

To: University Community

From: BarBara M. Scott and Santos Rivera

Re: Presidential Task Force on the Millennium Student
Meeting of January 16, 2007

The Presidential Task Force on the Millennium Student held its first open meeting on Tuesday, January 16th. Following are concerns and recommendations that were shared at this first exploratory session. The Task Force invites you to attend the next scheduled session which will be held, Tuesday, February 13 at 6:00 PM, room SU-214.

INFORMATIONAL

- 1) The Task Force will maintain the university's commitment to a diverse student body
- 2) Two State legislators are working with the taskforce: David Miller and Antonia Berrios
- 3) The purpose of the informational meetings is not to debate who the millennium student is or the agenda but to obtain input from stakeholders. The following key areas were identified:
 - a) Recruiting students for success
 - b) Eliminating barriers and enhancing supports
 - c) Developing new matrices for the new student
 - d) Advocating for the new student

“Developing new matrices” refers to developing new ways to evaluate and assess student success. In order to do that a better understanding of the goals and needs of our students is necessary and then ways to measure success against these goals.

ADVISEMENT

Advisement is an area of concern. There is no link to advising on “quick links.” Program requirements are not clear nor are they uniformly presented in current publications and the website. Departmental control of content is important but there needs to be a standard way to present the information to students. We could use an on-line self-advising function tied to student records. Paper holds us up.

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Student with low English language skills need opportunities to build proficiencies in reading and writing in English.

Where are the redundancies? i.e. ECE and Basic Skills Test require a similar writing sample. The ECE scoring takes longer than Basic Skills scoring and often holds up registration. Delays in registration lead to the unavailability of required classes and can push back graduation by a semester.

What are we asking student to do? In a 120-hour program are all the courses necessary?

What technology competencies are we to expect from our graduates?

Access and excellence are often in conflict. We need to keep an eye on the quality of the degrees we grant.

ACCESS

Student surveys say that students get a run-around when seeking information. How do we minimize this run-around? How do we develop a service orientation across the University?

Students are unaware of many services that are available to them including scholarship assistance. We need to promote these services better, perhaps train faculty and staff.

We need to share information with one another in the University. Much of our work on retention over the last few years has not been disseminated.

We need to make services and procedures visible.

Where is our radio, TV and billboard advertising? Students need to feel they are “someplace” when they are at Northeastern.

STUDENT RETENTION

We lose sophomores. One way to improve retention might be to extend initial advisement assignments from one year to two years. We also lose our better students to other institutions because classes they need are often filled before they can register.

After 30 hours, students are not required to meet with an advisor. Students delay filing for their major, often until just before graduation. Some find that they are missing requirements, a situation that would have been caught had they had ongoing advisement. CAESEP requires ongoing advisement, one key to high retention rates.

ESL and learning disabled student need more support!!!

We need to look at male students in particular.

What is reasonable in terms of time to degree for our students?

DIVERSITY

44% of our freshmen are Latino/a.

There is no transfer orientation despite many students who transfer into the University from two-year programs and other four-year institutions. In UPRS and Plantando Semillas, students surveyed suggested developing a cultural center to provide a place to build community. Participating in student groups is worth the effort for students! A cultural center would provide access to multiple cultural identities and provide a “safe place to go.”

The diversity of our faculty and administration does not reflect the diversity of our students.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Career development is disconnected from advisement leaving a void in student preparedness for the workforce and difficult workforce transitions.

We have many opportunities for positive out-of-classroom experiences—leadership, volunteering, service learning, mentoring, career development.

SUCCESS

There are different definitions of success depending on the stakeholder— faculty/students/administrators/state legislators. We each need to better articulate what is meant by success in order to move toward more homogeneity in our thinking.

How successful are our graduates?

ACADEMIC DELIVERY

Academic content and instructional delivery systems are issues. The new student is demanding greater relevance in a multi-cultural environment.

What is the role of different instructional delivery for NEIU?

STUDENT POPULATION

We need to pay attention to the branding of our students/graduates in terms of core values we want them to develop to be able to contribute to our global society.

We need to address the adult students and transfers. They may have different needs. We don't intentionally address their maturity and transitioning issues in our programs.

K-12

Many CPS graduates are under-prepared for post-secondary work. There is a gap between K-12 and 13-20 standards. Perhaps the University could teach summer courses in the high schools for juniors and seniors.

A new program at El Centro of early college courses linked to the university funded by the Gates Foundation is in the planning stages.

The Chicago Teachers' Center has partnership with 21 Chicago high schools. These are well documented in the accreditation report. We are strengthening the K-16 pipeline, working with over 15,000 students. There are not enough AP courses offered in high schools for student to experience the rigor of post-secondary work. This is another opportunity where a university can reach down.

GENERAL

We could use a graduation committee to make graduations more celebratory and meaningful to our community. The separate graduation ceremonies this winter were a good start.

We need a carpooling bulletin board and child care options in addition to the Child Care Center.

Perhaps the University could obtain ongoing input by regularly surveying alumni.

We need to define a role for student in this calendar year process. There needs to be student representation on committees. Which ones?