Chapter 10

From: Maritza Martinez
Sent: Saturday, November 07, 2009 11:05 AM
To: Sue R Faerman
Cc: Christopher E Fernando; Mayra E Santiago; Wayne A Locust
Subject: Middle States Review on EOP

Good morning Sue,

I thank you for requesting that we review the initial draft of the Middle States Review Report.

I have reviewed EOP's and want to say that while I am fine with most of it, I take exception with the final recommendation to have the university investigate EOP's retention dip from semester 3 forward for the following reason. While this is something that we ourselves have already begun to review and take action on improving (so we here in EOP/OASS would be in support of this recommendation as that figure needs to go up), the report paints an incomplete picture. It states that we do a great job of retaining our students initially, but percentages commencing with semester 3 begin to paint a different success story. What it fails to state is that the overall university's retention rate also dips as well in that same time frame and that even with that, EOP students are still retained at higher rates than their traditionally admitted peers. The report states that after 8 semesters we're at 72% but it fails to also state that the University's rate for traditional students after 8 semesters is 66% and our students are coming to this University with greater academic/economic/societal challenges as we all know.

The report also indicates that our graduation rate is in the 60's. We are at 68% as compared to 63% traditional student rate. Being reported as having a graduation rate in the 60's could mean to any reader that we graduate anywhere from 60.5% of our students to 69% of our students. At 68%, we are almost at a 70% graduation rate. Big difference in perception and in actual outcomes (i.e., they graduate 61% of their students as opposed to almost 70%) as compared to a 63% graduation rate for the traditionally admitted student body.

Can you see where I'm coming from with both of these points? It's all about how numbers are reported and compared that can give the reader an understanding of how successful a unit on the University campus either is or isn't - and I didn't like how we were portrayed in the final analysis. It's not the complete story.

I will double check these numbers, but if what I am stating here is correct Sue, then this section of this very important report needs to be revised to tell the complete story and yes indeed, 72% after 8 semesters is definitely a stat that we have already begun to look at ourselves to improve - and if the University can further assist us with that - all the better.

I will attend one or both of the public forums announced and again, sincerely thank you Sue for advising Mayra to advise us to review the draft! Glad we did!
Feedback addressed as follows:

- Paragraph adjusted to explain that high first-year retention rates and high graduation rates are both commendable, but that graduation rates are not as high as other programs with comparable first-year retention rates.

Beyond the initial Residential Summer Program, retention rates are initially quite high; in fact, EOP boasts the highest rate of first-year retention of all comparable cohorts and maintains strong numbers throughout the five years that funding is available to its students. This indicates that EOP is highly successful at engaging students early in their UAlbany careers and that the five-week program has been identified as a role model retention-producing program whose students excel academically and go on to be very visible student leaders and University citizens. EOP was recognized in 2000 by the Noel/Levitz assessment agency for its effectiveness in retention and academic excellence outcomes.¹

Given these statistics, one might expect EOP students to have similarly high graduation rates. Yet, according to statistics provided by the Office of Institutional Research, Planning and Effectiveness, in 2003, 2004 and 2005, four-year EOP graduation rates were 45.3%, 47.6% and 50.6%, respectively — numbers slightly lower than some other cohort groups, including traditionally admitted students. The statistics suggest there may be barriers or impediments that affect EOP students as they progress through their studies. In light of the remarkable first-year retention rate, the University should consider asking the program to develop an assessment plan that would allow it to examine its retention and graduation rates and determine whether graduation rates can be increased.

- Recommendation adjusted to indicate that the discrepancy between graduation rates of EOP students and other programs with comparably high first-year retention rates might suggest a need for further review.

¹ [https://www.noellevitz.com/Papers+and+Research/Retention+Excellence+Awards/](https://www.noellevitz.com/Papers+and+Research/Retention+Excellence+Awards/)
1. Page 8, course prefix is ‘RSSW’.
2. Page 8 is missing a link
3. Page 18 ‘Capitol’ should be spelled ‘Capital’.
4. Page 12 number of veterans is now 221 as of fall 2009.
5. Page 3…reference to a ‘dip to 72.4% [retention] after eight semesters’, it is unclear whether this is correct…shouldn’t retention dip to zero given graduation after eight semesters for EOP students, esp in light of the fact that in the very next sentence inst Research has calculated the graduation rate at 60%?

Feedback addressed as follows:
- Points 1-4 edited as suggested.
- Point 5: see response above to feedback from Chris Fernando and Maritza Martinez.

CAA (Council on Academic Assessment)

Chapter 10

What we valued:
- The chapter is clearly written and formatted.
- We support the recommendations for rigorous, data-driven assessment of the IELP and EOP programs.
- We agree that the University should create a process to track internships in order to “make informed decisions about internship opportunities” (p. 8).
- We also agree with the recommendation that “the University should determine what statistics on non-credit offerings should be gathered, and whether and how these activities should be assessed” (p. 13).

Concerns and recommendations for revision:
- The first page of the document explains that this chapter will be limited to “those formal programs and services which engage students for an extended period of time, have measurable outcomes, and culminate in an assessment.” However in some instances the programs described in this chapter have little or no formal assessment processes and/or culminating measures. This should be acknowledged in the text.
- The claim pertaining to the success of EOP students would be stronger if it was substantiated with evidence. We suggest adding a recommendation for a rigorous assessment of the program, in addition to students’ perceptions (which are already discussed).
- The chapter did not review the status of Related Academic Programs over the course of 10 years, as other chapters did. We recommend that such a review is included in the report.
Feedback addressed as follows:

- **Wording changed to clarify choice of programs for inclusion as follows:**

  “Given the broad array of related educational activities available to students, this analysis confines itself to those formal programs and services which engage students for an extended period of time. For the purposes of the self-study, related educational activities have been defined as monitored offerings that: include a formal registration process; an extended period of engagement between a student and qualified faculty, professional staff and/or field representative; and should culminate in an assessment that the student has achieved a measurable threshold of competence.”

- **Recommendation was added to be consistent with paragraphs changes referenced above re: EOP**

- **The following paragraph was added at the end of the Introduction to explain why this chapter does not provide a history of changes over the past decade, as well as recommendations for proceeding in the future.**

  “This chapter addresses the fundamental charge questions through the evaluation of programs addressed by the definition above, and is organized by type of program. Within each section, specific programs addressing the category are reviewed. It should be noted that previous self-studies have not included a comparable section on Related Educational Activities. A decade ago, UAlbany’s self-study report had a short section entitled “Extended Learning,” which summarized the technology-enhanced courses the University offered at that time. Because this chapter clusters a set of programs and services together for the first time, it is difficult to provide a comparative review of how these activities have evolved over the past decade. The University may wish to consider using this standard in future self-studies in order to maintain consistency and appropriate points of comparison.”

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**Additional Feedback from Feedback for Chapter 7**

Hi Sue and Bruce,

Maritza and I had a chance to consider this further, and we felt that it was important to include some verbiage / description of CSTEP and STEP under the Office Academic Support Services section in the Student Support Services chapter. Both programs have been at the University at Albany for decades and play an important function.
We attached a paragraph on each grant program for your consideration. We are not suggesting the entire sections to be included, but we feel it is important that these programs be mentioned in some manner in this document. If you feel that the program descriptions belong in other chapters or sections, we will be happy to hear your suggestions.

Lastly, please let us know if you’d like for us to further edit these descriptions on STEP and CSTEP.

Thank you in advance!

Best,

Chris and Maritza

The Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP) is jointly sponsored by University at Albany and the New York State Education Department. STEP services middle and high school aged students in the Albany area who are potentially interested in careers in the STEM fields and licensed professions. Tutorial and programming services are centered on academic support and college attainment; services are offered to low income/at-risk students after school in various school districts and Saturday mornings here at the University at Albany. STEP also provides a three week summer non-residential program where students are engaged in programming/summer projects, and participate in weekly fieldtrips relevant to the mission of the program. STEP serves as an important part of the University’s commitment to the surrounding Capital Region community as well as increasing the pipeline of underrepresented students in the STEM fields and licensed professions. STEP also supports the mission of the University by providing tutors and mentors (graduates and undergraduates) with financial support and opportunities to be role models for their mentees.

The Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) is jointly sponsored by University at Albany and the New York State Education Department. The University at Albany CSTEP initiative is an academic and career enrichment program designed to foster student success in preparing for professional licensure and careers in medicine, law, accounting, mathematics and science education, science, technology, engineering, and health. CSTEP prepares historically underrepresented and/or economically disadvantaged college students to acquire the aptitude and skills necessary to pursue graduate degrees that lead to professional careers in the scientific, technical, health-related or other licensed professions. The University at Albany CSTEP program also provides opportunities to conduct summer research, receive peer mentors/tutors, educational field trips, opportunities for students to present their research at conferences, and discounts toward graduate preparatory courses. The program pursues partnerships with departments within the university as well as other community partnerships in order to support the development of our future STEM professionals.

University at Albany CSTEP program:

• 85% of CSTEP Seniors graduate
• 250 students served annually
• 40% of CSTEP students take Graduate Examination courses
• 40% of CSTEP freshman remain active through their senior year
• University at Albany Summer Research Program (UASRP) has assisted over 100 CSTEP students in scientific research
• 45% of CSTEP students utilize tutoring services provided
• 80% of CSTEP students plan to pursue graduate degrees/science Careers

Feedback addressed as follows:
• This feedback originally came in for Chapter 7 (Student Support Services). Chris Fernando and Maritza Martinez were informed at that time that CSTEP/STEP would be discussed in Chapter 10 and they were asked to review that chapter. Although there were no additional comments, some material from this section was added to this chapter’s section on CSTEP/STEP.