

## **Minutes of the Student Academic Development and Achievement Committee October 25, 2012**

**Attending:** Sandra Wildfeuer, David Maxwell, Andrea Schmidt, Cindy Hardy, Dana Greci, Sarah Stanley, Gabrielle Russell, John Creed.

**Visiting:** Will Updegrove, Jennifer Tillbury, Desiree Simons, Provost Susan Henrichs

After a brief check-in on the Learning Commons, the Brown Bag subcommittee, GERC, and Accuplacer Alignment, the bulk of the meeting was devoted to a conversation with Provost Henrichs about President Gamble's concerns with "remedial" education. These minutes summarize the highlights of the conversation.

President Gamble has stated that remedial education doesn't help students graduate. As part of his Strategic Directions Initiative, he has called for a comprehensive examination of Developmental Education to make decisions on whether the resources spent are appropriate.

Provost Henrichs stated that this challenges us to do a couple of things. One is already being done by the Dept. of Developmental Education with the NADE study on the impact of developmental education on the success of UAF students. She suggests that, beyond the information in this study, we need to gather data on the 6-year graduation rates of students who have taken Developmental Ed classes. She notes that statewide these graduation rates are well below those who don't take developmental ed. However, she notes that at UAF the graduation rates of developmental ed students are only 10% lower than non Dev Ed students and that UAF graduation rates overall are better than UAA or UAS.

She noted that UA has a more permissive admission standard than peer institutions. She expects that our graduation rates will go up once we've passed six years from the point when we raised admission standards for the Bachelor's.

She made the following suggestions for action in response to the President's concerns:

First, continue to get data on what's happening to our DevEd students.

Second, try different approaches to developmental classes. She's not suggesting that we throw out current approaches, but encouraging us to see if there are other approaches that work better.

Two suggestions she made are to try accelerated learning approaches where a Developmental class parallels an academic class. She notes that research supports this method.

Another strategy she suggested is bridging programs such as the Math Bridge.

She encouraged faculty to give a whole-hearted effort, and noted that everyone has the desire to see students succeed.

Discussion followed, with the following points and questions:

*--How does this concern fit with the GERC process?*

SH: It's unlikely that the core revision will do away with a computation requirement and there will continue to be a Freshman composition requirement. We may need to make modifications to our program in a couple of years, but she anticipates that the GERC process may go on for many years. She noted that

the BOR and Gamble are discussing making Gen. Ed. requirements uniform across the UA system, such as with uniform course numbers. This will make the GERC process take longer.

*--We noted the recent Accuplacer English Alignment Community of Practice meeting in which all three MAUs agreed to adopt a new set of standard cut scores for ENGL 111X and DEVE classes.*

*--We discussed how to implement Accelerated Learning classes.*

We raised the question of classroom space if we try to run classes on the accelerated learning model in the fall. The way Baltimore does this is to hold classes in a computer classroom or lab. They also use longer periods of instruction. SH noted that once we get out of the standard class hour in scheduling classes, it impacts other classes. This is easier to do if it's not mid-day. She suggested that the registrar may be OK with non-traditional blocks if they are notified by fall.

We noted that students want to take classes during the day, and asked if there is a building where we can create a computer writing lab. SH suggested laptop carts. We noted that CTC has computer classrooms. SH noted that there have been discussions about adding computer classrooms to the Library Space (part of the Learning Commons proposal) but that this involves construction. She noted that, once the Life Sciences building opens in Fall 2013, there will be some major moves. It will take a year for the dust to settle. There is also construction of the new Engineering Building, but that will involve taking some of Bunnell off line while this is being completed. She suggested that the first opportunity for dedicated writing classrooms will be in 2015.

We raised the question of the feasibility of changing the DEV designator to be in line with ENGL or MATH. We discussed the history of the DEV designator; these classes were changed from MATH and ENGL designators in 1990.

*--We raised the question of whether there was talk of separating DEV Ed students from the four-year degrees and placing them in AAS or Certificate programs.*

SH: Dana Thomas has proposed this model where we would direct only students who might succeed in a Baccalaureate program to DEV classes, and direct others to the AA/AAS path. We noted that, in Alaska, only 30% of the population has an AA degree or higher. To raise the bar for everyone, we need to address students who are coming to us where they are coming to us. Although we have raised K-12 standards in AK, it will take four years before we see these students at UAF. By tracking students into lower degrees, we don't raise expectations for our students overall. SH noted that the percentage of Alaskan HS students entering college is lower than the percentage of adults with higher ed degrees in the population as a whole. She added that among the options for students would be to work toward the AA. This "tracking" is not necessarily about blocking students from BA/BS degrees, but is about pointing out options. She further noted that, regardless of test scores, a HS B average predicts success in higher ed, and indicates a student who is well organized and completes work.

*--We asked if Pres. Gamble has asked for an examination of Developmental Ed.*

SH: He's implemented this, looking at statewide statistics on Developmental Ed. This is in parallel to the Strategic Directions Initiative (SDI), and he has commissioned a study of Developmental Ed grad rates, among other items. In the listening sessions he raised question about Developmental Ed: what it does, how it does it, and what needs to be changed. He raised questions about reducing the need for Developmental Ed by better coordination with high schools.

*--We asked where this leaves non-traditional students.*

SH: Gamble doesn't speak to that. We need to provide opportunities for non-traditional students; people without HS diplomas can come to UA and will need DevEd in the future. We want to offer them the best form of DevEd that we can.

She agreed that it's common for students to take DEVM 105 instead of freshman math and that it's common for students to enter UAF after a break having forgotten math.

*--We asked about funding or grants to support changes in Dev Ed.*

SH: We need to look at things that won't cost more money. Gamble wants to spend less money, not more. However, she noted that no administrator is opposed to grant funding. If we identify sources of funding, she can target grant writers to develop proposals. We encouraged her to think about funding DevEd as an investment in students. SH suggested that there is support for a model that's dramatically effective and small in cost.

*--We noted that the President wants to put less money into DevEd, but our data shows that students are doing well with DevEd. Is reducing funds going to take away opportunities for students?*

SH: He's expressed what he wants, but the MAUs develop their own budgets. She noted that he can be persuaded by evidence, not verbal arguments. Her goals are:

Trying some experiments,

Telling Gamble that we are responding by "taking his message to heart,"

Developing an answer to his question of what's the best way to do Developmental Ed.

**Other business:** We concluded the meeting by touching base on some SADA business:

How to get advisor contacts for students listed on UAOnline,

The suggestion that we invite Alex Fitts to a later meeting,

An update on the Learning Commons meeting with the Library dean, and a need to review our original proposal and make a new one to the Library,

An agreement to list SADA as a sponsor on the upcoming Wounded Warrior Brown Bag,

A heads up on the Accuplacer Alignment recommended DEVE/ENGL placement changes,

An update on the GERC committee.

We will take most of these up at our next meeting, November 15.