

University Council Student Engagement and Success Committee

March. 21, 2018

3:30 PM

Student Union 321

AGENDA

In attendance: Kayla Bouchard, Michelle Byrne, Katie Cerrone, Paul Levy, Jennifer Manista, Carrie Short

Absent With Notice: Ravi Krovi, John Messina, Barb Caillet, Debbie Gannon

1. Welcome/Roll Call
2. Meeting minutes from Feb. approved.
3. Discussion regarding financial literacy.
 - a. Students don't always know exactly how much they owe
 - b. Students registering closer to start of school are at greater risk
4. Discussion of retention plan developed by Student Success Committee
 - a. Will check with John M. about how that information is shared
5. Guest: Jolene Lane, Vice President for Inclusion and Equity
 - a. Topic Submission: Services for LGBTQ Population (see attached--yellow highlighted sections)
 - i. Bathrooms for transgender students--signs are almost all up, working on how to publicize them
 - ii. Ohio Business Competes--is working with purchasing for how to participate
 - iii. Campus Pride Index--this is an assessment of resources. Jolene recommends we look at other campuses that have a good rating and see what resources they have for their campus
 - iv. Akron Pride Weekend--Some UA units had a table at the 2017 event. Falls during New Roo Weekend, so the timing is hard. But will work with student group and others to increase our participation.

- v. Safe Space Training--This happens occasionally on campus, but could be more frequent and better advertised. Could be promoted on the Office of Inclusion and Equity's website.
- vi. Lavender Graduation--Kayla will check with LGBT UA and see if they would be interesting in partnering with Kent. Perhaps we share that event with them and invite them to Gay Prom in fall.

Next meeting scheduled April 18, 2017.

Minutes prepared by Michelle Byrne

Topic Submission: Services for LGBTQ Population

Submission Date: January 17, 2018

Submitted by: Lis Regula

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Topic or Issue Description: While there has been little obvious anti-LGBTQ sentiment on University of Akron's campus and among its students, and most individuals are at least tolerant if not accepting of our LGBTQ population, University of Akron is currently a far less than welcoming university for LGBTQ students, while the city of Akron is one of only 19 cities in Ohio that has legislated anti-discrimination laws. This disconnect, paired with the welcoming and supportive infrastructure at nearby universities puts UA at a distinct disadvantage in recruiting and retaining students. This can be seen demonstrably in the 4 out of 14 Kent State QUEST program (mentoring program run by their LGBTQ center) mentees having some connection with UA. In short, we are not providing critical services that would help a vulnerable population to attain higher education, and make UA more attractive to these students going forward. To this end, I suggest that the university take some "low hanging fruit" actions and start to build an inclusive infrastructure for our students - current and prospective - that will help us to become a stronger, more diverse university community.

Specific actions requested:

1. Sign on to Ohio Business Competes, expressing our belief that an atmosphere of inclusion helps to attract the best and brightest to Ohio, and specifically to University of Akron.
<http://ohiobusinesscompetes.org/join/>
2. Register with and complete the Campus Pride Index self-assessment, report back with results and recommendations of the assessment, and make a plan for implementing those recommendations. <https://www.campusprideindex.org/>
 - From their website "Question: How does a college/university participate in the LGBTQ-Friendly Campus Pride Index?"
 - Answer: Any college/university may participate in the LGBTQ-Friendly Campus Pride Index. To begin, a campus official representing the college/university should create an account to take the online assessment. This individual should be responsible for LGBTQ issues and, or able to represent the campus in a professional capacity. Once the account is approved, the campus official completes the index tool consisting of 50+ self-assessment questions, which correspond to eight different LGBTQ-friendly factors. The individual may save responses and return to complete the index as many times as necessary. Once completed, the campus official receives a confidential report of the index tool responses along with results and recommendations. Each campus receives a basic campus profile with limited results for the public to view with the option of adding information like contact details and photos; however, a campus may also opt out of sharing information online."

3. Increase participation and support for annual Akron Pride Festival, coming in August (University of Akron School of Social Work is participating this year, up from last year's inaugural festival participation) <http://www.akronpride.org>
4. Encourage Safe Space training and encourage every department to have *at least one* safe space trained faculty/staff/office, and make that information available to students, possibly having the appropriately trained individuals serve as a point-person for other faculty, staff, and students in the department (with appropriate service credit, when possible).
5. Convert single stall restrooms to gender neutral, as opposed to gendered, restrooms to better protect trans and gender non-conforming students at UA, preferably with a map of some sort to help students locate these accessible facilities more easily.
6. Make available (and publicize) a listing of community and university resources targeted towards our LGBTQ community (I have the start of one, if that is helpful- <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1nD6NbKQ-mAlgcPYjLEby4PYgjTOEYeNYl6JWA5jlU8w/edit?usp=sharing>)
7. Stretch goal - Begin or support a Lavender Graduation for those LGBTQ students who do successfully complete their degrees at University of Akron.
8. Stretch goal - work towards reinstating an LGBTQ center on campus, with staff (part- or full-time) to help transition this university to the inclusive, welcoming institution that our LGBTQ students, faculty, and staff deserve. This could be done through a donation campaign reaching out to our alumni and/or local/regional grant foundations.

University Council Executive Committee Action:

Referred to: Student Engagement and Success Committee and
Talent Development and Human Resources Committee

Date: January 30, 2018

Please Provide Response Here

Response Date:

Submitted by:

Standing Committee, if appropriate:

Recommendation(s):

2018 RETENTION EFFORTS

* BEST PRACTICES *

Academic Advising

- Advisors assigned to specific majors/departments so they know those programs best
 - Keep up-to-date with and understand changes in curriculum
 - Communicate those changes to students
 - Process degree clearance requests
 - Make sure students understand requirements to graduate
- New hires to reduce load
- Mandatory advising for new freshmen, pre-admits
- Mandatory Career Planning class for all undecided students in second semester
- Faculty advisors working with students
- “Drive-by Advising” tables throughout semester to answer quick questions

Auxiliary Programs

- Learning Communities
- Living-Learning Communities (ex: 3 floors in the dorm)
- Akron Experience class focused on major and required for all
- Mandatory “Academic Action” meeting for probation students first week of semester
 - Introduced to stakeholders in student’s success (academic advisors, financial aid, accessibility, library, tutoring, personal counseling, etc)
- Student Success Workshops
 - Required for students on probation for more than one semester
 - Increase advising appointments to 6 per semester
 - Topics including accessibility, financial aid, career services
 - Tutoring/study tables provided and monitored by staff
- Women in Engineering
- IDEAs/Increasing Diversity in Engineering Academics
 - Committed to increasing diversity and inclusive excellence, enhancing enrollment, retention and graduation
- Design Teams
 - Any student can join any time
 - Students define project and run it
- Zip To Success
 - ½ semester workshops
 - Time management
 - Math help
 - Encouraged for anyone on probation or not happy with their grades

Continuing Students

- Outreach to those not enrolled for the next semester
- Midterm goodie bag (students had to come in to pick up)
 - Snacks
 - Tutoring information
- More effective email communication
- Academic probation
 - Students with 1.24 or lower gpa meet with a dean
 - Students with 1.25-1.99 meet with an academic advisor
 - All create an action plan listing recommended retakes, suggested tutoring and progress checks
 - Students with a 2.0 for the semester get a “term warning” – a hold is placed on student’s account and are asked to see their advisor before a certain date.
 - Students are given information on academic skills workshops in the counseling center
 - Required to meet with academic advisor minimum of twice a semester

Faculty

- Submit interim grades
 - Advisors reach out to those with “U”
- Create events that are very discipline specific
 - Modern Languages – study abroad programs
 - Biology – lecture series
 - Pre-health majors – create opportunities/learning communities, Brightspace page for this information
- All departments have a faculty advisor(s)

Departments

- Convocation for each unit/address how to get students to come to college/dept events
- Awards/recognition for students
 - English awards
 - Modern Languages has a ceremony for new majors
 - Psych has a popcorn machine second week of semester, staffed by dept to answer student questions
 - Welcome tables with snacks, planners, etc.
 - Student sessions/walk-in hours with tutors and snacks available

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

- Current last day to withdraw is too early/before midterms
- Need better way to track students
- Need better way to track efforts/working?
- Return to common reader