

**MINNESOTA STATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE STUDY SESSION  
APRIL 13, 2011**

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*Academic and Student Affairs Committee Members Present: Chair Christine Rice; Trustees Duane Benson, Christopher Frederick, Thomas Renier, Louise Sundin, James Van Houten and David Paskach (via telephone).*

*Other Board Members Present: Trustees Scott Thiss, Cheryl Dickson and Jacob Englund (via telephone).*

*Leadership Council Committee Co-Chairs Present: Interim Vice Chancellor Scott Olson and President Larry Litecky.*

The Minnesota State Colleges and Universities Academic and Student Affairs Committee held a study session on April 13, 2011, at Wells Fargo Place, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Board Room, 30 East 7<sup>th</sup> Street in St. Paul. Chair Rice called the meeting to order at 1:03 pm.

**1. Developmental Education**

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee has asked for a study of promising practices in development education and for recommendations on how to best address the delivery of developmental education within the system.

Mike López, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, reminded Trustees that during a previous study session they were given information on several efforts some campuses are undertaking in the area of developmental education. These practices included: supplemental instruction; learning communities; intrusive advising; first-year success courses; and redesigning developmental education, such as accelerated coursework.

During this study session, several campuses presenters have been asked to provide information on their best practices in developmental education and how these practices are being implemented.

**Supplemental Instruction at Winona State University (WSU)**

**Presenter:**

Jillian Quandt, Tutoring Services Coordinator, WSU

Supplemental Instruction was started at WSU in the fall of 2005 and it primarily focuses on historically difficult courses in the College of Science and Engineering.

Supplemental instruction leaders are undergraduate students who have successfully taken the course. As a leader, they sit through the course again with current students and then conduct study sessions two to four times a week to help students understand the coursework. Attendance at the supplemental instruction sessions is voluntary, Ms. Quandt said, but they've found more students prefer group study sessions rather than individual tutoring sessions.

The study sessions can effectively serve large numbers of students and have shown success in terms of enhancing grades and lowering the number of students withdrawing from the class, Ms. Quandt said. In 2009-2010, more than 1,200 WSU students attended an average of eight supplemental instruction sessions and earned grades .72 higher than students who did not attend.

Each supplemental instruction leader costs about \$1,150 per semester. Related costs include faculty support, textbooks, classroom space and a program coordinator. Student leaders are also finding the experience they gain by leading these sessions to be beneficial, Ms. Quandt said.

### **Minnesota FastTRAC Program at Saint Paul College**

#### **Presenters:**

Peggy Kennedy, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Student Development, Saint Paul College;

Mary Jo Gardner, Chief Executive Officer at Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board;

Kristine Halling, Director of the Hubbs Center, a part of the St. Paul Public Schools system.

The FastTRAC initiative in Minnesota is creating new ways for adults to learn by helping local partnerships build programs that combine development of basic academic and English language skills with career and technical education. Ultimately, the program aims to help more adults enter and succeed in post-secondary education to respond to the changing economic and demographic landscape of the state.

Vice President Kennedy said Saint Paul College became determined to help adult students raise their assessment scores since too many students were using up their financial aid doing developmental coursework before they could even begin their occupational coursework.

Co-teaching has proven to be an effective way to help adult students enhance their skills, Ms. Halling said. In addition to the classroom teacher, an adult basic educator instructor attends a portion of the class and often offers assistance to students who may not be understanding the concepts. The adult basic instructor then offers after-class study sessions to help reinforce learning.

The program is showing encouraging results in terms of retaining students and bettering grades, Ms. Halling said.

Vice President Kennedy said the average age of a student in this program is 44. Associate Vice Chancellor López pointed out that future workforce needs will not be met unless there is a greater effort to attract adult learners.

### **Developmental Education Courses and Redesign at Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College (FdLTCC)**

#### **Presenters:**

Anita Hanson, Dean of Student Services, FdLTCC

Anna Fellegly, Vice President of Academics, FdLTCC

Vice President Fellegly said three years ago the English Department determined that the Refresher English Course was not meeting the learning needs of students who placed into the developmental course. Therefore, they decided to redesign the existing course curriculum and create two separate courses. If students are placed into a more appropriate developmental English course based on their current skill level, they may save some time and money.

The semester-long, 3-credit Refresher English course was broken into two, 2-credit, eight-week courses titled College Prep English I and College Prep English II.

This course redesign is proving to be successful, Vice President Fellegly said. Both passing and completion rates have improved and students are now better prepared for college-level composition.

Dean Hanson described a recent math curriculum redesign involving beginning algebra and higher algebra. On their own, both these courses are 3-credits long and students meet three days a week for a full semester.

The math department decided to combine beginning algebra and higher algebra into an accelerated, one-semester course that meets five days a week for 60 minutes, plus a one-hour lab. Students are taught beginning algebra skills during the first eight weeks of the term and higher algebra skills during the last eight weeks.

Again, the pass and retention rates of students involved in this arrangement have shown improvement. Instructors have found offering the class five days a week helps students stay focused. It is anticipated this redesign will help more students be on track to complete higher-level math courses during their second year.

FdLTCC also practices several other developmental education best practices, including intrusive advising. Students who are not doing well in class are identified and are sent letters, called and sometimes asked to attend face-to-face

visits with faculty. FdLTCC also has offered a learning community called Weekend College and this coming fall will offer a 1-credit New Student Seminar course to help students acclimate to campus life.

For the past four years, FdLTCC has given Accuplacer assessment tests to sophomores and juniors at area high schools. This activity helps students start thinking about college and they can use the assessment results to help them work on skills which they may need to bolster. This testing also helps to give FdLTCC a presence in the high schools.

### **Bridge to Success Program at Century College**

**Presenter:**

Ron Anderson, Vice President of Academic Affairs

Vice President Anderson said Century College has had a long tradition of utilizing innovative piloting promising practices. These practices include:

- Implementation of a mandatory New Student Seminar Course for developmental reading students: The New Student Seminar aims to orient students to the college environment, explore the student's individual relationship to higher education; examine strategies that will assist them in becoming successful; reflect on academic goals, skills, interests, values, personality and preferred learning style; and learning about Century College's educational philosophy and practices.
- Intrusive Faculty Advising: This practice focuses on an intentional pairing of a new student with a faculty advisor throughout the first term of enrollment. It is aimed at increasing student faculty interaction and establishing academic goals and concrete program plans, which form the basis for future advising.
- Learning Communities: This practice involves the intentional pairing of two or more courses to create a community of learners who will work and learn together across disciplinary lines. Faculty collaboration helps define complementary instructional strategies and assignments.
- Supplemental Instruction: The emphasis of supplemental instruction is on gateway courses. Student tutors are placed in the classroom and they work in conjunction with the faculty member. Students are given immediate access to a peer tutor and group study sessions.

The Bridge to Success program is showing good results, Vice President Anderson said. Of the 2,491 students participating in one or more components in the fall, there was a 76 percent retention rate. Of the 8,428 not participating in Bridge to Success, the retention rate was 71 percent.

Century College is also focusing on organization development as a way to create a common understanding of the individual and collective roles in improving student success. There are efforts to develop and implement unit, program and departmental action plans which outline specific activities that will be undertaken to improve student success.

**Increasing College Readiness Through a P-20 Partnership- Minnesota State University, Mankato**

**Presenters:**

Ginger Zierdt, Director of The Center for School-University partnerships, MSU, Mankato

Paul Preimesberger, Assistant Director for The Center for School-University Partnerships, MSU, Mankato

Brian Dietz, Superintendent, Waseca School District

The Center for School-University Partnerships serves as a liaison between P-12 institutions and post-secondary programs involved in educator preparation with focus on developing and supporting partnerships between the College and schools/communities. Ms. Zierdt said the center works to strengthen high-quality learning through advocacy, leadership and service.

Mr. Preimesberger said to significantly advance student achievement and make high school graduates more ready to handle college coursework, the center and its P-12 partnerships are promoting the use of Advancement Via Individual Determination Program (AVID), a structured, college preparatory system. AVID is aimed at high school students with average to high test scores and college potential, but who may be first-generation college students, low income or in a historically underserved category.

AVID works to accelerate under-achieving students into more rigorous courses while in high school. They are given support with in-class tutors and a strong student/teacher relation and this helps develop a sense of hope for personal achievement. The ultimate goal is to help students bridge the achievement gap and become academically ready to meet the challenges of college or university coursework.

The program nationwide has shown success. Seventy-eight percent of 2008 AVID graduates were accepted to a four-year college. AVID students complete university entrance requirements at a much higher rate than their non-AVID peers.

Two-year colleges can also benefit from AVID. Century President Larry Litecky said his school has a partnership with AVID through students in the St. Paul School District.

Trustee Dickson said she appreciated hearing of the varied approaches to developmental education and their success rates. Although these best practices may be expensive to administer, the system would likely experience higher costs by not promoting innovative ways to address developmental education, she said.

Trustee Sundin said she believes the Board should send a strong message encouraging system institutions to adopt at least one best practice in developmental education. Assisting campuses in the implementation should be a high priority for the Board, she added.

Trustee Van Houten said it may be beneficial to assess the number and type of developmental education practices throughout the system.

Associate Vice Chancellor López said a survey of promising practices has been conducted among the two-year colleges. He said he has followed up with a similar survey of the promising practices at the universities. This information will be included in the final report on developmental education presented to the Committee at the May Board meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 pm  
Respectfully submitted,  
Margie Takash, Recorder