



FACULTY SENATE

Student Affairs Committee

Minutes

427a Waterman

October 13, 2016

**Present:** Kenneth Allen (CNHS), David Brandt (SGA), Hillary Brown (GSS), Thomas Chittenden (GSB), Dan DeSanto (LIB), Karla Karstens (CEMS), Don Loeb (CAS), Jane Molofsky (CALs), Cathy Paris (FS President), Jennifer Prue (CESS).

**Absent:** Zail Berry (COM), Jeffrey Hughes\* (RSNER), Omar Oyarzabal (EXT), Kristen Pierce (COM), Scott Van Keuren (CAS).

**Guests:** Veronika Carter, Stacey Kostell, Annie Stevens, Sarah Warrington

The Co-Chair Jennifer Prue called the meeting to order at 8:32 in Waterman 427a.

1. **Minutes.** The minutes of September 8, 2016 were approved as written.
2. **Undergraduate voluntary Departure and Reentry Policy Discussion – Sarah Warrington and Stacey Kostell**

## UNDERGRADUATE VOLUNTARY DEPARTURE AND RE-ENTRY PROCESS

### Background

Over the last several months, the Coordinator of Undergraduate Retention and Re-enrollment has met with representatives from the Student Services teams within each of the Colleges to learn about exit and re-entry policies and processes. We know that students are choosing to leave the University for a variety of reasons, including financial challenges, mental health concerns and a lack of connection or fit. Many students, in conjunction with their Dean's Office, do complete a "Change of Student Status" form prior or soon after leaving; however, in the absence of a policy requiring advising contact or college approval with students who withdraw from all classes, some students do simply leave the University without formal notice. When a student wishes to return from a leave, most of the Colleges follow an informal process where by a student contacts their Student Services representative within their major College to request course enrollment. If the student is in good academic standing, the Student Services staff member works to approve the student's request and helps to put things in place for a successful return to campus. These processes at UVM differ from re-entry practices at comparator institutions where, in general, schools provide a central access point for students to reapply and re-entry decisions are made by such entities as, the Dean's Office staff, a Readmissions Board and/or Undergraduate Admissions.

### Issues and Concerns

The current re-entry process for undergraduate students does not include adequate data tracking mechanisms, lacks a common language and is highly decentralized. In addition, the following existing issues affect best practice in student support at exit and re-entry points:

- Lack of policy requiring that students receive approval prior to withdrawing from all academic courses
- Inconsistent use of online re-entry forms maintained by the Colleges

- Forms are buried on web pages and can be difficult to find/access
- Variance in general information collected and questions asked on College re-entry applications
- Absence of clear instructions about which categories of students should complete the application
- Unnecessary work is put on Student Services staff when a student wishes to and is eligible based on GPA to change majors or switch to another College upon re-entry (Currently, student must apply through previously enrolled College.)

## **Proposed Changes**

The recommendations listed here reflect a desire to best support students throughout their full life cycle at the institution. It is hoped that with the creation of a Leave of Absence/Withdrawal Form and centralized re-entry application useful information about a student's reasons for departure and intentions regarding re-enrollment can be gathered and tracked in a more systematic way. The information gained in this process will be utilized in our process of understanding how we can create a positive experience for all students who ultimately feel successful and valued.

### **1. Full Withdrawal Procedure**

Prior to withdrawing from all academic courses, a student will receive notification through Banner that they must meet with a Student Services staff member/advisor if they are on campus or receive college approval if they have already left campus. In either case, an electronic signature from a designated University officer will be required within Banner as a condition of the withdrawal. If a student is choosing to withdraw from all of their classes close to or at the withdrawal deadline, an appropriate window of time will be allowed for the colleges to work with the student to complete the required paperwork. The added point of contact at full withdrawal will allow for a conversation to take place about the student's UVM experience, available campus resources (if applicable), reasons for departure and any future plans for re-entry. As it currently stands, without a policy such as this, it is very challenging to track students as they exit the University, and we frequently lack information about whether or not something could have been done to retain them or to assist them in their process of leaving.

### **2. Leave of Absence(LOA)/Withdrawal Form**

A web-based "Leave of Absence/Withdrawal Form" will be created in order to capture students' early plans for withdrawal and possible re-entry to the institution. Information collected on the form will include specifics related to the reason for the leave/withdrawal, details about when the student may choose to return, intended major, and revised date of graduation. The new form will also clearly delineate student responsibilities during a leave/withdrawal process, including necessary contacts within student services offices (i.e. Student Financial Services, Residential Life, Veterans Affairs).

Once a Dean's Office has information that a student is planning to withdraw or take a leave of absence, either via information provided directly from the student or because of a "Change of Student Status" form, the Coordinator of Undergraduate Retention and Re-enrollment will be alerted. It may be possible to have an automated message sent via Banner to the Coordinator, initiating disbursal of the LOA/Withdrawal Form. If this automated process is not feasible, Student Services staff will be asked to send the 95# for the student that is withdrawing to the Coordinator, which will then lead to outreach and disbursal of the online form for completion by the student. The names of students who are coded as inactive after the add/drop period will be pulled with help from the Registrar's Office, and the Coordinator will send the form link to them as well.

As forms are completed, responses will be routed to the Coordinator, and she will appropriately track the information gained (i.e. reason for departure and planned return date) either within Banner or Slate and make determinations about additional need for contact.

### **3. Outreach to Specific Leave of Absence/Withdrawal Populations**

Great potential exists to reach out to and assist students who leave and may be in a place to consider returning to the University. With targeted outreach efforts designed and implemented, students will gain added support from the institution and may feel as though they are in a better place to succeed should they decide to return. Based on input from Student Services staff, specific outreach to those students who take medical leaves, first-generation college students and those with minimal credits required to graduate will be beneficial.

As stated in recommendation number two above, outreach to students who are coded as having withdrawn or as inactive after the add/drop period will also be formalized. These students will be contacted and asked to complete a "Leave of Absence/Withdrawal Form" in October and February of each year.

A recommendation is made that the Coordinator of Undergraduate Retention and Re-enrollment work with campus partners to create tailored outreach content (i.e. by College) that will show a commitment by the institution to support and welcome back interested students. The outreach will be developed using multiple mediums, i.e. email, text messages, postcard mailing, calling campaigns.

### **4. Centralized Application for Re-entry/Termination of Leave of Absence**

A second common form will be generated that would capture student information at the point of re-entry. This centralized document will exist within the forms section of the Registrar's Office site and on the UVM student portal. (A link to the form on the Admissions Office page as well as within the Dean of Students site will also be discussed.) The form will include a routing function to direct completed applications to the Coordinator of Undergraduate Retention and Re-enrollment, simplifying processes and removing a component of the Student Services staff workload. Provided that the student is in good academic standing for their designated College, the Coordinator would readmit them by updating their status within Banner and would provide communication regarding permission to enroll in courses, available campus contacts,

etc. If a student applies using the common form for re-entry after an academic dismissal, if they have left while on trial or if their record shows any anomalies about needed coursework, the Coordinator will forward their application to the appropriate contacts within each College. All submitted applications, including those from students returning after a leave of absence, will be forwarded to a designated staff person within the Dean's Offices (i.e. Student Services) for additional processing (i.e. assign/update advisor, fees, etc.) and so that contact with the student can be made. (Many of the Colleges like to meet with re-admitted students to assist with scheduling/registration, discussion of academic standards, arrangements for advising, etc.)

If a student wishes to re-enroll in to a new College, the Coordinator can provide a more seamless transition by working with and referring them to the appropriate Student Services staff and/or by helping them to access services of the Advising Center. If students wish to transfer to a College that has admit deadlines (i.e. Grossman School of Business) or that maintains certain GPA requirements, the Coordinator will ensure that the student work with the appropriate contacts within that College.

Clear, detailed instructions within the re-entry application should include the following;

- Fall and Spring semester deadlines for admission – including an on-time and late registration date per semester
- Detailed instructions about who should use the application, pointing other categories of students to the appropriate resources based on their situation (i.e. Admissions)
- Financial Aid and Residential Life policies and deadlines
- Transcript specifics for Non-UVM Coursework
- Vermont Residency Information
- Contact information for Dean's Offices and relevant Administrative Units

The form itself will include a brief set of questions about when and why the student left, what they've been doing in their time away and why they believe they are ready to return. A new component regarding a disciplinary and criminal history statement will also be added.

It is believed that a small team from the Division of Enrollment Management (including Registrar's Office and Retention and Re-enrollment representation) as well as staff from several of the academic colleges should be formed to develop and implement the changes, with ongoing feedback and input being solicited from additional key campus stakeholders.

#### **Timeline and Cost for Implementation**

<b><i>Dates/Timeframe</i></b>	<b><i>Task</i></b>	<b><i>Responsible Party</i></b>
Mid-June – August	Share draft proposal, solicit feedback & make necessary changes	Coordinator of Undergrad Retention & Re-enrollment (Sarah)
August/September	Forms creation underway, review of existing forms (internal and external)	Sarah, Sharon Haas
September	Forms to web, form testing	Sarah, Sharon Haas, Stakeholders
Mid-September (Add/Drop date = September 12)	Pull list of withdrawal/inactive students from Banner	Registrar's Office, Sarah
September/October	Sharing of forms, request for feedback	Sarah, Stakeholders
Late September/October	Completion of LOA/Withdrawal Form	Sarah, Sharon Haas
October	Outreach to withdrawal students (encourage use of LOA/Withdrawal form)	Sarah, Student Services Collaborative staff
Prior to October 15 (Spring 17 re-entry app deadline) *allows for on-time mid-November registration, proceeds current deadlines set by Colleges	Go Live for Re-entry Application	
January/February 2017	Review/assess usage and make necessary adjustments	Sarah, Stakeholders, Student input?

#### **Cos**

A goal of this proposal is to remove aspects of the voluntary departure and re-entry processes from the workload of College Student Services staff. Thus, Colleges should gain human resources time that has been spent processing re-entry applications even while staff will continue to provide critical College-specific information to enrolled students upon their return from a leave, etc.

There will be a cost for any mailings that are distributed to students on leave as well as for other chosen outreach methods, i.e. calling campaigns or bulk email marketing outlets.

***Note: Students returning from an academic dismissal must adhere to distinct standards determined by the Colleges prior to re-entry. Academic dismissal and disciplinary re-admits are not covered by the recommendations made in this proposal.***

The SAC approved to endorse the proposed changes made to the Undergraduate Voluntary Departure and Re-Entry Process.

**3. Academic Integrity Policy Proposed Language Revisions – Motion to endorse and move to Vice Provost of Student Affairs for Legal Counsel and Staff Review (30 Minutes)**

**THE PROCESS:**

- i. Speak with Kim Martin and Deanna Garrett-Ostermiller in the Center for Student Conduct.
- ii. Continue these conversations with UVM Legal.
- iii. Inform the Faculty Senate, starting with the Executive Committee.

The committee voted to endorse the final changes to the Code of Academic Integrity and to move forward with the process.

Adding this material to the first year student course could be very beneficial to the process.

**4. Other Business.**

**Academic Calendar:**

- Inclusion of major diverse holidays. This could be an incredible tool for faculty when they are building their course work for students.
- Advocating for students who observe these holidays. The interfaith calendar needs to be very visible to the faculty and to students. Work with the SGA to get it out on their website. David will work with SGA adding in new information to the Cat's Tale.

**Agenda Items:**

- student code of conduct / student's rights and responsibilities, update. (November)
- International Admissions, Stacey Kostell and Beth Wiser (November)
- Undergraduate attendance issues (December)

5. **Adjourn.** The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 am.

\*Sabbatical

**Next meeting:**

November 10, 2016