Minutes of Project Graduation Committee Meeting

Meeting
October 29, 2013
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Attendance:
Denise Liguori
Hyacinthe Nkurunziza
Jennifer Reyes
Monica Postle
Nestor Melendez
Samantha Ekizian
Ralph Choonoo
Kim Smokowski
Jackie Ottey
Dr. De Jesus (Guest)

Sub-Committee Reports

1. **Graduate Eligibility Search and Interventions**
   Chair Denise Liguori

   **INITIATIVES/IMPLEMENTATIONS**
   1a. Denise reported:
   - Based on our interventions BCC can possibly double the graduation numbers for December.
   - The Sub-Committee is currently working on the mail merges, and preparations needed to send the “Congratulations” letter. This letter will be mailed to 227 past students on November 11, 2013.
   - A “Project Graduation” mailbox is being created to enable all “Candidates” to ask questions and communicate with us. This will also be a valuable data collection tool.
   - Revisions were made to the letter drafted by P. Klymenko and L. Richardson to the December Graduation Candidates. The draft was passed to the Vice President for revision and/or approval.

   1b. Samantha reported that she is scheduled to meet with the Academic Deans next week to discuss the committee’s “Adjustment of Degree” recommendations.

   1c. Monica opened a discussion regarding “HOLDS” vs “Protects”. She reported that she was having success in resolving most of the HOLDS so more students will be added to the “Ready to Graduate” list.

   1d. Kim reported that she is outreaching to students that can graduate via “Change of Curriculum”.

   It was discussed that our data is still changing in the categories based on these actions and approvals. Once this Sub-Committee has completed the manual audit, new charts will be created to reflect final intervention results.

   **ASSESSMENT**
   **Actions:**
   - Samantha will report on approval results at the next meeting.
   - Updates on additional grad numbers due to interventions will be given

2. **Graduation Advertisement Campaigns**
   Chair Nestor Melendez

   **INITIATIVES/IMPLEMENTATIONS**
   2.1 Nestor shared a draft of a series of postcards that PR had developed for him to be used as handouts at the upcoming ‘Graduation Station’ Tables. The pending Station dates were discussed. The committee recommended that the dates be reorganized to include a variety of weekdays. Nestor reported that the Oct. 23rd date was canceled due to a delay in the receipt of publicity materials. The committee brainstormed ideas on staffing the Stations.
2.2 Dr. De Jesus spoke to the group. She expressed concern that the October Graduation Table event date needed to be rescheduled.

She was not satisfied with the draft of the postcards because it was using old language regarding past graduation practices. She restated to entire Committee that our students would no longer be required to submit an application to graduate. She clarified the “chain of command” to everyone, stating that, although Denise is the committee Chair, she, Dr. De Jesus is ultimately accountable to the President for the results of this committee and our graduation rate.

Before she left, she thanked the committee for our good work.

2.3 Once the Vice President left, the committee discussed next steps and brainstormed “out of the box” ideas to help move the initiative forward.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Actions:**
- Ralph agreed to set-up and staff a Graduation Station next week
  - 1 hour per day, daily
  - He will use an IPAD and teach students how to read EVALS
  - Members interested in joining him are welcome
- All members will send recommended revisions of the postcard draft to Denise by Nov 1
  - Denise will return postcard draft to Nestor with incorporated recommendations
- All members will move forward with an idea related to “Graduation”, not “Commencement”, order/create them and bring to our next Full Committee Meeting.

*The meeting was interrupted for a webinar set-up which was scheduled in the room directly following our meeting. We attempted to rush through our remaining agenda items.*

3. **Graduation Automation Process**

Chair Hyacinthe Nkurunziza

3.1 Hyacinthe reported on the Sub-Committee’s progress.

**PROBLEMS/FINDINGS**
- He stated that many of the Colleges that he researched were behind us in our progressive ideas
- He educated the group on how we could track data and successfully move forward with mailings and possible return mailings
- He requested assistance from the Chair and/or VP to help to move forward our IT requests

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Actions:** Denise agreed to discuss this further with the Dr. De Jesus

*Due to the activity related to the pending Webinar, the meeting briefly moved to the hallway for a wrap-up.*
4. **Student Persistence & Progress Initiatives**  
   Chair Jennifer Reyes

**PROBLEMS/FINDINGS**

4.1 Denise requested that the Student Persistence & Progress Initiatives Sub-Committee & the Automation Sub-Committee meet. She stated that the materials that were supplied were not ready to move forward to the Dr. De Jesus for approvals due to the volume of students (8000) involved.

4.2 Denise stated that robo-calling and texting this number of students, requesting them to call to make an appointment to meet with a counselor, would put an undue burden on the office’s daily functions. Jennifer believed that her office would probably already be meeting with some of these students during regular Counselor appointments anyway, so this would not be a problem.

4.3 Denise stressed that new, creative approaches needed to be explored to successfully increase the graduation rates for this specific population.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**  
**Actions:**
- A meeting will be scheduled with the 2 Sub-Committees to share ideas and move forward

5. **General Business**

**PROBLEMS/FINDINGS**

Denise reminded the committee that our current graduations rates are unacceptable and we need to continue to push ourselves to think “outside the box” for new approaches.