**Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE)**

**Meeting Minutes**

**September 11, 2019**

1. **Call to Order**

The Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE) was called to order on September 11, 2019, at

3:00 p.m. in the Student Success Center Classroom 1115 in Ninth Street Hall.

**Members present:** Gurkan Akalin; Dagni Bredesen; Joe Eichman, recording secretary; Jacquelyn Frank; Jennifer Hedges; Shelley James; Alexis Jones; Josh Norman; Karla Sanders, chair; Jody Stone; Ed Treadwell; Tanya Willard; Melody Wollan; and Jie Zou.

**Members absent:** Cindy Boyer and Mona Davenport.

1. **Approval of CORE Minutes- August 28, 2019**

Melody Wollan moved to approve the minutes from the August 28 meeting. Dagni Bredesen seconded, and the minutes were approved, with Alexis Jones and Josh Norman abstaining.

1. **FA18 Retained to FA19**

Karla Sanders brought data on the retention from FA18 to FA19. These are not official numbers yet. According to her calculations, 73.67% of the freshmen class was retained, up from 70.3% last year. Those students in Financial Aid Verification have the worst retention rate, at 40.54%. Students who chose EIU after March have a 58.52% rate. Jennifer Hedges noted that last year, some 40-45% of freshmen were in Verification, while this year, only around 30% are, which is about normal. She added that these numbers are for any students with outstanding documents required by Financial Aid. Sanders noted that there are currently 10 students still in the verification process. She also added that the Aim High program is showing retention improvement results.

When looking at retention rates among the programs with lower rates, Sanders reminded the Committee that the old names of the programs are still being used. Josh Norman said that this model definitely needs to evolve. He also noted that overall the departments have made strides in retention. Sanders broke down the data and has worked with these departments. Ultimately, many of these programs are the favorite majors of students with other risk factors.

EIU is doing well with first generation students. Dual credit students are also doing well – retained at 81.72%. Josh Norman answered a question from Melody Wollan regarding data from our own dual credit program, saying that there has been a significant increase in students from District 214 as well as growth in downstate dual credit students. 19 of the 99 new freshmen are from our dual credit program. Sanders noted that this fall is only our third year offering dual credit.

The data once again show that high school GPA is a huge predictor. There is a 14% different between those students with a GPA lower than 2.5 and those with a 3.0. Looking at on-campus students, they typically have more risk factors than commuter students, Jody Stone added. He also noted that 51% of our students in the residence halls are Caucasian.

Melody Wollan asked why it seems we target students with more risk factors rather than really supporting those with fewer factors. Shelley James said that advising works to give those with multiple factors support, but those with fewer risk factors require a different conversation. Josh Norman said that it is difficult to identify which factor is the one the will send a student out of the University. He is working with Heidi Larson in Counseling to create a systematic mentoring program between older and incoming freshmen and transfer students across campus. Jody Stone added that students who have on-campus employment receive more mentoring at their workplace, so suggested that maybe this new program focus first on those students who do not have on-campus employment.

Gurkan Akalin asked if there are any positive risk factors, and Norman replied that athletes, dual credit, and Honors are positive factors. Sanders added that students in good standing are retained at higher rates than those on academic probation or warning.

1. **FA19 Cohort**

The percentage of freshmen with negative risk factors are lower in FA19. For example, only 29.9% of FA19 freshmen have a high school GPA less than 2.9. Jennifer Hedges said that MyEIU now has all required financial forms available on it, and has helped reduce the number of students in Financial Aid Verification from 4.7% to 1.1%. Karla Sanders reminded that committee that this data includes students who start in both summer and fall, while the official University data does not include summer starts. She also noted that there are more standard admits, so the percentage of special admits dropped, even though the actual number of special admit students has not changed. All-in-all, Sanders said that FA19 cohort looks good.

1. **Adjourn**

The next meeting will be September 25. Karla Sanders will not be there, but Tanya Willard will lead the discussion. The meeting adjourned at 4:05.

*~Minutes submitted Joe Eichman, Recording Secretary*