Student Retention Committee - Minutes  
September 21, 2012 – 12:30pm  
International Conference Room (SC-238)

Members attended: Carolyn Anderson, Elicia Arai, Russell Bloem, Ken Bratt, Todd Dornbos (chair), Andrew Harris, Dana Hebreard, Rana Huisman, Tom Van Eck, and John Witte.

Opening
Prayer
• Todd opened the meeting with prayer, and facilitated introductions.

(1) Review minutes and/or action items from last meeting – February 15, 2012.
• Minutes approved.

(2) Review agenda
• Planned to address items 5 and 8, with quick updates on 3, 4, 6, and 7.

(3) Review committee mandate
• Briefly discussed committee mandate, expectations, and objectives.

Old Items
(4) Retention plan (Todd)
• Russ reported on the state of the current Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM) plan that was presented to faculty senate last spring. Tom is leading a metrics committee to define measurable outcomes for each of the main sections of the SEM plan. The SEM plan includes a section on retention. It was suggested that the SRC could partner with the metrics committee to develop measurable retention objectives for this section, which could then serve as a reasonable alternative to a separate retention plan. See item 1 below.

(5) Student concerns referral system (Todd)
• Todd reported on the history of this item, and highlighted some recent (Summer-2012) discussion regarding possible alternatives: Datatel’s Retention Alert and Pharos-360. The SRC plans to move forward with this request and will compare system options at the next meeting. Once a system is selected, the SRC will likely develop a proposal for PPC and the President’s cabinet. See item 2 below.

(6) From Every Nation (FEN) and student retention (All)
• John and Elicia reported briefly on the status of Residence Life’s 12/SP project to assess the social/integration experiences of AHANA students. Hopefully, they will have something to present at an upcoming meeting. See item 3 below.

(7) Non-Returning Student (NRS) update (Tom, Dana, Elicia)
• Dana, Elicia, and Tom reported briefly regarding their progress on this topic. The updated NRS survey is about ready. The new PC (for survey completion) has been installed in the registrar’s office. See item 4 below.

New Items
(8) Fall-to-Fall retention (Tom)
• Tom provided the committee with an overview of the Day-10 retention and graduation statistics.

Adjournment
(9) Next meeting: October 25, 8:30am – International Conference Room (SC-238)

Outstanding action items (Blue items determined at the September 21 meeting)

(1) December 7, 2009 – Retention Plan - To help the Student Retention Committee (SRC) establish/refine a current list of retention goals and possible strategies for achieving them, a small task-force (short-term sub-committee) was charged with outlining a draft retention plan for the SRC to review and adopt. Given that (1) this plan will likely serve as a supplement to the broader enrollment objectives defined by the Enrollment Management Committee (EMC) and (2) that Dale Kuiper will be leading the EMC’s effort to reform the college’s existing enrollment plan, Russ requested that Dale also facilitate the SRC task-force. The following SRC members have also agreed to participate: Jacque R., John W., Russ B., & Todd D. While no deadline for completion was established, it is assumed that this group’s work will likely parallel the EMC’s time-line for constructing a broader enrollment plan.

November 22, 2010 - After a conversation regarding recent FEN updates with Michelle Loyd-Paige, MAC Chair and Dean for
Multicultural Affairs, the retention committee will intentionally remember FEN’s retention objectives/goals [B1] for AHANA and International students when developing the SEM retention plan.

March 7, 2011 – Dale and Todd will meet soon, to discuss next steps.

May 10, 2011 – Planning team (noted above) has met once, and some work has been initiated to brainstorm a possible outline and important metrics for measuring success. The team will continue to work on this important task.

October 28, 2011 - Dale and Todd have met a few times to consider possibilities, and will convene the larger working group, once a more substantial framework has been constructed. Given Jaque’s departure, both Alicia and Bob Crow have volunteered to join the working group. A working group meeting has been prescheduled for mid-November.

September 21, 2012 – Now that the SEM plan has been adopted, Todd and Russ will discuss next steps for the construction of a retention plan. Perhaps the SRC could partner with the metrics committee to develop measurable retention objectives for this section, which could then serve as a reasonable alternative to a separate retention plan.

(2) March 1, 2010 – Student Concerns Referral System - While members of the Student Retention Committee have varying opinions regarding the necessity of an electronic referral/alert system, Todd will coordinate a demonstration of Datatel’s ‘Student Retention Alert’ software to help determine whether or not this product (or perhaps a similar “home-grown” system) could be useful. Further discussion about possible next steps is deferred until after the demo.

May 18, 2010 (update) – With general consensus from the membership, the committee will move forward cautiously (yet optimistically) toward the implementation of Datatel’s retention alert software. However, before confirming a decision: (1) Todd will coordinate a few conversations with reps from other schools that are already using this tool, to gauge effectiveness and evaluate usefulness, (2) Dana will connect with reps from the Calvin faculty (dept chairs, etc.) to determine whether or not they would find it useful, (3) all committee members will talk with their colleagues about possibilities for using it to enhance current processes, (4) Todd will begin working with Matt, Gary, and Dana to draft a possible implementation plan and schedule, and (5) Todd will reconvene the committee this summer to consider the draft plan and finalize a decision.

October 19, 2010 (update) – John and Todd will meet to review the system more carefully, and consider possibilities for implementation. Perhaps some existing processes (i.e. attendance checks) could be managed with this program. Russ will mention the concept to Henry. Todd will draft a possible memo from SRC to CIT regarding implementation.

November 22, 2010 - Todd will reconnect with Matt Jeltema to reiterate SRC’s continued interest in the software and to investigate options for testing a live demo before committing to an 11/FA pilot and/or start date. Todd will arrange a meeting with Matt Sink (former Datatel staffer) for his insights, as well.

January 26, 2011 – SRC members will be invited to participate in a hands-on “sandbox” demo of Datatel’s RA software.

March 7, 2011 – SRC members agreed to move forward with Datatel’s RA software. Todd will edit the request/proposal letter, and route it to Matt J. and Henry DV. ASAP. If/when approved, Todd and Matt will begin drafting an implementation plan. SRC should remember to include transfer students as possible “concern” group in RA system.

May 10, 2011 – With guests (noted above) SRC decided to move forward with a 4S grant proposal (State of Michigan) to fund Datatel’s RA software and a possible retention specialist to manage it. Todd and Megan will take the lead on the proposal and will keep the SRC and other key student support teams abreast of progress.

October 28, 2011 - Todd reported that our attempt to obtain 4S grant funding for this project was denied by the State of Michigan. While disappointing news, the committee would still like to see the college adopt this system, and possibly hire a retention specialist to manage it. Furthermore, the SEM plan will likely include this item within the list of retention objectives.

November 28, 2011 – Russ has plans to follow-up with Claudia and Henry about costs, possibilities, etc.

February 15, 2012 – Megan Berglund and Todd D. submitted a preliminary letter of interest for a grant proposal entitled "Retention Alert: Improving Student Persistence" to the TG Public Benefit Grant Program (Texas Grant). Committee members discussed alternative plans for the RA system, if this request is rejected. In general, the SRC would still like to move forward with the RA system. Todd will follow-up with Claudia, Russ, and Matt J. if TG funding is Impossible.

September 21, 2012 – After some summer conversations about possible alternatives, the SRC will plan to compare the benefits/costs of Datatel’s Retention Alert and Pharos-360 at the next meeting. Todd will prepare a summary in advance of the next meeting and will invite Matt Jeltema (CIT) to join us for the conversation. If/when a system is selected, the SRC will pursue a proposal for PPC and the President’s cabinet.

(3) November 22, 2010 – From Every Nation (FEN) – After a conversation with Michelle Loyd-Paige, MAC Chair and Dean for Multicultural Affairs, the retention committee will: (1) clearly document current efforts to support student retention of both AHANA and International students and report to MAC with a written summary, (2) intentionally remember FEN’s retention objectives/goals [B1] for AHANA and International students when developing the SEM retention plan, and (3) possibly host a committee discussion about finances including representatives from financial services and financial aid.

January 26, 2011 – SRC members are reminded to submit a list of current retention strategies for AHANA and International students. These items will be included in the report noted above.

May 10, 2011 – Elcia, Jaque, & Todd met to discuss the need for a formal assessment of the social/integration experiences of Calvin’s AHANA and international students. Todd will pursue this idea with Mike Stob and/or Tom Van Eck.

October 28, 2011 – The committee agrees that an assessment of the social/integration experiences of Calvin’s AHANA and international students would be useful. John reported Residence Life is planning something similar for the 12/SP, and will keep the committee informed.

September 21, 2012 – The SRC plans to hear more from John and Elcia (current project leader) regarding their report on the assessment study conducted in 12/SP.
February 15, 2012 – **Non-Returning Student (NRS) survey** – After a discussion about the necessity and effectiveness of the NRS survey, the SRC appointed Dana, Elicia, and Tom to investigate possible revisions and a simpler format. Dana and Todd D. will work with Mindie and CIT to set-up a PC in the registrar’s office lobby for students complete the survey electronically. 

**September 21, 2012** – Dana, Elicia, and Tom will complete the revised survey format, and will integrate it into the current discontinuation processes.