**University College Exploratory Team Meeting**

*Wednesday, November 4, 2015*

*BPSC 3.201, 3:15 pm*

*Notes*

**In attendance:** Adam Peck, Dana Cooper, Deborah Pace, Debra Kiesel,

John Moore, Karen Embry-Jenlink, Kenneth Collier, M. E. McWilliams,

Mark Barringer, Michael Martin, Michael Walker, Scott Shattuck, Timothy Clipson, Todd Brown and Joy Hammonds (note taker).

1. Welcome
2. Approval of minutes
   1. Please email Joy Hammonds any corrections to the notes from last week by noon on tomorrow, November 5th.
3. Skype with Dr. Conchita Hickey, Dean of University College at Texas A&M International University
   1. <http://www.tamiu.edu/uc/>
   2. The University College has emerged over time.
      1. 1995
         1. Freshmen were admitted for the first time.
         2. There was no academic support for first year students at that time.
         3. It began as a small tutoring program and grew into the current structure.
      2. Current Staff
         1. Dean
         2. 9 Full time Faculty
            1. 7 teach Freshman Seminar classes

6 sections each per semester

* + - * 1. 2 teach developmental classes
      1. 36 paid mentors
         1. 19 hours per week
         2. (see more about this below under the Freshman Seminar explination)
    1. 6 Departments (each has a Director)
       1. Advising & Mentoring Center
       2. Testing Center
       3. TRIO: Student Support Services
       4. University Learning Center
       5. Writing Center
       6. Service-Learning Center
    2. Location
       1. This is an important point.
       2. The UC main office, Advising & Mentoring and Testing are located in the Student Success Building along with admissions, recruitment, business office, financial aid and student success/student affairs.
       3. We wanted to have a building/place where students could come to get their work done, to address their needs.
       4. This allows us to work closely with these other areas.
    3. The UC reports to the Provost.
  1. Questions:
     1. What role does the testing center play in the first year college?
        1. TSI Assessment
        2. The testing for the entire college
     2. Is early college high school part of the UC?
        1. No. It has its own building on campus.
        2. The Dean of Sciences & Math are on their advisory board.
        3. I work closely with the principle so we can get them ready for TSI and to unsure they are prepared for Junior level classes. Many of them still struggle.
     3. How many freshmen?
        1. Around 1000
        2. 45/46 Freshman Seminar Sessions per semester
        3. Union 1101 –Fall
           1. Common Curriculum

Common Reading

Read in class for 6 weeks

An international book

The President buys this for the faculty as well. This allows a common university experience.

There is an optional essay competition.

We take 15 student tot the country of origin of the book.

This year we will be traveling to India.

The course includes the other common transition components like safety, counseling, integrity, ect.

* + - 1. Union 1102 –Spring
         1. This includes more transition components and our QEP focus on undergraduate research.
         2. Freshman Academic Conference

Each Spring we have a conference where ALL freshmen present their research.

We have refocused the research aspect of this so we would have better evidence of our outcomes. This is an area where we are really pushing the envelope.

* + - * 1. All students take Union 1102 in the Spring unless they have 30 hours prior to coming to the University.
        2. For students who do very well in Union 1101, we do offer some non-UC faculty taught Union 1102. These courses are focused on the student’s major area of study. They still present at the conference.
      1. Mentoring Program
         1. This is part of the Freshman Seminar course grade.
         2. 36 paid peer mentors (working 19 hours per week)

Assigned mentees

Students must meet with peer mentors 30 minutes per week.

The mentors are trained and given a curriculum/topics to discuss.

The Director is a professional counselor.

This is mostly about establishing relationships.

This program is expensive, but budget-wise you reap what you sow.

We tried to have the meetings every other week to save money, but the relationships were not strong enough to make the desired impact.

This program is often mentioned in the reflective essays at the end of the semesters.

Mentors turn in grades based on attendance at these meetings.

An added bonus: this programs provides employment on campus for our really exceptional/successful Junior and Senior students.

* + - * 1. Note: there is no peer instructor in the classes.
      1. Tutoring Center
         1. Students are required to spend two hours at the tutoring center monthly.
         2. This has increased our Sophomore tutoring and SI numbers.
    1. Influence on Retention Rate
       1. Prior to the establishment of the University/First Year College establishment the retention rate was erratic.
          1. The UC has no only stabilized the retention rate, it has increased it.
       2. It has been 76% for the last two years.
       3. The retention rate was usually in the 60’s before the Freshman Seminar was required.
          1. That is a testament to how important this component is.
    2. Do you have a director that works specifically with the mentors?
       1. Director of the Advising and Mentoring Center is over the 7 Academic Advisor and the 36 Peer Mentors.
    3. Many academic deans appose loosing advising of first year students. Was this a hurdle and how did you address it?
       1. It is important to note the difference between scheduling and faculty advising. Our advisors work very closely with the other colleges to ensure they have the most current information to help students avoid scheduling mistakes. Having one location for freshman advising helps students avoid confusion. It also gives students a place to come ask questions if they have them in subsequent years.
       2. We encourage students to go to their professors, and we stress the importance of forming those relationships. We also encourage students to work with Career Services from the beginning.
       3. The advising hold is lifted after their Spring advising session. At that point they have registered for the following Fall and have a clear degree plan laid out for them.
    4. Do you have dedicated classrooms for Freshman Seminar?
       1. No, but we are usually assigned to two buildings.
    5. Can you elaborate on the role of the Data Information Specialist?
       1. His main role is to provide technical support for the division and the division website. This position also serves as general office support.
    6. What percentage of your freshmen are eligible for TRIO resources? How is it plugged into the UC?
       1. We have a large percentage of incoming freshmen who are Pell grant eligible.
       2. Students are selected based on who will use the services.
       3. TRIO tutors work and train either with the Learning Center or with Writing Center.
  1. Closing Comments
     1. It is very important to create a culture of communication and cooperation. The success of our UC has a great deal to do with the level of support we have from our current President and the partners we have across campus.

1. Meeting location update
   1. Wednesday, November 18, 2015 – Student Center Room 2.306
      1. This is the only meeting location that is different from the Wyatt Room in the library.