

Undergraduate Academic Affairs Council (UAAC)  
February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012

Attendees: Allen Arthur (Associate Dean, CEAS), Doug Burgess (Registrar), Suzette Combs (Pre-Professional Advising), Gigi Escoe, Vice Provost Undergraduate Affairs (Chair), Adrian Hall (Provost Office), Mare Lewis (Associate Dean, CoB), Greg Metz (FYE & Learning Communities), Caroline Miller (Enrollment Management), Raj Mehta (Honors), Richard Miller (CEAS), Joanna Mitro (Associate Dean, A&S), Marlene Miner (Associate Dean, UCBA), Regina Sapona (Associate Dean, CECH), Tara Warden (A&S and Provost Liaison for Advising)

### Introductions

The Council welcomed two new members. Greg Metz currently works as director of FYE and Learning Communities, and is a member of the Near-Capacity Enrollment subcommittee. Suzette Combs is director of the Pre-Professional Advising Center and co-chair of the **STEMMD** initiative.

### STEMMD

Suzette spoke on Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, Medicine, Diversity (**STEMMD**), a new initiative aimed at increasing the number of underrepresented ethnicity (URE) students who apply, enroll, graduate, and gain admission to competitive graduate and professional programs in medicine and health sciences. A full narrative will be made available (on the council's Bb site). About 20 students will begin with the summer bridge program coordinated by E3, and follow this with academic support services throughout the year, focused upon activities with CoM.

In its first year, the program would serve as a yield tool, as communications with students will begin too late in the admissions process. This "pilot" year will serve as a basis for an ongoing program to become a recruitment tool.

Gigi and other **STEMMD** committee members have submitted funding requests and explore funding options. The external grants currently funding E3, as well as the McNair program, are potentially in danger given the current funding environment and length of time they have already been supported. Given the risk associated with reliance on these external funding sources, programs supporting URE students in STEM disciplines are critically important.

### "Killer" Courses

Gigi and Greg spoke on courses with high rates of D, W, or F, or so-called "killer courses". When large percentages of the enrolled students in particular classes are not successful, this causes a variety of serious problems. Students can fall out of step with the requirements of a curriculum, are less likely to remain enrolled and graduate, face negative impacts on federal aid eligibility, etc.

Joanna and others pointed out that some math courses have only a 50% success rate. Allen and Richard in CEAS pointed out that they were considering a change to their curriculum in advertising a pre-requisite course to Calculus I, rather than to assume all students would begin with Calculus I. While students could continue to begin with Calc I by testing out of the pre-requisite course, those students needing the pre-requisite might not feel as far behind or stigmatized.

The group agreed that there is not a single cause for why large numbers of students struggle in particular courses, but that many different factors could cause a particular class to have a low success rate. Some of the main factors are:

- a) students might lack academic preparedness for the rigor of the course

- b) the academic content might simply be very challenging for people to grasp in general
- c) the students might simply lack motivation and appropriate work ethic
- d) there might be a problem with a particular instructor who is not teaching effectively

In discussion of different strategies that could help prevent, but also respond to the problem, one topic came up having to do with the promotion and tenure process. Dr. Richard Miller in CEAS highlighted the fact that a professor's good teaching is not as highly valued a factor in the promotion / tenure process as would perhaps be ideal to ensure quality instruction. In short, good teaching should result in better rewards. To follow up, the group spoke about approaching John Bryan and perhaps others for more discussion and consideration.

#### UC Forward

Gigi gave an update on UC Forward. UC Forward is still a somewhat new initiative, and is growing. It takes many different forms primarily in either particular courses, or in certificate programs. UC Forward experiences focus upon collaboration across disciplines, in either courses co-taught by professors from different areas, or in certificate programs requiring courses from a range of areas. Courses focus on problem-solving in real-world situations, often with community partners in forms of experiential learning.

A recent call for funding requests to support UC Forward courses produced 17 proposals, which will be reviewed for approximately 8 to receive funding, with selections around the end of April. UC Forward courses are co-taught by a primary faculty member and a co-instructor, and the Provost Office would provide support for the co-instructor.

#### eCurriculum Data Model

Adrian provided a quick update to say that the eCurriculum data model is available to BI/Query users. This data model allows for ad hoc queries to gather data stored in different places on the eCurriculum system, either on C-1's or P-1's. Users with a need to run this type of report can request access by contacting Adrian.

#### Pre-Requisites

Adrian and Doug spoke about concerns having to do with pre-requisite functionality for semester courses. A report of all semester course pre-requisites shows that many have been set up using incorrect logic statements. Another general concern is that the volume of existing pre-requisites is very large, which will limit students' options in perhaps unpredictable ways, potentially creating unforeseen bottlenecks. Lastly, the only way to override a pre-requisite and grant a student individual permission to enroll (while preserving the course's pre-requisite overall), is to use a particular UniverSIS function. Course professors might assume that they can make exceptions to their pre-requisites with a signed add slip, but this is not in fact the case. Many students will become dissatisfied if referred to multiple offices in an effort to add the course. Everyone is encouraged to raise awareness, and associate deans will coordinate within their colleges to review pre-requisites and correct mistakes.

Minutes: Adrian Hall