Multicultural Network Meeting Summary  
Thursday, February 19, 2015  
1:30-3:00 p.m., Bolton 196

Present:  Susan Fields, Rob Smith, Ruth Russell, Kelby Spann, Channy Rasavong, Enrique Figueroa, Linda Huang, Maurina Paradise, Alejandra Lopez, Victoria Pryor, Twyla McGhee, Gary Williams, Warren Scherer, Ramona Sledge, Claudia Guzman, Simone Smith, Triena Bodart (guest), Phyllis King (guest)

Debriefing on A2S Summit – Gary Williams

Gary led the discussion on the 2/12/15 Summit that included comments and suggestions from those who attended the event. A financial aid issue that came up was the fact that students do not take advantage of the work study program. It seems, instead of accepting this award, students rather go into debt. It was suggested that we start the discussion on suggesting topics and getting involved in the planning of next Summit.

Financial Aid Update – Triena Bodart, Assistant Director

As presented at the A2S Summit, work study funds were underutilized. Financial Aid Office overawards three times the amount available, then sends “use it or lose it” letter. The process involves students accepting the award and finding a job on campus. If students are not employed by a certain deadline, money will be taken away. Students could keep the 2nd semester award, even if they didn’t work during the 1st semester. Some of the suggestions to facilitate/educate students about the work study awards include:

- Create a list of campus jobs and email it to the work study students.
- Inform students about the benefits, e.g., work study money is taxable, but it does not count as income in FAFSA.
- Continue and expand the campus job fairs at the beginning of fall and spring semesters.

Questions to consider:

- How do we support and inform/educate our students so they will take advantage of the work study awards?
- Is there a need to do a campus job fair targeting only work study students, i.e., how many students are awarded work study each year?

It was suggested that we invite Triena back to follow up on other financial aid matters. It would be great if she could share some work study data (by race/ethnic groups – awarded, accepted, etc.) at the next meeting. Linda will email Triena and copy the interim director.

Retention Plan – Phyllis King, Associate Vice Chancellor

The Retention Plan grew out of the Strategic Plan on what success looks like for students – from the successful students thematic group. The Retention Plan has three big objectives:

1. **Academic:** Deliver innovative, engaging, and distinctive undergraduate, graduate, and professional academic programs.
2. **Student and co-curricular experiences**: Foster student engagement, intellectual achievement, personal growth, well-being, lifelong learning and professional development.

3. **Operational**: Promote successful students and learning through operational enhancements.

**Objective 1**: The Plan also includes items on the critical first year academic experience, and developmental education. The Math Pathway experience seems to be successful, but not for all students, particularly African Americans in Math 94. Data showed that the African American students were doing “C” work until Thanksgiving, but we don’t know what happened after that. Thus far, 24 of these students (16 from AOC) have been followed up with success coaching, in an effort to get them back on track. It was suggested that we invite Kyle Swanson to our next meeting to discuss further on this topic. Phyllis also mentioned that the current transitional English courses will be discontinued in fall 2015.

**Objectives 2 & 3**: The intent is to get all students involved in HIP and learning communities. A UWM group attended the Gardner Institute to learn about academic advising, learning communities/common 1st experience for all students, and gateway courses.

Since academic advising is critical to student success, the following related issues on campus are:

- Lack of academic advising coordination.
- No centralized leadership/advising location.
- No standardization of academic advising practices; what are the expectations from students?
- Should all undecided (and pre-professional) students be centralized in a large undecided group? [Alejandra felt that pre-business students should stay in the School of Business as they benefit from being connected with the school.]
- Need for more academic advisors; national standard ratio is 1:300.
- Students are confused as to which advisors to see as some of them have many touch points.

To address these issues, an Academic Advising Task Group will be formed in the near future. Both Rob and Warren have been invited to join the task group. Phyllis, Gesele, and Kay are co-chairs.

The topic of faculty advisors was raised, which was a separate issue! The task group will only address issues related to academic advisors/advising.

It was suggested that we invite Phyllis back to the meeting in the future.