Provost’s Undergraduate Student Advisory Board
February 21, 2020 meeting

Student members in attendance were given the draft report template responses from the four Task Groups and asked to read through them and respond to the following guided prompts in writing.

Academic Support

- Top 3 most exciting/promising ideas/concepts/recommendations:
  - Removing institutional barriers – aware more of other schools (II)
  - Staffing numbers – hard to get same-week appointments
  - Emphasis on mental health – very limited mental health resources currently (II)
  - The restructuring of academic support resources can be very beneficial.
  - I also think standards for advising/consistency throughout the colleges are very promising.
  - Professional development
  - Centralized student support resources and spaces (III)
  - Consistency across colleges (II)
  - More collaboration between college advisors and career center
  - More qualified advisors
  - Faculty advising lectures (optional)
  - Advising infrastructure/required advising

- 3 gaps/potential pitfalls:
  - Ineffective data use (II)
  - Unfulfilled promises
  - Data privacy concerns (II)
  - All of the ideas are promising but not easy. I want to know more specifics and the “how.”
  - Follow-through by administration
  - Pushback from departments
  - Lack of initiative
  - Identifying students and figuring out why/how to help
  - Increased staffing: Quality over quantity
  - Greater emphasis on mental health: Follow through with access
  - Removing institutional barriers: Don’t have to remove 100%. Just make less strict, more accessible.

Overall, if you were in charge, what is the one thing you would implement (discussion):

- Staffing numbers for academic support – increase number of qualified advisors
- Triage/students’ health & wellness
- A website or something centralized to know what resources are available to students; no one on campus has a good idea of what all is available
- Required advising for students/establishing a 4-year plan
- Focus on overall student wellness; many of the health resources on campus aren’t viewed in a positive light (e.g. Mc-kill-me)
- Include self-promotion/an area where you can go to ensure you know how to proceed after graduation; something to help juniors and seniors feel more prepared for life after Illinois
Additional notes from discussion relevant to Academic Support:

Mentorship model: The older students/seniors I met when I first started helped me select classes and served as a role model for where I want to be. The best model would be a foundational course with mentors and an instructor. Students can learn how to dissect problems and learn how to think.

Phys 211: learning assistant – essentially a mentorship position for students in Physics

AHS intro course: the course would have benefitted from the student/mentor perspective; a mentorship class could help students who may not have gotten as involved earlier on in their experience

Co-curricular Experience

- Top 3 most exciting/promising ideas/concepts/recommendations:
  - Mental health as top priority
  - Finances because people simply don’t have the financial means sometimes (II)
  - Access to information – there’s a lot of info out there but it’s scattered
  - All of the emerging priorities (listed on the template) are super exciting to hear. Top is mental health, belonging/community/inclusiveness, and campus resources.
  - Career development (establish what it means to be ready)
  - Inclusiveness (24-hour helpline)
  - Mental health/well-being
  - Introduction to campus life (1-to-1 with current students for new (students))
  - Promotion of a flyer with all activities on campus
  - Awareness of community (Champaign-Urbana) needs
  - Centralized plan for students to navigate co-curricular offerings and university at large
  - Establish what it means to be career ready
  - Embedded counselors
  - Improve students sense of being accepted
  - Enhance access to resources

- 3 gaps/potential pitfalls:
  - Career leadership model might prove ineffective
  - HOW do you plan on reducing (cost)? Should have ideas (II)
  - Need data to implement the addition of trained professionals for advocate in mental health
  - International students are having a hard time finding jobs – need to focus on them
  - Follow through by administration
  - Pushback from departments
  - Lack of initiative
  - What is Kognito?

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Include self-promotion/an area where you can go to ensure you know how to proceed after graduation; something to help juniors and seniors feel more prepared for life after Illinois

First-Year Experience

Top 3 most exciting/promising ideas/concepts/recommendations:
- Better orientation program for new students during move-in!
- Campus-wide initiative focused on student wellness
- Reviewing academic depts. to make sure there’s equity and inclusion
- Introduction to campus life (how to)
- Plan for pursuing an area of study
- Mentorship and innovation (cultivation of a strong mindset)
- Provide ongoing training for faculty on how to best support FY students
- Designate central resources for FYE Center
- Develop 4-year plan for each major
- Single LMS for courses
- Co-curricular transcript

3 gaps/potential pitfalls:
- Lots of information and resources scattered (need one single site)
- Ensuring students understand advising is important, but an ICT could mean a completely different advising experience. Make it more similar throughout or make sure FYs understand how it can change in colleges.
- Follow-through by administration
- Pushback from depts.
- Lack of initiative
- “Paying the bill” – not a good message but this is reality. Focus on making school more affordable.
- Needs to be continuation of valuable experiences like first-year throughout the 4 years, not just 1st
- Single LMS for courses means professors must be on board/earn new LMS.
- RE: developing 4-year plans for each major – include career paths
- Simplification of ICT process should still require an advisor meeting to discuss options and timeline

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Additional notes from discussion relevant to FYE:

It’s important for students to feel like this is the right place/institution for them within their first couple of weeks on campus.

**Foundational Courses**

- **Top 3 most exciting/promising ideas/concepts/recommendations:**
  - All ideas are really great and would’ve made a difference for me as a first year.
  - Need a mentorship/innovation hybrid course within each college (start w/ AHS, LAS, ENGR, BUS, and ACES)
  - Reduce conflicts with required course meeting
  - Identify problem/roadblock courses
  - Enable student success

- **3 gaps/potential pitfalls:**
  - Weed-out classes
  - (Students need) more of a feel about the course before 2nd week
  - For problem/roadblock courses: Go big and have them restructured! “Weed out” classes discourage FYs and contribute to feeling out of place/shameful. Instead of just “warning” students, warn bad instructors!
  - Instructors/departments need to stop setting Bell curve for grading
  - Follow-through by administration
  - Pushback from departments
  - Lack of initiative
  - In enabling student success, one size does not fit all
  - In identifying problem/roadblock courses, should have a place where students can report struggle
  - Regarding reducing conflicts with required courses, some classes have only one section

- **What factors help students succeed in large, introductory courses? What are some barriers?**
  - Helpful – fill in books to help keep up and note important info! So helpful!
  - Barriers – Professors who belittle/are unapproachable
  - Helpful-Resources from other students
  - Helpful-Positive outlook
  - Helpful- Review sessions with professors, recorded lectures available online, practice tests and quizzes with answers.
  - Barriers-one professor for class of 1,000. Not much one on one time.
  - Helpful- Knowing what to expect from exams
  - Barrier-Getting lost in the crowd

- **What practices, initiatives, or actions, within the course or beyond the course, could be implemented to help ensure that every student is given the chance/opportunity to succeed in these courses?**
  - Continue with I-clicker to encourage attendance. Encouraging office hours. Have a place where students can share/like questions they’re too afraid to ask.
  - Stop trying to set a bell curve.
- Teach, don’t make it a point game.
- Let students know of intro courses like CHEM 101 or MATH 115 that are good to start off in.
- Lots of office hours, tutoring, practice tests, review sessions.

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Additional notes from discussion relevant to Foundational Courses:

In Chem 104 for instance, the test average was a 60; I scored higher than that but I put a lot of time into studying because that’s not my strongest subject. First year students may not be used to prioritizing certain courses and don’t know how to manage their time, prioritize studying for one subject over another, attend office hours

Intro courses (e.g. calc, physics) often send a message that students prioritize points over learning. These courses are set up on a points system; “stop trying to set a bell curve” – perhaps we can think of a way to show the rigor of our courses without depending on “a points game”

The university could adopt an “open arms” philosophy where they are willing to help students no matter where they are when they enroll

Math 115 & Calc 1: students sometimes do not start off in the right courses because of the pressure to graduate. It would also be helpful if profs share what other adjacent/similar courses will be covering so students have a better understanding of their options

IB 150 & MCB 150: Intro courses can provide a “fill-in book” because it makes it easier to study and follow along in class. It can be difficult to follow lecture/take notes during MCB; Stat 100 has a guided notebook, for example; Org. Chem – incomplete notes; some examples include practice test; can be difficult to know what to focus on; guided notes can help students get back on track if the get behind/lost

If you were in charge, what would you implement?

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