

Agenda – Recruitment, Admissions, and Retention Committee  
October 13, 2006

Attendees: A. Tuchtenhagen, N. Hagberg, M. Brennan, K. Tjornehoj, S. Egerstrom, D. Trechter

1. Reviewed/Approved Minutes from October 6, 2006
2. Follow-up questions regarding freshman profile data

Tuchtenhagen points out that retention is likely to be key to growth agenda. Retention has been dropping slightly and even if we bring in the same number of students next year (1300), overall enrollment could drop. Tjornehoj asked if we do any sort of exit interview with those leaving us. Egerstrom responded that little is done currently but it is on the agenda of the first-year experience initiative group, including a potential phone survey of those leaving. Tuchtenhagen noted that studies indicate that students say lack of money is key but this probably masks other things (i.e. they don't really value education, they are homesick, etc.). Hagberg wondered if they also may not be aware of all their options in terms of loans. Tuchtenhagen noted that students seem much less concerned about taking on debt to buy a car than they are to buy an education. Egerstrom noted that families are asking about financing their child's education when they arrive on campus, indicating that they haven't prepared for this nor have they searched for financial options. Hagberg hypothesized that many UWRF students are neither sufficiently wealthy to finance their kid's schooling nor poor enough to qualify for federal financial aid. We may need to have financial aid do training with key constituencies across campus – athletic teams, RAs, advisors, etc. about options. Egerstrom also noted that many times students seem unwilling to utilize resources offered by the University (e.g. going to meet with professors, using tutors, etc.). Could use freshman level courses (e.g. English 100) to make announcements about resources availability. Tuchtenhagen – can we have a conversation about how to subtly change pedagogy to increase the amount of feedback earlier in the term so that those, particularly freshmen, know how things are going? This isn't necessarily popular to faculty. Trechter – to sell this to faculty, this committee will need to provide a literature review to show that there is a demonstrable and positive impact between student retention and structuring feedback to happen earlier in the term. This may be more difficult in freshmen-level courses where lots of background data gets covered early in the term. Retention rates are difficult management goals because there is no obvious optimum – Tuchtenhagen agreed but feels that our rate isn't high enough. We need to have conversations about customer service, pedagogy, and advising to move us closer to an ideal retention rate. Hagberg also noted that grade inflation in high school makes it shocking when they get here and don't get the A's they are used to. Trechter noted that shrinking the student body isn't necessarily a bad thing because they might be able to avoid taking classes at night, be more likely to have connections with people on campus, etc. Hagberg noted that she came here because of small size of UWRF – I don't want to be a number or a faceless person.

3. The UW Growth Agenda, issues UWRF needs to resolve
  - Growth options

- undergraduate/graduate (how much do we get out of grad programs)
- regular semester/J-Term & Summer/on-line (Tjornehoj suggested that we identify models, best practices as in-service for faculty. Egerstrom suggests this is a different market than our traditional undergraduate. Tuchtenhagen noted that there is a new Title 3 grant that could fund some in-service and course development work. Can we use this to supplement our curriculum?)

4. Next Meeting, October 27, 2006 at 12:20 in the Falcon Room.