**Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE)**

**Meeting Minutes**

**October 23, 2019**

1. **Call to Order**

The Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE) was called to order on October 23, 2019, at

3:00 p.m. in the Student Success Center Classroom 1115 in Ninth Street Hall.

**Members present:** Gurkan Akalin; Cindy Boyer; Joe Eichman, recording secretary; Jennifer Hedges; Shelley James; Alexis Jones; Josh Norman; Karla Sanders, Chair; Tanya Willard; and Melody Wollan;.

**Members absent:** Dagni Bredesen; Mona Davenport; Jacquelyn Frank; Jody Stone; Justin Tierney; Ed Treadwell; and Jie Zou.

1. **Approval of CORE Minutes- October 9, 2019**

Gurkan Akalin moved to approve the October 9, 2019, minutes with a second from Shelley James. The minutes were approved, with an abstention from Tanya Willard.

1. **Exit Survey Update**

Tanya Willard Doug Michaels, the graduate assistant working on the Exit Survey, have looked at the data from the Housing Exit surveys Jody Stone shared with the group. From the six years of data they found six recurring reasons students gave for leaving the University: Finances, Not feeling safe on campus or in the community, Not feeling safe or supported because of their race, Size of the community – nothing to do, Mental Health issues, and Homesickness. The next step is to come up with ways to approach the issues raised here, to look at ways to ask questions to get deeper into the reasons students are leaving. Jennifer Hedges said that of the students who come to Financial Aid to discuss leaving the University, about 75% cite mental health issues as the reason they must leave. Karla Sanders said that the Counselling Center is inundated by requests for help, and Tanya Willard added that the current wait list for sessions will last until the end of the semester. Willard said that they hope to implement this exit survey next semester at the very earliest.

1. **Mentorship Pilot**

The Mentorship Pilot group met last week, and are still trying develop a plan to get these students into specific University Foundations classes. Josh Norman and Heidi Larson will meet with the current UF Peer Leaders to get their feedback on the pilot. Melody Wollan asked how we can increase student engagement. Karla Sanders admitted that this has been an issue for years, and wondered if EIU should look into some sort of out-of-class attendance requirements. They discussed the Panther Life app, Sanders said that the Peer Leaders report that it used to work great, but is now glitchy and unreliable. She mentioned that at her previous institution, there was a graduation requirement to attend so many events outside of class. Alexis Jones mentioned that the College of Education currently requires students attend a certain number of workshops and events, but between course loads, work, and other demands the students are left feeling stressed and anxious.

1. **Midterm Grade Report**

Karla Sanders brought the analysis of the FA19 Midterm Grade Report. The majority of failing grades go to freshmen. Sanders refreshed the meaning of certain grades that are given (R = Remedial, X = Not for credit, NF = student stopped attending, so Financial Aid must discern the student’s last date of attendance and adjust their Aid package.) Sanders said that ethnic minority students are still receiving more grade reports than Caucasian students. Melody Wollan asked if this could be due to correlation with other risk factors. Sanders replied that she may have to ask ITS to adjust this report to get at that data. She mentioned that she is at a loss how to respond. So many students are not attending Supplemental Instruction sessions. Sociology and MAT 1270 have two students each at SI sessions. The SI sessions were set by the class, based on what they said was their availability. Wollan noted that she meets students who are fine with the D, with the attitude of “Hey, I’m passing.” Josh Norman said that one of the goals of the Mentorship Mentoring Pilot will be that the mentees will see solid examples of students seeking help, and may even feel more comfortable seeking help if someone in their mentorship group also wants to seek help.

1. **Strategic Enrollment Plan**

Josh Norman updated the Committee on the progress of the Strategic Enrollment Plan. The following initiatives are complete:

1. Hired a bilingual Latinx recruiter and a Latinx retention coordinator. Norman noted that by 2025 the only high school population group with growth will be Latinx students.
2. STRONG MENtoring – for both African-American and Latino male students. They are having issues with participation, and are looking at making participation a requirement.
3. Scholarships – 90% retention rate from FA18 to FA19 for students who received the scholarship for financial need.
4. LEAP Program
5. Students who have 4 or more retention factors must meet with their advisor one more time each semester.
6. Living and Learning Mentoring Program will be implemented in FA20.
7. All new students were invited to Academic Foundation Day.
8. Identify unassigned scholarships and communicate to students. Pending.
9. Focus groups of 1st year minority students to assess their specific needs.
10. Analyze what factors make students successful and are retained.
11. Explore Work-Study options. Until Norman can identify more money, this project must wait. Jennifer Hedges mentioned that Financial Aid is currently not utilizing all of its available federal funds for the Work-Study Program because many students don’t go to work. Norman said he will change the focus of this item.
12. Ensure SAGA admits have the same support as Gateway students.
13. Explore incremental debt-forgiveness for readmits and online learners. Norman said he will hire someone to accomplish this. A discussion followed regarding online Gen Ed courses. Melody Wollan and Shelley James both said we are sending many students away to community college because we don’t have enough available gen eds. It was suggested the University step away from Degree Completion online programs and offer more Gen Eds online. Gurkan Akalin asked if we have any retention data on our online students. Wollan and Sanders said that we do not, but can look at completion rates.
14. **Newsletter**

Sanders listed the articles for the FA19 *Retention Matters* newsletter:

1) FA18-19 Retention

2) FA19 Cohort

3) Scholarship Recipients

4) Socal & Belonging Pilot

For SP20:

1. Mentorship Pilot
2. FA19-SP20 Retention
3. Universal Design. A plan to recreate the classroom environment set up to ensure students from different backgrounds are successful.
4. **Adjourn**

The next meeting will be November 13. The meeting adjourned at 4:08.

*~Minutes submitted Joe Eichman, Recording Secretary*