

OLLC Meeting Summary

Attendees: Jill Klein, Prita Patel, Paula Weissman, Katerina Kulagina, Stephanie Brookstein, Matt Meekins, Stef Woods, Sonja Walti, Vi Ettle, Michael Piller, Michael Keynes, Julie Sara Boyd, Elizabeth Boals, Kara Reynolds, Kamalika Sandell, Michael Schroeder, Essence Lee, Alexander Naula.

Date: Wednesday, October 18, 2017

Agenda

- I. **Introductions** (Jill Klein): Jill welcomed all attendees. Indicated focus of this meeting will be on our online graduate programs. Members of this group are advocates for our online students. Undergraduate online students will also be considered.
- II. **Review Charter:** OLLC members were alerted to review the charter if they have not already done so.
- III. **Roster of Online Programs** (Prita Patel): A report containing the Fall 2017 roster for all online programs was distributed to all attendees. Report includes partnered and in-house programs. One-off courses were not included in report. If discrepancies are found please report back to Alex Naula or Prita Patel to explore discrepancies with BI report.
- IV. **SARA Guidelines- University Compliance Update** (Prita Patel): Please review your copy of the State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements Manual summary and ensure that all online programs are adhering to guidelines delineated in our SARA agreement. This information is attached to the calendar invitation.

American University joined November 2016 and as part of a renewal application the Provost signed off that we are complying with all requirements as of September 2017. Our SARA membership allows us to deliver online programs in 48 states with one single application. California and Massachusetts are the two only states that still require separate application processes. Compliance from each unit and program is essential.

V. **Online Student Performance and Probation Report** (Michael Keynes)

Michael presented metrics from a retention report regarding graduate students. Overall, online graduate students are “dismissed” at a higher rate than non-online students.

Another metric relates to those students whose GPA falls below 3.0. Of this group, 65% are online students. This number raised the concern that online students may be weaker than its traditional counterparts, may be provided with different levels of student services support, have a different profile which makes them prone to weaker grades, may be prone to receive lower grades from faculty, etc. A program by program analysis did not provide a clear answer, thus in general it CANNOT be said that online students are weaker than on campus students.

A next step for our workgroup is to figure out a way to take a deeper look to find out key driving factors that affect dismissal rates and GPA. Student services support needs to be explored, as well as faculty training to ensure the best student experience for our online students.

VI. Brainstorming Time

Attendees mentioned several factors that may be affecting probation status rates and other facts to consider as we interpret reported dismissal rates. A selection of comments are listed below:

- Larger programs may have larger number of students that are dismissed
- 10% of online students have GPA less than 3.0, this rate is 3% in the total graduate population.
- Can we generate comparisons by programs and further with each program's on campus counterpart?
- Can we compare online part time versus campus part time students?
- Faculty in campus programs may not be as comfortable to give a lower grade than those for online students.
- SPA online students struggle in more ways than on campus counterparts.
- Online contexts matter, e.g. grading frequency and corresponding curve, online format leaves students with no place to hide, and minimal breaks.
- Online applicants are very different from the on-campus applicant pool. Programs create alternative pathways to degree with conditions, provisions, that will artificially raise dismissal rates.
- Partners, pedagogy, platforms are distinct (2U, Wiley, Noodle)
- Compressed format may be a factor too, some courses may not work well in the short format, how can pedagogy address compressed schedules?
- At times it feels that admissions and marketing are not controlled by AU programs. Nonetheless, AU should manage partners and must communicate guidelines for marketing, recruiting, and other aspects. AU must review and collaborate on marketing materials.
- Does higher percentage of adjunct faculty have an impact on dismissal rates?
- What are the goals for retention?
- Where do we lose the students?
- The goal for online programs is to provide the same academic rigor and quality as our on campus programs.
- The Academic Data Book provides data such as overall retention rate, attrition rate, and graduation rate.
- There are different credit plans for Adjuncts (load values for adjuncts, and also full time)
- Barrier classes (quantitative preparedness), availability of "bridge" classes.

VII. Planning for Future Full Committee Meetings

Dismissal rates and GPA metrics provide the group with a timely opportunity to improve the online student experience and retention. With that goal in mind, it is suggested that the following task forces be created to work strategically and bring recommendations for next steps:

- **Academic Support Services & Learning Assessment Task Force:** Find the drivers that affect persistence/metrics
- **Faculty Training and Support for Online Teaching Task Force:** Explore ways that faculty support can be enhanced, such that faculty are trained to reach best teaching potential and learning outcomes. Explore teaching and learning assessment.

- **Information Sharing and Best Practices Task Force:** Learn from each program's operations and share best practices or different management methods for handling relationships with online partners (this group will focus on best practices including administrative setups, operating efficiencies, relationships with administrative units across campus, potential workarounds for existing issues or implementation of permanent changes)
 - **Strategic Vision Task Force:** Forge the vision of a unified university wide approach to online education. This will be a topic of much interest to all parties. It may not be a separate task force. All sub-committees are asked to incorporate this thinking into their work, and report back to the OLLC.
 - **See OLLC Proposed Tasks AY17-18** document sent out by Jill and Prita for more detail
-
- CTRL will create online experience courses (demonstrations). Please identify 1- 3 professors to give 15 minutes of a deep dive of teaching a lesson. Teach and sharing (to include operational aspects)
 - A site will be created for this committee to post about topics and for task forces.
 - Spring 2017 presentations will be posted on the site (CTRL to host the new site, and instructions for access will be communicated)
 - Jill and Prita will summarize the breakdown of taskforces and suggest task-force assignments for the group. Each sub-committee will have deliverables for the next meeting, Dec 13th.