

# **AtD Student Experience & Retention Team**

## **MINUTES from January 23, 2020**

Attendees: Stacy Ehmen, Tammy Rigglesman, Stephane Potts, Amie Musk, Tom Carey, Nick Catlett, Dawn Nasser, Kellie McBride, Timothy Morgan

### **1. Data Updates from Institutional Effectiveness:**

- **Student Satisfaction Inventory:** The team reviewed the strengths and challenges highlighted by the Fall 2019 survey. Two of the challenges were pertinent to the focus on financial aid (#7 Adequate financial aid is available for most students and #20 Financial Aid Counselors are helpful). After reviewing the data for the items though, DACC scored the same as or higher than the National average. The team also highlighted the strengths of the college in regard to student experience. Tom also reminded us of how the test is administered and, in some cases, the effort that students put into responding which can be less than desired. Overall, the team felt that the SSI did not provide a direction for our next project/activity.
- **KPI Performance Gap Review:** Tom brought a report from Bob on the performance gaps between white students and African American students. The team discussed

### **2. Financial Aid Processes & Communications:**

- a. **Where are we in the process?** At this point, we've completed the following:
  - Mapped the financial aid processes from a Financial Aid Office perspective.
  - Surveyed students on their knowledge of financial aid and DACC's processes. Eighty-six students responded. Takeaways: Overall the results were very favorable. Students are very appreciative of financial aid. Constructive remarks were shared with Financial Aid staff. Ideas to think about: develop informational communications to further assist students with "grey" areas uncovered in the survey.
  - Surveyed faculty and staff on their knowledge of financial aid and basic processes. Sixty-one employees responded (35% faculty, 26% classified staff, 38% administrators). Overall staff was fairly knowledgeable and many had completed the FAFSA (personally or for a family member) within the last 5 years. Areas in need of improvement: Understanding the Drop/Withdrawal policy and dates, understanding the importance of last date of attendance, knowing where students find their award letter and other communications "after" verification. Also several ideas were given for helping students navigate the FSA ID and FAFSA. Faculty and staff asked for financial aid, drop/withdrawal/last date attended information to be reviewed at future in-services.
  - **Student Perspective:** The team reviewed the results of the student survey. Students were asked about their financial aid knowledge and experiences. 85 students completed the survey. Statistics were consistent with percentage of students who receive financial aid. The team also discussed the following items, but Stacy noted that Financial Aid needs to weigh in on all of the ideas:
    - What are we 100% verification?
    - Can the first page of the Financial Aid webpage be more reader friendly? It is a little wordy. Do students get lost? We know the info is necessary, but can it be laid out in a more reader-friendly manner?
    - Per the survey, staff and faculty do not know the webpage.
    - There appears to be a disconnect at the point of verification and award letters. How can we improve this?

- Can appeals be done on a regular basis throughout the year so that students are forced into late-start classes? Our late-start schedule is not appropriate for many majors and it forces students to stop out.
  - Can we share financial aid dates/deadlines with students through faculty by sending out a short/one-liner tidbit every week? The tidbits could be scheduled out and include other offices such as Foundation (scholarship applications are available), Advisement (register now or last day to drop), and Records (apply to graduate now)
  - Does Financial Aid have a paper checklist that they could handout to students before they leave their office? They receive so much information, it might help them finalize the verification process. Or, they can show them the great “checklist” on Self Service. New students, especially, wouldn’t know about it.
- b. Next Step? Finalize a list of recommendations for the Financial Aid and in-service trainings on drop/withdrawal/last date attended.
3. Student Employment Focus:
- A few more items (Guide for Supervisors of Student Workers/Work Studies and website updates for both employee and student information) need to be finalized from the action list. Stacy will get with Nick & Angie.
4. Other Team Focus Items: Based on the data recently presented performance gaps and the need to work on the general atmosphere/aesthetics at the College were two ideas. The team is also open to helping other student experience-oriented teams such as the Diversity Team and Toolbox. We will also continue to review input from the BOSS (Board of Student Scholars) team and Institutional Effectiveness data. Additional items discussed include the following:
- Focus on students who are dropping within the first 10 days/refund period. Can we keep them here?
  - Help recruit Mentors on campus. Different incentives and an appeal to faculty members were ideas discussed.
5. Upcoming Meeting Dates:
- February 13<sup>th</sup> @ 1:30 pm, Laura Lee Room \* Different Date Than Normal
  - March 19<sup>th</sup> @ 1:30 pm, Laura Lee Room
  - April 16<sup>th</sup> @ 1:30 pm, Laura Lee Room
  - May 21<sup>st</sup> @ 1:30 pm, Laura Lee Room