**Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE)**

**Meeting Minutes**

**March 27, 2019**

1. **Call to Order**

The Committee on Retention Efforts (CORE) was called to order on February 13, 2019, at

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

**Members present:** Gurkan Akalin, Cindy Boyer, Julie Dietz, Joe Eichman (recording secretary), Shelley James, Alexis Jones, Katie Lewandowski, Catherine Polydore, Karla Sanders, chair, Jody Stone, and Tanya Willard

**Members absent:** Austin Cheney, Mona Davenport, Josh Norman, Vicki Phillips, Ed Treadwell, and Jie Zou.

**Guests:** Mandi Starwalt from Financial Aid and Alexis Straub, CSA graduate student and Housing

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1. **Approval of CORE Minutes- February 13, 2019**

The minutes from the February 13, 2019, meeting were reviewed. Catherine Polydore motioned to approve the minutes, and Julie Dietz seconded that motion. The minutes were approved, with no abstentions.

1. **Foundation Grants & Criteria**

The University Foundation has raised $40,000.00 to help financially-struggling freshmen students to persist from SP19 to FA19. These funds will be distributed as 40 $1000.00 scholarships. The eligibility criteria will be based on the following: 1) New freshmen students, 2) in good standing, and 3) on track to earn 30 credit hours by May. Karla Sanders ran data on new freshmen with outstanding balances. 520 of them met the first two criteria, with fewer on track to earn 30 credit hours by May.

Sanders asked if we give $1000 to students who owe more than $5000, would that have an effect on retention. Josh Norman and Karla Sanders both would prefer students receiving these monies attend a course on financial literacy. Shelley James said that Sanders should run this data again, after the withdrawal deadline, in case any of these students drop classes, thus putting them off target to earn 30 credit hours. Julie Dietz mentioned that the fault outstanding balance could be beyond the student’s control – that it could be their parent’s fault. Mandi Starwalt said that it is often an issue with the parents. The Foundation’s goal is to get 40 students to an outstanding balance of less than $1000, the amount the Dr. Glassman thinks can trigger a hold to be placed on a student’s account. In current practice, Student Accounts places holds on students owing more than $200, which is the federal limit to place a hold on an outstanding balance. Jody Stone said that he think the middle group (students with outstanding balances between $2000 and $5000) will see more of an impact of the reward. He did wonder, though, if there are people who owe money, and are able to, and maybe even plan to, pay those balances. Catherine Polydore asked if there was a way to know whether they can or cannot pay. Mandi Starwalt said that Financial Aid can look at their overall financial package and make a more informed decision regarding a parent’s ability to pay. Polydore said it is important to approach this fairly, and does not think asking them to attend a financial literacy session is too much to ask. Mandi Starwalt also mentioned that for some of these outstanding balances, it is possible that a loan has not yet been dispersed. Financial Aid can check that, as well.

Karla Sanders suggested that in the financial literacy session, the focus be on where to go to help reduce the financial gap rather than just general information. Maybe also include financial do’s and don’t’s. Mandi Starwalt said that Financial Aid could instead do one-on-one meetings with each student receiving an award. They could go over each student’s individual financial package to give a 15 minute, personalized, and specific information. The Committee agreed that this would be the best approach.

These awards may become annual, as the Foundation is looking at more ways to help students stay in school.

Karla Sanders will run a new report on Monday, April 1, and sort it based on the Provost’s parameters. She will pull out students who owe less than $1000. Mandi will analyze the students’ financial profiles on the list and send it back to Karla. Then the students will be notified and the workshops scheduled.

1. **Spring Newsletter**

Karla Sanders will push Gurkan Akalin and Austin Cheney’s report to the fall newsletter and will add the announcement on the $40,000 of awards.

1. **Gateway Retention**

Karla Sanders compiled retention data specifically on Gateway students from FA17 to SP18 and from FA18 to SP19. She gave a refresher on the Gateway program – conditional admission. Students must meet with their advisor weekly, take the University Foundations course and Study Tables. They must also live on campus and not join a Greek group their first year. Students qualify for this program is both their ACT and HS GPA are below the standard admission level. Mona Davenport admits the students after EIU denies them standard admission. There are usually around 140 new freshmen Gateway students.

These students are more likely to have a need gap. The retention rates really went up from FA18 to SP19. Students with low HS GPA were retained at higher levels than standard admit students due to Study Tables and the one-on-one advising. Gateway students with HS GPA’s over 3.0 were retained at a lower rate, perhaps because they did well and transferred out.

1. **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 4:15.

*~Minutes submitted Joe Eichman, Recording Secretary*