**Enrollment Management Process Improvement**

**Advising Task Force Subcommittee Minutes**

**September 8, 2022 (11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.)**

**Committee Members Present:**

* Joe Hinojosa
* Paul Hoffman, Co-chair
* Allyson Huntley
* Natalie James
* Tina Lyles, Co-chair
* Kari Peden, new member
* Diane Russo
* Kirk Schlemmer
* Dinithi Wright

**Committee Members Absent:**

* Laci Gerik

**Discussion and Recommendations**

The Advising Subcommittee recommends:

* FTIC students be required to meet with a Financial Aid representative before advising to understand how to complete the financial aid process, understand their financial aid package, and learn about critical requirements (how many hours, necessary GPA, completion rate, etc.).
  + Does this create a need for seasonal help?
  + What would it take to have consistent (daily) hours for the Financial Aid office Zoom?
  + Who is going to take ownership of financial aid discussion with the student? Students get one answer from Highlander Central and a different answer from financial aid, and often times have a difficult time getting through to either one.
  + Clear documentation is necessary for students and staff, and must be done in one platform only (Insight). The conversation will explain how many credit hours the student must take and how the amount adjusts based on credits.
  + Is there a way to show what the actual amount received for financial aid will be before the staff post financial aid on the payment deadline? This is especially challenging when students only attend part-time and it will need to be adjusted, or when they only receive partial Pell and it isn’t clear how much it will cover.
* When a veteran student meets with the VA rep, can that individual forward the DD214 to admissions so the TSI requirement can be waived? This would help eliminate so many errors because VA students don’t have to disclose that they are a veteran, Student Planning does not indicate they are a veteran, and they are told they need to test (plus it just removes an extra step for the students).
* More offices should provide a Zoom waiting room to improve communication channels for new students. It allows them to get answers when they ask for answers, versus calling and not getting through or not getting replies to emails and voicemails. When students don’t get answers, they come to advising anyway, and it makes for a less-than-efficient process.
  + Offices essential to the enrollment process who may benefit from a Zoom room may include:
    - Highlander Central
    - Business Office
    - Financial Aid (extended hours)
* MCC has a payment crisis. Advisors dealt with the backlash from students being dropped for non-payment, and many of the drops could have been avoided. Continuing the current model is counter-productive to all of the work done by staff to get the students enrolled in the first place.

Suggestions and questions:

* + Outreach to students who started financial aid and never finished it. This is happening to an extent, but does it start early enough?
  + What would it take to send out an electronic bill?
  + If not a bill, are students notified ahead of time that they have a balance and will be dropped for non-payment if not settled? Students often think their financial aid has gone through (or will before the start of school), but if it doesn’t they don’t find out until they are dropped for non-payment.
  + The fee for included books is causing a huge headache. Students don’t understand it, some classes have it and some classes don’t, fees are added late, etc. That fee specifically should not cause students to be dropped.
  + Drop for non-payment should not happen during office hours. There were students in the process of setting up the payment plan in office and were dropped in the process. It was frustrating to many students how many times they were dropped and weren’t sure when/why it was happening. A later time in the evening would also allow students time to talk with their families if needed to ensure payment is made.
* There is a lack of signage on campus and it may be beneficial to have more signage, especially seasonally, for all buildings essential in the enrollment process. Many buildings only have a name on one side of the building, and cannot be seen from the center of campus. Also, the name of the building alone does not let students know what services can be found in each building.
  + For example, students have a difficult time understanding what Highlander Central does. Sometimes we refer to it as the building, Enrollment Services Center, sometimes Highlander Central. Most often students understand “Start Here Building.”
* The committee sees value in campus-wide customer service training, in hopes of streamlining a similar “person-forward” style. Too often, the staff are concerned with triage and directing students to the right area, and the person and the actual questions are overlooked. While many times a referral/transfer is necessary to best serve the student, it can still be handled with more care than is always offered. (Possible recommendation: customer service themed PD Day).
* Communication about registration deadlines should be streamlined and be finalized earlier in the registration period. Changes were only updated in some places (website) but not others (WebAdvisor). Some offices were not aware of the changes and students were getting conflicting information.
* The committee sees the benefit in eliminating certain timelines as an effort to smooth out peaks during the busy times. For example, at times students are told they have to register for classes in order for their financial aid to be packaged. This past spring, registration opened before 2022 – 2023 financial packages began to be processed. Is it possible that packages can begin being reviewed when the FAFSA first opens for the year, the result being that many are out of the way when the rush season hits? It may also encourage some students to enroll if they understand their financial aid award before registering.
* Positive changes:
  + Become a Student page updates – we love! Clarifies the application process for potential students.
  + ACS changed the website and email alias automated response, to direct students to complete steps 1-3 of “Become a Student” before meeting with an advisor.