Minutes of Project Graduation Committee Meeting

Meeting
October 16, 2013
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Attendance:
Denise Liguori
Nestor Melendez
Ralph Choonoo
Jackie Ottey
Monica Postle

Greg Fenkart
Hyacinthe Nkurunziza
Samantha Ekizian
Kim Smokowski

Sub-Committee Action Plans & Reports

1. Graduate Eligibility Search and Interventions

Chair Denise Liguori

PROBLEMS/FINDINGS
Denise reported that the Sub-Committee had completed the evaluation process of over 2000 student records. The results fell into 4 categories:

Category 1 - Ready to Graduate – Not enrolled

There are 227 students eligible to graduate. These students had last attended from Fall 2010 - Summer 2013. A draft letter to these candidates, from the VP of Student Affairs, was shared. The letter congratulates the students, informs them of our intent to graduate them and invites them to their Commencement Ceremony.

Of these 227 students, 16 had HOLDs on their records.

INITIATIVES/IMPLEMENTATIONS
The Sub-Committee will outreach to these students individually to assist them to resolve the HOLDs.

Category 2 - Needs some intervention to graduate

PROBLEMS/FINDINGS
An additional 161 student records required some interventions for the students to graduate. Examples of interventions are; Adjustment of Degree requirements due to students taking the wrong combination of general education electives, or changes to the catalogue year.

INITIATIVES/IMPLEMENTATIONS
Denise will work with Dr. De Jesus to appropriately communicate with the VPAA & Academic Deans so that they can understand our process and anticipate our requests.

Category 3 - Not currently eligible, due to missing courses

PROBLEMS/FINDINGS
498 records showed students needing 1 or 2 course(s) to graduate but are no longer enrolled at BCC. Of that population, 206 needed only Mathematics to complete their degrees.

INITIATIVES/IMPLEMENTATIONS
The Sub-Committee will outreach to these students to attempt to re-enroll them at Bergen to complete their degrees.
If any of these students have transferred, we will assist them to transfer back the courses needed to complete their Associates Degree from BCC.

Category 4 - Candidate for graduation at the completion of Fall 2013 Semester.

PROBLEMS/FINDINGS
The total of Degree Candidates is 398. These currently enrolled students should graduate at the completion of their Fall 2013 Semester courses.

2. Graduation Advertisement Campaigns – Chair Nestor Melendez

INITIATIVES/IMPLEMENTATIONS
Nestor shared samples of Grad Ad posters & flyers, showing photos of BCC Graduates at Commencement with the slogan “It’s Your Turn”. He also shared proofs for giant “Ask Me about Graduation” buttons. The Sub-committee is currently working on additional literature and brochures.

The Sub-Committee requested full Committee participation for staffing upcoming ‘Graduation Station’ Tables. These will consist of tables/stations on all 3 campuses advertising Commencement activities and assisting students to stay on track toward graduation. He suggested that we all wear Caps and Gowns on those days. Each event will last an hour and a half.

The ‘Graduation Station’ dates are

<table>
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<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<td>Oct. 23</td>
<td>Feb 12</td>
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<td>Nov. 30</td>
<td>March 12</td>
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<td>Dec 11</td>
<td>April 16</td>
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3. Graduation Automation Process – Chair Hyacinthe Nkurunziza

Hyacinthe reported on the Sub-Committee’s progress on Environmental Scanning and Graduation Automation.

Environmental Scanning

INITIATIVES/IMPLEMENTATIONS

The Sub-Committee has completed the Environmental Scanning process. All NJ Community Colleges’ graduation processes were researched. Findings:

- All colleges had a 2.0 GPA requirement to graduate
- All colleges had deadlines
- All colleges had some form of an “application” or graduation initiation process (some were student initiated, some college initiated)
- Some colleges had an online or portal process (web advisor was used for this purpose)
- Some colleges had a graduation processing fee that offset the cost of cap/gown and diploma. These fees ranged from $25 to $63.
- Some colleges had late fees.
Graduation Automation

PROBLEMS/FINDINGS

Hyacinthe reported that after meeting with the BCC IT department he learned that our current system has the capability to automate the process. They informed him that they had begun the work to do this in the past but it had never been completed due to changes in IT personnel. It was determined that they could work with the Sub-Committee to complete that task at this time.

INITIATIVES/IMPLEMENTATIONS

The official IT Request for such action was placed today (October 16th) for a Spring 2014 pilot. He noted that it is important to test the system under a high graduation traffic situation to get the kinks out before the system goes live.

PROBLEMS/FINDINGS

We discussed Lynn Richardson’s concern about this Spring timeframe. Hyacinthe explained that since the automation would be done in a “sandbox” format it would not interfere with the processes she has already begun for that semester. He stated that he will continue to communicate with her and the relevant stakeholders during the pilot and eventual live automation activation.

4. Student Persistence & Progress Initiatives

Chair Jennifer Reyes

Jennifer was absent from the meeting. Kim, a member of this Sub-Committee, reported that there were no new updates to report, as there had been no meetings of the Sub-Committee since the last Full Committee meeting.

5. General Business

INITIATIVES/RECOMMENDATIONS

- Denise reminded the Committee to communicate and collaborate with relevant college personnel, whenever possible, in order to assist toward our goals.
- The Committee discussed terminology confusions, with specific regard to the terms Graduation, Commencement and Application. It was agreed that if the term “application” was used it would ONLY be in the context of BCC initiated graduation outreach. Nestor coined a new word “Gradumencement” referring to the confusion between “Graduation” and “Commencement” in the same way that “Application” is confused with “Degree Completion Evaluations”.
- Denise asked the Committee to give some thought to the idea of including 2 official college transcript copies with the diploma when mailing them to graduates. All graduates eventually will require transcripts, for either jobs or educational purposes. Providing students with 2 copies with their diplomas would ensure better control over the timing and distribution of the transcript requests.

Next meeting Tuesday, October 29th 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., see meeting agenda for next steps and Sub-Committee assignments.