

Report to Faculty Senate

Janna P. Vice, Interim Provost

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In response to President Whitlock's directive to consider "student success" one of the three strategic priorities for ECU, the academic deans have determined that student success will be their major focus for the 2009-2010 academic year.

The appropriateness of this decision was reinforced for me at last week's Governor's Conference on Postsecondary Education Trusteeship: **Raising the Bar: Access, Quality, and Success**. The opening session as well as the majority of the break-out sessions advocated American colleges and universities need to step up to ensure students not only enter college but they persist to graduation. Although you will hear more specifics in the weeks ahead about the Conference's challenges for us, this report lists some student-success initiatives that are currently underway at ECU.

Discussions among Faculty, Staff, and Students to Define Student Success

As the deans discussed how to focus on student success, they decided to ask the faculty, staff, and students. As a result, your department and faculty may be engaged in a discussion as to how student success is defined at ECU. The questions to be addressed are:

- a. How does the college/department define student success?
- b. What should be the outcomes of student success?
- c. How do we measure student success?
- d. How should we reward student success?

Although the first three questions may seem to pertain primarily to students, I suspect to get at this last question faculty will begin thinking more broadly. For example, how does faculty-student engagement impact student success? How many faculty members work with students and/or assign research projects? When the faculty members are brought into the equation, the landscape for student success might change. I think this is the "holistic" aspect of student success the President was referring to at convocation.

This discussion will correspond well with the focus groups being planned by the Strategic Planning Council.

Early Alert Reporting System (aka EARS)

This fall, for the first time since the implementation of BANNER, ECU faculty reported the names of students who were not attending their classes. The official update on the number of faculty, departments, and colleges participating will be reported in the *Academic Affairs Update*.

However, accolades and great appreciation goes to Dr. Dirk Schlingmann and the faculty in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

I thank each faculty member for each student's name that was checked because ultimately that will be how we retain students—one at a time.

The Offices of Advising and Retention and of the Registrar are also to be commended for their preparation, thoughtful planning, and quick response in making EARS possible.

Project Graduate

EKU is participating in a statewide initiative called “Project Graduate” designed to recruit students who dropped out of college after earning 90 or more college credits. The director of EKU's Project Graduate, Lisa Cox, was praised by two recent EKU graduates who shared their stories with CPE recently. They told the Council they had given up on a college degree, but with the help and support of Lisa and EKU, they have now achieved their dreams. A full report of Project Graduate's success will be forthcoming.

The Associate of General Studies Degree

EKU received word recently from CPE that our proposed Associate of General Studies Degree has been approved. This degree will provide a credential for hundreds of students, particularly adult learners, who otherwise might not earn a diploma. Since the degree contains our complete General Education program, the degree is transferable to any public four-year institution in Kentucky. Programs wanting to identify a 12-hour concentration for which these students can opt to take may begin sending their proposals through the curriculum pipeline.

Math Transition Courses for High School Students

Earlier today I participated in a presentation at Northern Kentucky University entitled “A Comprehensive Plan to Improve College Readiness in Kentucky.” The presentation, which was made to the Subcommittee on Postsecondary Education, was given to convince the Subcommittee this comprehensive plan should receive a portion of the federal stimulus funds in order to launch the initiative statewide.

Part of the presentation focused on the background of the high-school transition course. Last year NKU piloted a prototype for the statewide college-readiness plan. Ten Northern Kentucky high schools participated.

EKU is also piloting college readiness programs with our partnering school districts. The process, which is similar to NKU's, guarantees that high school students who take a math transition course and pass the KYOTE (Kentucky Online Test) will be guaranteed placement into an appropriate college-level course at ECU.

Kentucky's "comprehensive plan" would extend that guaranteed placement to students at any Kentucky public institution to which they are admitted. (Different regions might choose alternative placement exams.)

If we are to successfully meet the mandate of Senate Bill 1 to reduce 2010 remediation rates by 50 percent by 2014, we must build an infrastructure between secondary and post secondary schools to ensure high school graduates are ready for college. ECU is excited about this program; and we are committed to its success.

To develop a transition program for high school students in its Service Region, ECU

- Has entered into a collaborative arrangement with two school districts (Madison County and Berea Independent) to offer transitional algebra courses Fall 2009.
- Is currently in the planning stages with the following school districts: Clay County, Corbin Independent, Estill County, Garrard County, McCreary County, and Pulaski County.
- Has scheduled a meeting with all school districts in ECU's Service Region on November 3 for President Whitlock and the leaders of our program to discuss the regional-stewardship opportunities these transition courses hold for ECU.

Additional information will be available in the *Academic Affairs Update*.

Implementation of Degree Works

One of the "best practices" identified at the Governor's Conference was to improve technology to help students map their college careers. ECU is doing precisely that by replacing the cumbersome and limited CARES with a new, intuitive software called Degree Works. Registrar Tina Davis and her staff are taking Degree Works "on the road" to each college to demonstrate the new capabilities students and advisors will have over the CARES. For example, Degree Works is programmed to identify the shortest path to degree.

Residential Students Responding to Map Works

What influences students to remain at ECU or to transfer to another school? When do students make the decision to transfer or leave? We will soon learn the answers to these questions and more as a result of the pilot of Map Works, which is an on-line Education Benchmarking Inc. (EBI) product designed to identify students who need intervention or assistance. This on-line questionnaire is being completed by students in ECU's resident halls after their first three weeks of classes. The survey will be repeated near mid-term.

Re-organization of Enrollment Management

Student success at ECU will also be enhanced by the re-organization of Enrollment Management. Ms. Linda Fossen, the new Assistant Vice President and Dean of Enrollment, will now oversee the Admissions Office, the Scholarship/Student Financial Aid Office, and Marketing. A newly formed unit in Enrollment Services will be the Student Outreach and Transition Office (SOTO). This unit will include the Transfer Office and will provide services to special populations such as the adult learners, veterans, Project Graduate, and other student groups facing unique challenges. Enrollment Services will market, recruit, admit, and serve students matriculating into the University.

The Office of Advising and Retention, the Registrar's Office, and the Office of Developmental Education and Academic Testing now report to the Office of the Associate Provost. These offices deal more with the post matriculation of students. They were moved to Academic Affairs to promote better collaboration and integration with the academic colleges.

The "glue" that will ensure the coordination and planning of all functions involving recruiting, retaining, and graduating students is the newly formed Student Success Advisory Council. Members of this Council will include the leadership of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Administrative Affairs. It will also include a faculty representative and two student representatives—both a traditional and a non-traditional student.

We welcome Ms. Fossen to ECU. We are excited about the knowledge, skills, and experience she brings; and we encourage the faculty and staff to get acquainted with her.

EKU Now!

Through ECU's new dual-credit program, ECU Now!, we are recruiting the best and brightest students in our Service Region to take ECU courses while still in high school. Fall 2009 is the first semester for ECU Now! Data on the students' success will be forthcoming.