The primary topic of discussion for the 2012 CAC/BSP Retreat was Enrollment (Admissions), Recruitment & Retention.

Discussion

S. Turner opened the meeting by introducing Fawn Skarsten.

Fawn distributed several documents including various graphs depicting enrollment trends of local high school students, college choices of potential students, etc. J. Davidson acknowledged that our admissions at UM-Flint are down ~ a direct result of the tougher admissions criteria established (without administrative consent) by the prior director of admissions. While the Admissions office has been working to reverse this trend, it has had a dramatic effect on our enrollment and projected enrollment, which will likely continue for some period of time.

Currently, we still maintain an approximate 50-mile radius draw with potential and current students. Our international student population has resulted in significant growth as have our graduate programs. There is a significant weakness in graduate programs among our local competitors.

Other parameters affecting enrollment are the declining population in Genesee County and the current economic climate. Bachelor degree parents are more likely to send their children to college than those without degrees ~ as Genesee County has shifted its employment focus from factory jobs to more skilled/technical careers, it is hopeful that we will see a rise in enrollment. For this reason.... it is imperative that we develop a presence in “out-county” areas (e.g. Lapeer, Livingston, etc.)

R. Person noted that the Governor’s incentives for higher education are directed primarily at undergrad students as opposed to those seeking graduate degrees. If
the proposed budget model being marketed by business leaders is accepted, it would result in a much better market for graduate students.

As we look at ways to grow our enrollment, we must also look at how we market our product. UM-Flint has a great reputation, the fourth lowest tuition among the 15 publics ~ and yet we've done a less than stellar job at pitching our value and superb educational opportunities. We must also begin to look at developing an improved culture of collaboration with community colleges. The Livingston County initiative is a great beginning ~ but also demands that we look at other satellite locations. D. Barthelmes inquired about articulation agreements with Oakland Community College and the potential we might have with that institution.

G. Voland stated that part of the enrollment challenge in seeking students from outside Genesee County is housing. S. Gano-Phillips asserted that we must also begin to look at the role of adjunct faculty ~ both full time and part-time. B. Barnett stated that he is working on an initiative model with adjuncts, but staffing has been a huge issue.

V. Lotfi spoke of the necessity to develop new programs that also offer students the flexibility of mixed mode classes.

J. Davidson stressed the importance in diversifying outside the Genesee County area. In that regard, we also must focus attention to the university website, which is woefully inadequate and presents various challenges to potential visitors.

A discussion ensued regarding other institutions and their enrollment. Saginaw Valley hosts approximately 2000 students on campus. Part of the draw to this campus is their athletic program. It was also asserted that their administrative costs are much less (e.g. salaries are lower, many units share secretaries, etc). While it is possible UM-Flint might be able to adopt or consider some shared duties among units, these are not easy conversations. Clearly, it is imperative that we begin to understand the necessity to change the “business as usual” mindset.