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Undergraduate Council Minutes of Meeting March 2, 2010

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The University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Undergraduate Council
Minutes of Meeting
March 2, 2010
2:00pm – Room 223-224 – University Center

MEMBERS PRESENT: Don Clark, Chuck Collins, Don Cox, Rebekah Page (for Steve Dandaneau), Jeff Fairbrother, Tom George, George Hoemann, Greg Kaplan, John Koontz (Vice Chair/Chair Elect), Mike Kotowski, Jeff Mellor, Mark Moon, John Mount, Alex Mullins, Fred Pierce, Chris Pionke, Gary Ramsey, Harold Roth, Matthew Theriot, Dixie Thompson (Chair)

OTHER ATTENDEES: Fadia Alvic, Monique Anderson, Richard Bayer, Eric Brey, Sarah DeYoung, Sally McMillan

The meeting was called to order at 2:00pm by Dixie Thompson, Chair.

The minutes of the [February 2, 2010](#), meeting of the Undergraduate Council were approved.

Committee Reports

- Academic Policy (Billone)—NO REPORT
- Advising (Darling)—see pages [U1734-U1738](#)
- Appeals (Park)—NO REPORT
- Curriculum (Theriot)—NO REPORT
- General Education(Collins)—see page [U1739](#)

Sally McMillan noted that she will be meeting with THEC and TBR representatives on Friday to discuss implementation of the new general education policy.

Dixie Thompson encouraged members to participate in Vol Vision, a series of meetings/discussions where faculty, staff, and students may provide input on a campus strategic plan. More information is available through the Provost's Office at: <http://provost.utk.edu/>.

The Council discussed changing the regular meeting time (2:00pm) to reduce class conflicts and to provide more opportunities for participation. The Council approved changing the time to 3:40pm (still on Tuesdays).

A correction to the general education policy was approved (see page [U1740](#)).

The meeting was adjourned at 2:20pm.

ADVISING COMMITTEE REPORT

The Advising Committee met on February 23, 2010.

In attendance:

Beth Barret	Tom Holcomb	Doug Renalds
Betty Bradley	Mary Anne Hoskins	Laurie Roberson
Tom Broadhead	Annazette Houston	Brian Russell
Lisa Byrd	Ashleigh Huffman	Phyliss Shey
Alison Connor	Rebekah Page	Michele Stauffer
Gina Cox	Missy Parker	Matthew Theriot
Ruth Darling	Dulcie Peccolo	Ashley Wheelis
Sarah DeYoung	Fred Pierce	
George Drinnon	Anton Reece	

“Life in the Real World: Major Issues”- Learn More, Achieve More: SophoMORE – Ruth Darling summarized the upcoming event scheduled for March and asked for Advising Center participation (see attached).

Academic Success Workshops Recap – Doug Renalds spoke about the 500+ students who have attended a workshop this term. There are still 70+ students who have not attended one. He disseminated lists of those students to the appropriate college and asked for assistance in contacting the students. There is one more workshop scheduled for Friday, February 26. Early next week Phyliss Shey will place holds on the accounts of those students who not attended a workshop.

Educational Advancement Program career exploration and academic success workshops – Tom Holcomb talked about the spring programs being held in collaboration with Career Services. See attached copies of fliers. Mary Anne Hoskins announced that Arts & Sciences will be co-hosting with Career Services a “Plan B – What if I don’t get into medical school” program on Thursday, March 4th.

Academic Advising Assessment – Ruth Darling asked Advising Directors to provide to Ginny Williams the names and NetID of new people who need access to the system. At the last AALG meeting the final minor edits were made to the forms. The system is set to begin March 15th; Business began theirs this week.

FYI (First Year Intervention) Update – Ruth provided the information that only 570 students have reports of C or below for spring term so far. An outreach email from the Student Success Center has been sent to each of the students. We continue to refine the process.

TennACADA Update – Brian Russell announced that the March event, April program, and May trip to NACADA Region 3 conference in Lexington are all under way. More details to follow.

Retention and Graduation Summary – Ruth gave an overview of the document prepared by Vice Provost Sally McMillan, Donald Cunningham from OIR, and her for Provost Susan Martin. See attached copy of the document.

Other announcements –

The Vol Vision website is up and running at <http://www.utk.edu/strategic-planning/>. This is the website created to refine the work of the strategic planning committee.

Upcoming Advising Committee meetings beginning at 1:30 in the BCC multi-purpose room:

Tuesday, March 16

Tuesday, April 20

Tuesday, May 4

AALG meetings from 3:00-5:00 in BCC room 216

Thursday, March 4 – AdvisorTrac decisions, Universal Tracking update, Summer Orientation update

Thursday, April 8

Thursday, May 6

Retention webinar schedule – from 2:00 – 3:30 in HBB 316

May 12 - Biology student departure and persistence

June 16 - Expertise-development mentoring: A case study of an intervention to improve first generation college freshmen academic performance

July 14 – Beyond the first year retention

September 8 – Retention forecast

**Learn More, Achieve More: SophoMORE
“Life in the Real World: Major Issues”**

Tuesday, March 16
7 – 9 pm, UC Crest Room

Finishing your sophomore year and STILL don't have a major? Don't panic! Representatives from UT's Student Success Center, Career Services and College academic advisors will be on hand to help you evaluate your options and make plans for your junior year.

Proposed agenda

- I. Introduction and summary of program - Ruth
- II. Action Plan Activity described - Ruth
- III. Panel discussion
 - A. College Advising representatives
 - B. Career Services
 - C. SophoMORE experience – Dan Stypa
- IV. General questions and discussion
- V. Individual review of action plans with panel members
- VI. Closing and evaluation

Goals:

To offer insight into exploring majors/careers that can still meet overall academic/career goals – even if original goals have had to change for various reasons.

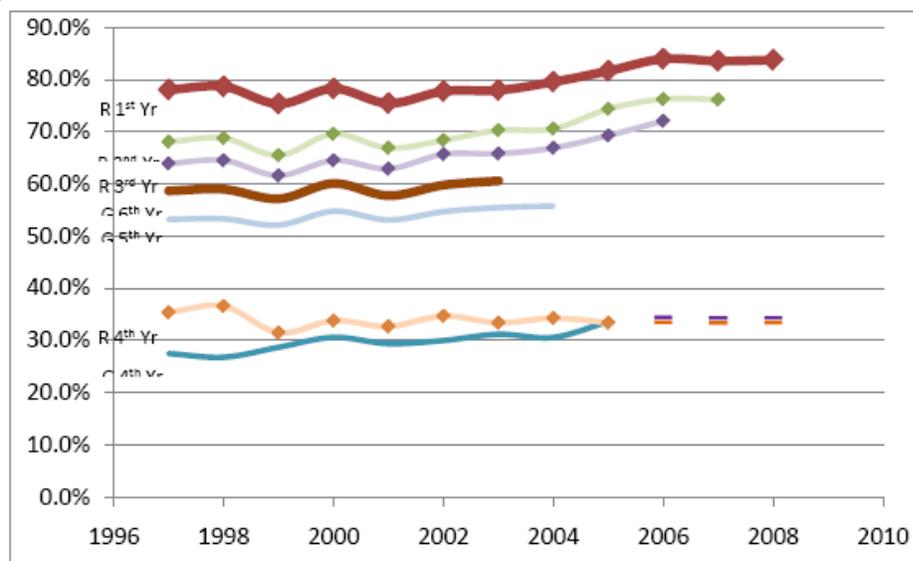
To develop an individual action plan with specific goals and deadlines that focuses on connecting a major with a career.

To connect with key resources and UT staff that can assist students with meeting goals.

The goal is not necessarily to “recruit” students to a particular major, but to inform students of opportunities and alternatives that might meet their goals/ revised goals, e.g. How we (advisors/career services) can help you find an academic home and connect with a major/career...helping you persist to graduation and completion of your undergraduate degree. We will be swiping ID cards which allows us to run a report of students and contact information. The SSC will follow up with the students who attend, offering additional help or referrals. Based on your thoughts and feedback, it might not be necessary to have representatives from every college. I've put this on the agenda of the Advising Committee for tomorrow. Based on previous events, I would expect around 40 students.

**Retention and Graduation Trends and Projections at the University of Tennessee,
Knoxville
February 4, 2010**

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville can and should increase graduation rates. We should strive to increase the six-year graduation rate by 1.5% per year and the four-year graduation rate by 0.8% per year for the next five years. This would mean raising four-year graduation rates from 33.7% to 37.7% and our six-year graduation rate from 60.6% to 68.1%. Our long-term goal is to have four-year graduation rates greater than 40% and six-year graduation rates greater than 80%. These goals cannot be achieved in five years.



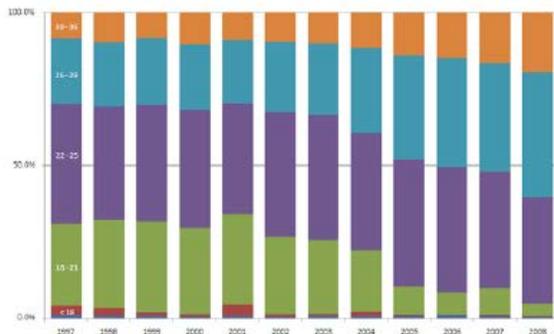
Schools (such as Florida) that began to focus on increasing graduation when they already had first-year retention rates of more than 90% were able to see fairly rapid improvements in graduation rates by focusing on throughput. We have to start with first-year retention.

In the past decade, UTK has become much more focused on student admission, retention, and graduation. The timeline below summarizes some key initiatives.

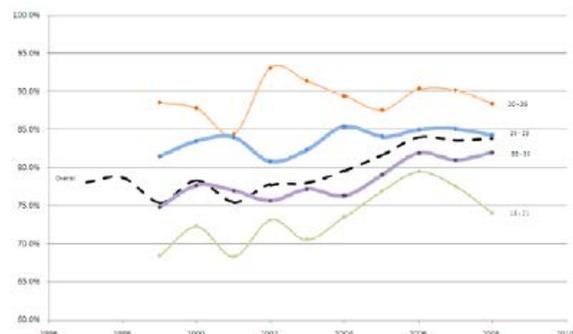
- 2002 Began to intentionally "make" a class rather than "take" a class
- 2004 Hope Scholarships increased the number of high-profile students choosing to stay in Tennessee for college and enabled UTK to be even more selective in admissions
- 2005 Formation of the Student Success Center and a number of initiatives focused on the first-year experience (e.g. Life of the Mind, revisions to FYS 101)
- 2006 Beginning of supplemental instruction programs
- 2007 Introduction of FYS 129 and push for increased enrollment in other classes focused on the first year experience (e.g., BA 100)
- 2007 Academic success workshops required of students on probation
- 2008 Start of the UTLSI summer program for Promise and Pledge students

Many of these efforts taken together have resulted in a significant "shift" in the student body. As illustrated in the charts on the next page, a much smaller proportion of students now enter with ACT scores of 21 or below. More than half of our entering freshmen now have ACT scores of 26 or higher.

First-time Freshmen by ACT Group



Retention Rates by ACT Group



The dotted black line on the right-hand chart illustrates that our overall retention efforts have risen over this time period. But this chart also illustrates several troubling trends.

First, after an initial climb, we have seen a drop in retention for the students with the lowest ACT scores. This is, in part, because this group is getting smaller and ever more at risk. UTK has made an institutional commitment to students through the Pledge and Promise programs. But we must realize that these students are unlikely to graduate at the same rates as students with higher academic profiles. Because this is a relatively small portion of the student body, the impact on overall graduation rates will be small. But we may wish to consider the balance of resources that should be focused on this group.

Second, after a “bump” from the Hope Scholarship, we have seen a fairly steady decline in retention of our very best students. This group is becoming an ever larger proportion of our entering class. It is ever-more important for us to understand what it takes to build the kind of rich environment that will encourage these students to finish their studies at UTK.

Third, our greatest success in improving retention is among students with ACT scores in the 22-25 range. This is laudable and expected given the focus of programs we have created since 2004. But it does not address the majority of students with ACT scores of 26 and higher.

Finally, for our largest group of students (those with ACT scores of 26-29), we have seen a plateau and even a slight dip in retention rates. This is very concerning. We are developing action plans for conducting both qualitative and quantitative research with the current freshmen class that will help us focus on the experiences of these students. We will have good baseline data from which to draw next fall so that we can compare students who return and those who don't and begin to build programs that will focus on retention of high-ability students.

We are also beginning programs that focus on throughput. We must make sure that after we have kept freshmen students, we are also helping them to progress toward majors. One taskforce that is launching this spring will focus on developing a “UTrack” tool to help keep students moving toward graduation. Another taskforce will work on making revisions to the timetable to improve efficiency of course scheduling. We are also considering changes to the general education program that will make it more engaging for high-ability students. These efforts are all focused on the next five years. If we continue to improve retention among our current students, we can potentially see a compounding effect that enables us to approach our goal of a four-year graduation rates of 40%+ and six-year graduation rates of 80%+ within the next 10-15 years.

GENERAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT

The General Education Committee met at 8:30 a.m. on February 10, 2010.

1. We reviewed the proposal from our last meeting and the final version that was passed by the Undergraduate Council.
2. We discussed with Sally McMillan, Vice Provost for Academic Operations, our options in the aftermath of the legislative action to influence the discussion on General Education across the state. We began work on a proposed statement of our position on the matter.
3. At our next meeting (and last meeting until Fall 2010), on March 18, 8:30AM, UC 220, we will continue this discussion and deal with any proposals for courses for Gen Ed.

CORRECTION TO GENERAL EDUCATION POLICY

The current policy erroneously states that students' last 60 hours must be taken at a 4-year school. The hours do not have to be in the last 60 hours; students just need 60 hours before graduating.

“Prior to graduating from UT Knoxville, transfer students must have completed their last 30 semester hours of credit at UT Knoxville and ~~their last at least~~ 60 semester hours of credit at a four-year college or university.”