

MEMORANDUM

TO: Provost Carey
Vice Chancellor Ciri
Vice Chancellor Nelson

FROM: Rick Caulfield 
Chancellor

DATE: April 18, 2018

RE: Response to Retention Committee recommendations, dated April 16, 2018

As discussed, the UAS Retention Sub-Committee chaired by Eric Scott and Dr. Charla Brown completed an audit of UAS practices based upon a diagnostic tool developed by the Educational Advisory Board (EAB)(see attached). As you know, the Sub-Committee operates under the guidance of the Chancellor's Strategic Enrollment Task Force.

Recommendations from the Committee in four areas were presented to UAS Executive Cabinet on April 17, 2018. The four areas are: Early academic alerts, Course repeats, Course and Institutional Withdrawal, and Bursar Holds. Initial response of Executive Cabinet is favorable to these recommendations, and there is a desire to act on such recommendations quickly when a strong case is made for implementation.

Before approving these four recommendations, I ask that you consult with those in your areas—including with faculty and staff governance leaders and campus directors—about each of them and provide any further feedback, questions, or concerns about them. Please do so no later than May 4 so that we can complete our final review and act on these prior to the end of Spring semester.

Thank you.

Cc: Registrar
Faculty Senate President
Staff Council President

TO: Dr. Richard Caulfield, Chancellor
Dr. Karen Carey, Provost
Michael Ciri, Vice Chancellor
Joseph Nelson, Vice Chancellor

FROM: Eric Scott, Dean of Students & Campus Life and Co-chair of UAS Retention Committee
Dr. Charla Brown, Assistant Professor and Co-Chair of UAS Retention Committee

DATE: April 16, 2018

RE: EAB Academic Policy Audit

The UAS Retention Committee, as established under the Strategic Enrollment Task Force, adopted a course of action in August 2017 based on a best-practices diagnostic tool developed by the Educational Advisory Board (EAB). This EAB Academic Policy Audit is a “toolkit for identifying and prioritizing institutional barriers to success.” The 2017 version of this document has 18 policies across 5 separate categories that target areas where unintended consequences may negatively impact students.

This tool was designed to help an institution determine where “academic rules, regulations, and processes may create unnecessary obstacles for students.” For each policy under review, the Academic Policy Audit identifies what is considered to be “best practice”, as well as “too lenient”, “too strict” based on EAB findings and research. “Too lenient” indicates that students may get unnecessarily bogged down and not make academic progress due to not having enough support, incentive or information, while “too strict” indicates that unnecessarily rigid rules or regulations may be creating a barrier to success.

The Retention Committee then expanded upon the toolkit by identifying decision makers and stakeholders for consultation. The completed audit was shared with the regional advising group and Faculty Senate for feedback and prioritization. Following receipt of that feedback, the committee met on March 26 to identify the top four priorities for immediate action in FY19. These recommendations are intended to be the beginning of a collaborative process and each priority has varying levels of complexity to be addressed. There are additional items within the audit that are being pursued by other parties that the Retention Committee further endorses but require more complex planning to implement.

See below for a list of the Retention Committee’s current priorities that includes an explanation of the EAB best practice, the classification of the UAS policy as too lenient or too strict, a summary of unintended consequences, and recommended changes. It is our sincere hope that these recommendations, based on best practices and student retention, be considered and referred to the appropriate departments for further action. The UAS Retention Committee is available for further consultation as these priorities are pursued.

RETENTION COMMITTEE
 UAS Priorities Based on Stakeholder Input & EAP Academic Policy Audit
 AY2017-2018

| Priority #1: Early Academic Alerts | |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>EAB Best Practice:</i> | Require instructors in critical courses to submit early alters within a flexible time frame. |
| <i>UAS Current Practice:</i> TOO LENIENT | UAS does not require faculty to submit early academic alerts or midterm grades. |
| <i>Unintended Consequence:</i> | Students are failing from the beginning and without outreach, have no motivation to improve. |
| <i>Recommended Changes:</i> | With the adoption of the EAB advising suite, the senior academic leader (e.g. the Provost) can establish that faculty use of the early alert tool is an expectation rather than an option. Provide adequate training to faculty on how to utilize the EAB tools and offer incentives to those who use early alerts. Includes outreach to faculty who are not taking advantage of this tool. Further, consider the use of low stakes early assignments with prompt feedback and updated grades at midterm so that students understanding where they stand in class. |
| Priority #2: Course Repeats | |
| <i>EAB Best Practice:</i> | Allow students to repeat a course once, with an option to appeal. |
| <i>UAS Current Practice:</i> TOO LENIENT | Students can repeat courses indefinitely with no restrictions. |
| <i>Unintended Consequence:</i> | Students make no degree progress while spending money. |
| <i>Recommend Changes:</i> | Allow students to repeat a course twice then appeal with advising. |

RETENTION COMMITTEE
 UAS Priorities Based on Stakeholder Input & EAP Academic Policy Audit
 AY2017-2018

| Priority #3: Course & Institutional Withdrawal | |
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| <i>EAB Best Practice:</i> | Require students to complete an online advising prompt before processing a withdrawal request. |
| <i>UAS Current Practice:</i> TOO LENIENT | Students may withdraw through a simple online transaction* Note: Following a recommendation by the UAS Retention Committee, faculty now receive an email notification when a student withdraws from any course after the add/drop date. Implemented 2018. |
| <i>Unintended Consequence:</i> | Students may not realize the ramifications of withdrawing upon their degree completion plan, financial aid or other academic related items. |
| <i>Recommended Changes:</i> | Utilizing the EAB Student Portal, create a compulsory online advising prompt before a student can complete a course withdraw. Include in the prompt potential financial aid, degree completion, and academic progress ramifications and an encouragement to consult with the faculty before completing the withdrawal. Looking forward, if UAS were to also collect the reason for the withdrawal, a longitudinal data set may help identify student enrollment trends around course withdrawal or identify areas for additional resources. |
| Priority #4: Bursar Holds | |
| <i>EAB Best Practice:</i> | Set a minimum bursar hold amount |
| <i>UAS Current Practice:</i> TOO STRICT | UAS Student Accounts places an immediate hold for any balance due. |
| <i>Unintended Consequences:</i> | For minor debts, a student's ability to make academic progress is brought to a complete halt. |
| <i>Recommended Changes:</i> | Allow a minimum account balance between \$100-\$200 before a hold is triggered, allowing students to register and to continue making progress toward their academic goals while smaller debts are paid. |