

**UHD Retention Task Force
Minutes, October 2nd 9-11 in A629**

Present: Ashe, Beebe, Birchak, Caesar, Cheatham, Dement, Flint, Greer, Gulati, Grau, Henney, Hugetz, Khoja, LeGrande, Mitri, Morano, Pogue, Purdy, Redl, Ryden, Waller, Wesley

Absent: Alonzo, Cuevas, Delavina, Evans, Farris, Thomason

GOAL: “Raise the FTIC retention and graduation numbers. This is a small number of students and we need a highly structured plan to address the needs of these students so we can improve their success.”

- 1. Approve minutes of last meeting. Poonam Gulati motioned to approve the minutes and Carolyn Ashe seconded and all approved.**

- 2. Current Inventory Charge**
 - a. Review of subcommittee lists**
 - i. Report from each subcommittee and review of subcommittee lists**
 - ii. Address duplications or assign any missing initiatives**

Academic Support –Bill Waller described the efforts to be covered in his subcommittee. He described them as falling into categories of tutoring and support centers, learning communities, courses and course redesign and faculty development. It was pointed out that the Honors Program and Scholars Academy will be covered by several subcommittees.

Academic/Co-Curricular – Carolyn Ashe summarized the activities that fell into their area. She discussed Study Abroad and initiatives in the College of Business. Ron Beebe stated that he would be reviewing QEP, Honors Programs and the initiatives from the College of Public Service. Bill Pogue will cover internships and initiatives in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and he also pointed out that many of the forces impacting our students’ success and retention are related to poverty (for example, having funds to buy a new tire). Poonam Gulati will cover service learning, HIPS and initiatives through the College of Science and Technology like the Intervention Series in Natural Sciences. Tomikia LeGrande suggested that additional items should be added such as clubs, the Bayou Review, employment opportunities on campus, Theatre and Sports and Recreation.

Student Support – RaShonda Flint reviewed the areas that would be covered by her group. These included Financial Aid, Advising, Disabilities Services, Career Services, Veterans Services, Student Activities, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. It

was suggested that the Career Fair be added along with Counseling, Title IV, and Student Conduct.

Admissions, Orientation and Student Programs – Chris Birchak summarized all the areas this group was working on which included admissions standards, orientations (2-day, 4-day, Right Start, 3-week Fast Track), Freshman Convocation, 30n3 campaign, Gator Leadership, Ambassadors, O Team, Scholarships, CAPS Power Hour, Honors Program, Scholars Academy (SA) and some college related initiatives. It was suggested that this category could be everything that happens to the students before the first day of class. It was also suggested that testing programs should be included in this group. The SA and Honors Program have parts that impact both what is happening before the first day (they are special admissions and additional orientations) and this is different from the co-curricular opportunities that happen throughout the year.

It was suggested that we made need to reorganize our groups slightly and that some initiatives transcend groups.

A sample of the Assessment Report form created by Souraya Mitri was included in all handout packets (and was sent by email). As groups are engaged in their summaries and they are investigating what kind of assessment information would be useful, this form is included to give direction on the type of information that is useful.

b. Subcommittee discussions

i. Subcommittees break out and discuss the creation of an outstanding FTIC experience as it relates to their subgroup.

- **Which items does your group have reason to think will be most important to include in our final retention plan? (At this point this will be based on your personal experiences or what you know the experts recommend. This is only a preliminary discussion.)**
- **What strategies or items WOULD your group recommend that are not currently on your list? (Try to think of broad or innovative ideas that would create a great FTIC experience.)**

ii. Subcommittees share ideas with larger group.

The goal of this exercise was to give the expertise in the room the opportunity to share the areas they see as most critical for the FTIC students. These discussions will go on as we continue to collect a summary of our current initiatives, look at

assessment information at UHD (if available) and investigate assessment information at universities like UHD.

Academic Support – Addressed the following issues in their brainstorming.

Tutoring – Increasing participation rate. What is the best model? How can standardization of curriculum occur (particular for gateway courses)? How can there be integration of support? What facilities are needed? How can we improve faculty awareness and online tutoring?

Mentoring – How can we increase participation rate? What is the best model? What faculty support is needed?

Course Specific Innovation – We need to improve student learning. How do we encourage faculty participation? How do we identify evidence-based strategies? How do we increase relative time on task?

Academic/Co-curricular – If money were no object we would create the Scholars Academy modeling for every student. Students would be clustered by interest and supported with advising, career development, related clubs or organizations and alumni connections. This program would offer long-term continuity to the students. Each college should develop a program for their students where they give their students an orientation, exposure and encouragement.

Student Support – For effective academic advising important items are an extensive early alert system, ease of registration for all students, excellent degree maps for all programs. There should be ready-made communities for all FTIC students and all students would be assigned to one or more community. Career services should be improved to mimic what the College of Business with respect to career support. Career Fairs should be offered for specific career clusters.

Admissions, Orientation and Student Programs (Before the First Day group) – The goal of our retention efforts should be to create “A comprehensive transition to school process (not program) that meets [the FTIC students] where they are and prepares them for success on the first day of class.” With respect to recruitment it was suggested that there be a better introduction to the transition process to the university. Is it clear? Is it relevant? Is it the correct information? Is it compelling? Is it timely? Does it address the question of why UHD? Is there a way to improve FTIC information? Is there standardization of message?

iii. How should we go about creating one page summaries of our retention initiatives? (A subset?)

Lisa Morano and Faiza Khoja worked on a rough draft of a network diagram showing the major retention efforts at UHD and how they connect with each

other. Lisa and Faiza agreed they would continue to work on these connections and bring a version to the next Task Force meeting. This network might also help indicate which efforts we are currently doing need to be summarized and all the aspects that need to be summarized. This could be a strong starting point to discuss how our efforts should be best organized as we move forward.

3. Consideration of what the experts recommend and where UHD faculty and the UHD Retention Task Force could assist (Waller)

Bill gave a presentation of his UHD Retention Data and summarized where UHD is and what some of the experts say are the most critical components. The last two slides outlined possibilities that the Retention Task Force should consider as we investigate what we are currently doing and consider recommendations as move forward. These are based on Bill's reading and experience in retention at UHD.

- Create opportunities for academic high-achievers
- Motivate faculty participation in retention (e.g. early alert and gateway course redesign)
- Develop mechanisms to integrate student supports with instruction and increase tutoring participation
- Devise pilots for structured scheduling/linked classes/learning communities
- Develop redemptive options for probationary students
- Encourage college and department sponsored major assimilation activities
- Improve the Early Alert system
- Develop/refine/exploit academic maps
- Revise summer bridge programs and programs for conditional admission students
- Develop and implement student mentoring programs
- Expand opportunities for experiential learning and campus-based employment
- Expand use of prior learning assessments
- Expand use of data analytics as a critical tool to target resources and stimulate action

4. Alignment of retention efforts with Houston Guided Pathways to Success (GPS) (Birchak)

Bill covered this in his slides and there was a handout on the GPS in the packet. This is an initiative that UHD is committed to participating in. There will likely be some overlap between this Task Force and the GPS committee, but the GPS initiatives are fairly tightly focused in a couple of areas of advising and academic support. There are several members on the Task Force who are involved in the GPS so they will keep us updated on the GPS initiatives.

5. Discussion of Retention Task Force goals, broad recommendations, faculty buy-in, faculty assistance and a November Town Hall.

Lisa introduced the goal of a November Town Hall. The plan is to describe the goals of the task force, to get faculty buy-in and assistance as we begin our process of figuring out what we have, what is working well and what we need to do better.

6. Future Meetings (tentative)

October 2-22nd - Subcommittees continue to work on current inventories

October 23rd (Friday) – Large Retention Task Force Meeting

November 6th (Friday) – Large Retention Task Force Meeting

November 12th (Thursday) – Possible Town Hall (see item 5 above)

There was no opposition to the plan above.