds...might there be a dollar threshold established...so that students with minimal outstanding balances aren't prevented from registering

Eliminating some HOLDS might allow students to register (*anybody through the door...*) but the correlation to success/retention isn't established

Based on discussion, three recommendations were established and shared with the Provost for consideration.

The Retention Committee recommends:

- I. A thorough review of the Registration Process. We recognize the school is currently working with a consultant who is reviewing admissions and enrollment procedures, so we recommend building upon the consultant's work to establish a clear and simple process for registration of new and returning students that is clearly articulated and easily accessed/referenced by students, staff, and faculty as needed; a process that eliminates confusion, redundancy, delays, and any other mitigatable barriers; the development of a strong process-foundation to engender consistency and cohesion; a process that contributes to a more seamless advising experience and encourages more timely registration.
- II. A task force, including co-curricular staff and faculty, be created for the redesign/reinvention of ORNT 90: First-Year Seminar to establish institutional priorities and goals for the student orientation and first-year experience; establish a curriculum and student learning outcomes to meet the goals/priorities identified; ensure the orientation/first-year experience is one part of a broader, more seamless onboarding and transition process for new Northern/college students.
- III. A review of financial HOLD policies/procedures for the possibility of revisions that minimize and/or eliminate, to the extent possible, financial barriers from hindering student retention.

Meeting adjourned.