Degree Audit Design Team Recommendations

2010

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The Charge:

Research best practices in Degree Audits, Credit Evaluations, Change of Majors, and Certification of Graduation at Banner Community Colleges

Synthesize research to develop preliminary recommendations and solicit feedback from College Senate and Academic Affairs Administrative Team

Colleges Surveyed:

Team: Hudson Valley CC (HVCC), Schenectady CCC (SCCC), SUNY Potsdam, CUNY – Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), Monroe CC (MCC), SUNY New Paltz

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Credit Evaluations:

- Credit evaluations for new, transfer and continuing students were done centrally in all the
 institutions we surveyed, by either one or two full-time staff members located in the Admissions
 office or the Registrar's Office. Only HVCC has academic departments doing the credit
 evaluations.
- In each institution, even when the Transfer of Credit tables and entries into banner are maintained by a staff person in Admission or Registrar's Office, the Deans/Academic Departments are ultimately responsible for approving courses that are deemed equivalent.
- The Deans/Academic department heads/faculty at the colleges surveyed established guidelines for the staff person to follow for program specific requirements. Example: Students must earn a grade of B or better in courses to transfer into the Nursing program. In addition, they submit forms to the Registrar's Office to document course substitution, course waivers, etc.
- Transfer Credit is kept in Banner, but advisors/deans have access to view transfer credit on the student record through Curriculum, Advising, and Program Planning (CAPP) Reports or DegreeWorks Reports (SUNY Potsdam, BMCC).
- Except for BMCC and HVCC, all Banner colleges use the Banner "Transfer Articulation Module" building equivalency tables to keep track of courses transferred from other institutions.

In addition to keeping track of transfer credits using Banner, some colleges are making use of
imaging systems such as Banner Document Management Suite or X-Tender (SCCC), or
ImageNow (MCC) to eventually replace all the paper files. Each college expressed that they are
committed to moving toward a paperless environment. Most records at HVCC are now
electronic. SUNY Potsdam still maintains all credit evaluation related paperwork on paper
records that are later microfilmed.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- That the Transfer of Credit be done centrally to standardize granting transfer credit from other colleges to MVCC and among the students attending the institution. The re-evaluation of credit should also be centralized. "Now, more and more institutions employ a transfer credit coordinator, whose job is to facilitate and preserve (and sometimes mediate) through course evaluations. Having a permanent record of the transferability of a course -not just for the student who already completed the course but also for students who might take it in future-means that the course is now articulated, not merely evaluated." (The Registrar's Guide: Evolving Best Practices in Records and Registration, p268-269).
- That MVCC implements the Banner "Transfer Articulation" module to facilitate and standardize the transfer of credits from other colleges. This will help to standardize the evaluation and articulation of courses. The implementation of "Transfer Articulation" may also show major benefits in DegreeWorks.
- That MVCC make use of their web site to market the transferability of courses and publicize which courses are equivalent courses once the courses have been articulated. This will help students make a decision if they want to transfer to MVCC.

Degree Audit/Advisement:

- Students are advised by Professional Advisors and faculty using a Degree Audit tool. Colleges use different different software vendors to advise students about their degree requirements. BMCC and SUNY Potsdam use DegreeWorks, HVCC, MCC and SCCC advises their students using CAPP reports, and SUNY New Paltz uses DARS. In addition to faculty, colleges rely on professional Advisors to guide student through the myriad of degree and certificate requirements. Faculty advisors report to an academic entity such as a chair, dean, and ultimately to the Academic VP. Professional advisors report to a Director of an Advisement Center, the VP for Enrollment Management or the VP for Student Services.
- At SUNY Potsdam, the Student Success Center is responsible for training all advisors in the use of DW. Mandatory new advisor training and college wide meetings are used as ways to gain some consistency in advising. Using a system such as DW has made it easier for students and advisors to follow the degree requirements.

RECOMMENDATION:

- That DegreeWorks at MVCC be made available to students and advisors to follow up on degree requirements and be used as a consistent tool for advising.
- That MVCC make available training for Deans, advisors, faculty and student on the effective use of DegreeWorks.

Change of Majors/Re-matriculation:

- Change of Majors and Re-Admission (Re-matriculation) are done centrally by the Admissions
 Offices and/or the Registrar's Offices. This is done to attain a certain degree of consistency. In
 addition, guidelines from SUNY Administration should be followed and common terms should
 be used for institutional reporting.
- At colleges like BMCC, where all Credit Evaluations are done by the Admissions Office, all change
 of majors forms are sent to the Admissions Office for re-evaluation of credit, while the actual
 processing of the Change of Major and update in Banner is done by the Registrar's Office.
- There is no charge for the students to have a Change of Major processed on their behalf. BMCC had a \$10.00 fee for re-admission.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- That there should be one point of entry for all students (matriculated and non-matriculated) where processes and communication to all students can be done consistently. Thus, rematriculation may be changed in name to Re-Admission to the college.
- That MVCC makes a serious commitment to utilize technology to facilitate processing new, transfer and returning students.
- That MVCC rethink and review the Change of Major process and make use of available technology to simplify and streamline the process.

Graduation Certification:

- In all colleges surveyed, the Graduation Certifications were done centrally and the certifications were processed by the Registrar's Office.
- In all colleges, the Registrar's Office makes sure that degree requirements are met, and they are set using a degree audit tool such as CAPP or DW.
- Deans/Chairs in Academic departments submit "waivers" and "substitution" as needed for graduation and review the compliance reports.
- Registrar Office reports to VP for Enrollment Management and Student Development or VP for Instruction.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

• That the Certification of Graduation be done centrally to standardize the process of approving degrees and certificates.

In addition, the committee is submitting the following recommendation:

• That the college makes a commitment to become paperless starting with the intake of students applying for Admission or Re-matriculation to the college and extending through all the departments at the college.