

UBAC Minutes

January 16, 2020

Special Guest: Kimberley Buster-Williams, Vice President for Enrollment Management

In Attendance: Dana Hall, Abby Tomba, Brooke DiLauro, Nabil Al-Tikriti, Anand Rao, Suzanne Sumner, Kyle Schultz, Chris Garcia, Tim Saulnier (Financial Aid), Christy Pack (Admissions), Melissa Yakabouski (Admissions), Kimberley Buster-Williams (Enrollment Management)

- Ms. Buster-Williams presented the 2016–2020 Strategic Enrollment Plan Proposed Targets, focusing the presentation on goals of that plan, cost, and anticipated return on investment
 - The 2016- 2020 SEP aimed to:
 - Stabilize First-Year Enrollment (smaller, higher profile classes)
 - Improve Retention
 - Increase Out-of-State, Adult students, Graduate Students
 - October numbers for each year of 2010s were presented, showing a dip in 2014 due to a confluence of factors
 - Non-Degree students declined from 2007 (129) to 2016 (only 15) Kimberly Young has been working to re-build this aspect of our course offerings.
 - Grow graduate enrollment. KBW noted that the current SEP 2020-2024 has a different focus relative to graduate enrollment. See below:
 - Focus on developing existing programs versus adding new programs. Kimberly Young has help to build external programs. COB obtained MBA accreditation, international clients established. Dahlgren cohort also established. COE is shifting to 4-year programs, will retool master's programs to make staying on for an additional year an attractive option. Post-Bac programs available for late deciders. (Dana Hall: How will the COE changes impact student athletes?)
- Selectivity: President Paino has been interested in raising our profile, which has impacted the budget (e.g. Washington Alvey awards). Problem before the 2016-2020 SEP: not yielding students beyond those given full rides. Solution: Finalists now landing top award which includes being offered a tuition scholarship. This has raised awareness of the program. This push-and-pull between attracting top candidates and the cost to do so has influenced the current iteration of the SEP, focusing on the middle group. Admitted students are partitioned into tiers based on test scores (if submitted—not required), GPA thresholds, and HS curriculum determined by UMW.
- Out-of-state targets have not been hit. States are getting more protective in terms of retaining their students and several states now provide financial incentives to state in-state (i.e. NY). Monitoring price sensitivity for optimal enrollment (e.g., Maryland has good neighbor

policy). Nabil Al-Tikriti: Would UMW benefit from a similar policy? No, it would not because the majority of our out-of-state students come from Maryland. Some of our historically largest draws have been hit harder by the economy and decreasing demographics as it relates to high school graduates (e.g., New England).

- Costs
 - Many investments were required to carry out the 2016-2020 SEP, including, financial aid, international recruiters, increasing honors program enrollment, data analytics tool, Executive Director of Career & Professional Studies, etc.
 - Impact on Academics (retooling programs, etc.) Suzanne: Where are we with getting support for developing online programs?
 - Financial Aid: Unanticipated cost of bringing in higher-achieving students. Admissions and financial aid have been analyzing results of each class (what was offered and accepted) so that they only award what is absolutely necessary going forward. These elasticity studies have paid dividends as net revenue goals for incoming classes have been met last two cycles.
- Tim Saulnier commented on improving campus diversity as it relates to demographic diversity. This goal has been achieved, as students at different income levels, and from different demographic neighborhood clusters have enrolled in larger numbers since 2014. He specifically noted the increases in Pell eligible students. Lower income students cost more because the university provides both need and merit based awards. In addition, students in recent freshman classes have required more student support services.
 - State formulas punish UMW for these access initiatives. “You never get less than what you start with.” Other institutions with whom we compete get more money through state funding.
 - Income of families interested in UMW has shifted. Homes have less money. (Less saving, recession, housing crunch, parents who have never told their kids no and expect the university to make it work)
- The Huron Firm has been brought in to help develop the 2020-2024 SEP
 - They found our aid strategy was well optimized
 - They made some recommendations as it relates to both recruitment and retention
- The rebranding initiative currently underway, being conducted by the firm MindPower, may impact our brand recognition in the future, affect recruiting
- Other discussion:
 - Dana Hall: Can we connect network with overseas alumni for international recruiting? KBW: Yes, we are leveraging this opportunity already, but we could do more. This year we enrolled 4 international graduate students. Christy Pack shared information regarding the countries and the programs they enrolled in. Nabil Al-Tikriti: Advocates doing more than current practices. Priorities need to be upgraded. KBW: Infrastructure and organization must be continuously refined for sustainability (alumni program infrastructure cannot rely on particular individuals). We are working to make agreements (e.g., Erasmus Plus which pays our travel costs to recruit).

- Virginia Tech market shift exposed vulnerabilities, prompted exploring markets to expand (Tidewater, Richmond) in addition to existing markets (NOVA).
- Challenge: Doing enough to stay competitive without straining the budget.
- Q: Nabil Al-Tikriti: How are we doing in terms of out-of-state? A: We get students from all over in smaller numbers. The numbers from particular regions can be sporadic. Athletics and historic preservation are big draws. Cybersecurity, GIS are other areas with potential. Halo effect: programs that lead into professional schools could eventually help?
- Q: Suzanne Sumner: Are we doing better from North Carolina? A: Actually, more from South Carolina. NC is challenging because its in-state is cheaper, lots of schools, agreements for transfer students.
- Q: Nabil Al-Tikriti: Do you see this whole thing as a potential train wreck? A: “It could go left. We are approaching a demographic cliff. There will be fewer students from which to draw. Schools in demand, with strong brands, will have a huge impact on the overall landscape”. Virginia’s directors of admissions meet twice a year to share information. Our director of admissions, Melissa Yakabouski, participates in these meetings. This practice helps anticipation and planning.
- Q: Dana Hall: Do you feel like the early orientation program has helped? A: It is now the standard practice. Recent changes to NACAC’s Standard of Best Practice have the potential of impacting when students make their commitment and how schools respond (i.e. poaching and enrollment deposit increases). In the past, there were “rules” which governed the behaviors of admissions offices. These “rules” (which the DOJ threatened to take legal action on) have meant that recruitment has been done on a fair/ equal playing field. Colleges and universities are waiting to see what the impact of the removal of NACAC’s “rules” will mean. UMW will take action if it appears that current practices put us as a competitive disadvantage. It has already been proposed that we increase our enrollment deposits from \$550 to \$600 to get a better sense of who is serious about enrollment. How peers are responding is being closely monitored.