

Basic Skills Committee

Tues. Oct. 15, 2013

4:00-5:00 Room 902

Adopted Minutes

Melissa called the meeting to order at 4:02 pm.

Roll: Sandra Moore, Melissa Reeve, Genele Rhoads, John Yu

I. Approve Minutes from 9/17 & 10/1

Minutes – 9/17 Approved

II. Budget discoveries & implications info

Melissa gave an update on the status of the annual report. She sent the report to Finance VP Yulian Ligioso, one of the signatories of the report, about ten days prior to the deadline but received documents from the finance office just before the deadline. Due to major discrepancies, Melissa requested an extension to ensure the report is submitted correctly. Last year BSI information from finance was not categorized in a way that could be reconciled and information from Banner doesn't match. Finance has much clearer records now and Melissa discovered some funds were taken from BSI that shouldn't have been. However, the biggest expense discrepancy was in personnel. BSI was billed the entire cost of the BSI Coordinator (40% release time), the BSI English and Math Coordinators (20% each), and the ASC Coordinator (20%), all adding up to around \$100,000 for salary and benefits. This is significant as the annual BSI allocation is around \$118,000. The full cost was mitigated some last year due to a couple coordinators leaving positions early. For the report Melissa calculated the cost of coordinators at the adjunct backfill rate plus a percentage for benefits (as done in the past) which amounted to about 60% less. In past years there were more coordinators and the allocation was smaller. BSI exists as its own budget code. The law requires that 50% of college funds must be spent on instruction, not coordinating, and reassign positions are the first place auditors will check. Melissa met with VP Ligioso last Friday and, understanding why this was a problem, he felt the College needs to own coordinatorships fully or in part. He will bring it up at the ALG meeting and suggest putting BSI under College ownership. If coordinatorships are effectively serving BSI needs, BSI funds should and could be spent for student benefit. S/P Laguerre also agreed this challenge needs to be fixed and shouldn't change so radically. The Finance Department has created more clarity and accuracy and Melissa is looking forward for spring. She doesn't see that coordinator positions, in place for the full year, can be changed, other than administration deciding if the general fund will pay part or all of the cost for this year. IVP White also sent a response stating BSI shouldn't be impacted this way.

III. Planning for 2013-14

- a. Restrictions on fundable projects: must serve 5-year goals

The report has to show what is spent toward each goal and at the last meeting members discussed how to attach money to planning. Melissa coded funded faculty proposals to goals and activities which brought to her attention that some things funded in the past don't have a clear rationale connecting to goals. Improving success rates in BSI English and math and growing the ESL program are the goals. If solicitation for faculty proposals continues, the Committee will need to ensure funded proposals can measurably move to the goals. The Committee has given around \$14,000 annually to Umoja and, while

the proposals have been somewhat complicated, adding math to the program will make it more related to BSI. Sandra noted that current components of the Umoja learning community are Social Science and counseling. When Melissa used the cohort tracker the focus is on gross numbers but it is possible to sort by demographics. If African American students are being served and helped by Umoja, that may be a way to make the funding connection. Melissa reiterated that, if continuing with proposals, the call for, how to evaluate, and the standard of evidence as follow-up will have to be more tightly linked to those goals. Melissa will email the five year goals campus-wide.

Regarding pros and cons of goal restrictions, it can help the Committee set funding toward the goals but the BSI vision to support success of all basic skills students wherever they are (history, social science, etc.) can be narrowed. Although benefits to success may be known, the placement in five year goals is difficult. Goals should be carefully researched before funding and the Committee should stick to the goals. John suggested seeking a second opinion from the Chancellor's Office regarding changing a goal, noting people have different familiarity with certain programs. The math objective is to improve students' base skills. Sandra added that it seems, if circumstances change and the current goal doesn't serve students as expected, it might be possible to change. Math 330, the most populous course that captures everyone, was chosen by the previous BS Math Coordinator in 2012 when these goals were agreed upon. Melissa added language that states the definition of Basic Skills success is too narrow because, if you look at the student success score card remediation tab, it is only counting students who start at transfer level or complete at least one transfer level class in one area. College students don't always express transfer as a goal and that will show as non-success on the scorecard. Many ESL students are here just to work on their English, 40% don't go on to take English, and they don't need to learn how to write research papers if they're not planning to transfer. Melissa posed a question on how to support students, many of whom are CTE students, who don't have transfer goals. Measuring in terms of completing a transfer level course is a mixed message.

b. FYE Coordinator Job description / Learning Communities Coord.

Melissa spoke with IVP White regarding the strategic proposal approved in June for FYE to find out if a coordinator can be hired now for spring. IVP White replied yes, it would only take about three weeks to hire for the position and it should be done for spring. Melissa brought a copy of the job description that former Student Services Dean Erin Vines wrote about a year ago. It was written as a 30% position; at the time there was some debate whether the position should be restricted to counselors or open to faculty from any discipline. IVP White commented that, looking ahead, she wondered if there should be one learning experience coordinator, combining FYE, Umoja, and Puente. Currently a counselor/English instructor is serving about 30 students per year, maybe up to 60. Members discussed whether creating one position for all three programs would be too much responsibility or make sense to eliminate much overlap in these various learning communities. Programs could be strengthened by being centralized for coordinated marketing to show students options as much of that work is now duplicated. Specific people are dedicated to specific programs is the other side of the argument. Sandra felt combining under one umbrella would weaken, rather than strengthen, the Umoja program, noting that a lot goes on internally. Melissa suggested getting all the coordinators together to identify, with the view that these programs will grow, where there is redundancy and see what could be consolidated, such as technical items. Melissa spoke with IVP White about looking ahead to begin having options for

incoming students to place them on different pathways towards specific professions, tailored to students for their goals, and creating opportunities for contextualized learning. That could include social support, career interest, or complete GE, having a buffet be within a program pathway, and attach folks to a peer network. SB 1456 really supports that kind of push and legislation compels colleges to ensure students have an education plan. The more initiatives are in place, the more important it is to bring together first year communities.

Sandra opined it might make sense to reduce reassign time for tasks that are combined, such as administrative duties that could lessen reassign coordinator time, but she didn't think coordinatorship sharing would work. John felt that it's better to have a faculty person in this kind of a position than a full-time administrator. Melissa will work to bring all coordinators together for a discussion.

The position was approved too late for this fall. Next spring a coordinator would mostly work on orientation, assessment, and with FYE faculty in preparation for the next year. The job description draft lists everything in no particular order. John opined it covers everything well but is more than one person can do. Melissa suggested identifying essential responsibilities that must be done and another list of second tier responsibilities to be done when possible. In terms of putting together the FYE plan for what students need; the program was expanded to add contact courses; counselors bring a particular knowledge and skill set that faculty wouldn't have. Members will review the description and send Melissa suggestions by the end of the week. Genele noted that, if hired for spring the job would end on June 30 and a lot of work is needed over the summer getting students ready for fall, probably a good argument for being a counselor. Melissa will ask IVP White about the job timeline.

- c. ESL Outreach / student ambassadors
- d. Evergreen Institute application

The Committee earmarked funds to send a team to the Institute next summer and applications are due in December. The concept has been discussed to have these first year learning kind of programs be more cohesive and centralized without losing what is special about each one. The Institute is about program planning and school teams are supposed to include faculty and administration. A conversation needs to be started to find out if there is willingness to pursue this. Sandra suggested determining what the combined program might look like and send that team to collaborate.

IV. Other news from the group

None

The meeting adjourned at 5:02 pm.

