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INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION TASK FORCE REPORT

Action Requested: Approve the report and direct the Board Office to work with the universities to implement the action plans.

Executive Summary: The Task Force report includes three academic areas that were examined by the Council of Provosts for institutional cooperation – distance education; study abroad; and recruitment and retention of Iowa minority students.

This report addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan strategy (4.1) to “utilize management and oversight systems that regularly measure achievements in Board and institution strategic priorities, while pursuing continuous quality improvement in programs and services.”

Background:

The Regent universities continually strive to enhance administrative processes. During years of reduced state appropriations, it is critically important to focus on these efforts to aid in strategically reallocating limited resources. In the past, this review has been applied across the universities and resulted in improved efficiencies; among them, collaborative purchasing, fleet operations and shared risk management.

The Inter-Institutional Cooperation Task Force was created in 2009 to discuss opportunities (academic and non-academic) for consolidation/collaboration, business efficiencies, and shared resources and collected pertinent information from the universities through the Board Office staff and engaged university staff to review, discuss and gather information and appropriate data.

The focus of the Task Force was to recommend opportunities to pursue, using criteria, such as, saving, not shifting costs; balancing short and long-term gains; improving quality; and retaining institutional identity and prioritizing identified opportunities. The Task Force was chaired by President Pro Tem Jack Evans; other members included President David Miles, Regent Ruth Harkin, and Executive Director Robert Donley. Board Office staff included Patrice Sayre and Diana Gonzalez.

The Board Office worked with the Council of Provosts to develop the academic elements identified by the Task Force – distance education; study abroad; and recruitment and retention of Iowa minority students to the Regent universities. The institutions were asked to consider opportunities for cooperation that promote efficiency and effectiveness; save time, money, and other resources; support core missions; best serve stakeholders; and better position the universities for future challenges. The outcomes of cooperative opportunities needed to include sustainability, strategic accomplishments, and implementation of essential changes.

The following opportunities for cooperation were identified by the Regent universities.

Distance Education

While preserving and enhancing the uniqueness of the Regent universities, the universities explored opportunities to create joint Regent (and with other higher education institutions) course/program offerings, maximize use of distance education technologies, investigate expansion of participation and offerings of select programs in the Great Plains IDEA and other similar consortia. (Great Plains IDEA (www.gpidea.org) is a multistate alliance founded in 1994 to offer distance education courses and programs at the graduate level. The consortium facilitates strategic inter-institutional academic alliances, allowing institutions working together to field academic programs that are greater in reach and significance than any single institution could field alone; that manages institutional and shared resources efficiently; and enriches the teaching experience for faculty and the learning experience for students.

The following elements were considered:

- 📖 Development of a policy that allows a student who is enrolled full-time at one of the Regent universities to take classes from one of the other Regent universities, on a space available basis, without additional tuition for full time students if the course is not offered at their home institution.
- 📖 Development of opportunities to capitalize on exceptional faculty expertise by using technology to share selected courses among the Regent institutions and to determine the feasibility of broader application of existing cooperative models, such as the Bachelor of Liberal Studies and teacher licensure programs.
- 📖 Development of cooperative opportunities with community colleges to offer selected second year courses in such areas as engineering, science, and mathematics to insure community college graduates complete four-year degrees in a timely manner.
- 📖 Sharing fiscal and quality responsibility for necessary but low enrollment courses, such as foreign language courses.

Steps to accomplish: Exploration of various distance education opportunities and development of applicable policies and implementation strategies.

1. Goal #1. Allow students to take courses and certificates/degree programs from among the Regent universities.

Procedure

- Appoint committee to review issues and opportunities.

Metric

- Report on issues and needed policy and procedural changes.

2. Goal #2. Identify types and uses of course management and delivery software.

Procedure

- Committee review and recommendation for common use.

Metric

- Listing of available software; recommendation for common use.

3. Goal #3. Identify uniquely offered courses that meet requirements for the Bachelor of Liberal Studies (BLS) and the Bachelor of Applied Studies (BAS).

Procedure

- Advisors identify courses.

Metric

- Identify 10 unique courses and their quality.

4. Goal #4. Identify uniquely offered courses that meet requirements for the BLS/BAS.

Procedure

- Each university recommends two courses.

Metric

- Six courses will be available (two from each university) for Spring 2011.

5. Goal #5. Review articulation agreements with community colleges for courses necessary for timely graduation.

Procedure

- By college, identify problem areas which prevent timely graduation.

Metric

- List problem courses and/or academic areas.

6. Goal #6. Share fiscal and teaching responsibility for low enrollment but critical courses among the Regent universities.

Procedure

- Identify areas.

Metric

- Agree to an implementation strategy to address the identified areas.

Resources needed: Funding and staff time.

Expected benefits: Increased collaboration, reduced costs, and opportunities for students.

Richer Study Abroad Collaboration

Educational opportunities for broadening the international perspectives and experiences of students, faculty, and staff members are an increasingly important element of the academic enterprise at Iowa's public universities. The breadth of potential international opportunities is substantial and the diversity of existing international activities at the universities suggests strong potential for beneficial collaboration that will enhance program quality and cost effectiveness. The result of more systematic collaboration in the international arena will be more broadly educated graduates who are better prepared to be effective contributors in the private and public sectors of our globally integrated economic and political environment.

An essential element for enhancing the international perspectives and experiences of students is the opportunity to study outside the United States for an extended period of time. Systematic collaboration in the development, enhancement, and implementation of study abroad programs will result in more widely available information about existing programs, as well as an increased variety of affordable international opportunities for students. Enterprise-wide collaboration will foster greater participation by students in international experiences that better prepare them for public and private life as global citizens following graduation.

The overarching focus of collaborative activity in the international arena is to increase affordable study abroad opportunities and participation by students. A second important emphasis is to increase international collaborative activities and participation by faculty and staff members. High quality, cost effective international activities that enhance academic programs and that leverage institutional strengths are a fundamental objective.

The following specific actions and associated metrics of progress are proposed as the initial elements of an increasingly systematic enterprise-wide collaborative approach to international educational experiences.

1. Identify, more aggressively publicize, and increase utilization of existing enterprise-wide opportunities for study abroad and international experiences. There are currently eight Regents' study abroad programs, as well as a variety of study abroad programs that are organized by one of the Regent universities that are available to students from all three universities.

Specific Actions

- Revise study abroad websites at all three universities to publicize more prominently Regents' Study Abroad programs, as well as single university based programs that are available to students from the other Regent universities.
- Identify additional existing study abroad programs that are good candidates to become Regents' Study Abroad programs.

Metrics

- Increase student participation in Regents' Study Abroad programs by 20% by FY 2015.
- Increase the number of Regents' Study Abroad programs to 12 by FY 2015.

2. Leverage infrastructure costs of international locations at which one of the universities has an existing study abroad program with additional capacity. Costs associated with the support infrastructure for the international location could thus be spread over a larger number of participants reducing the cost per participant.

Specific Actions

- Identify sites outside the United States at which one of the three Regent universities has a study abroad program, international partner, and support infrastructure in place with capacity that would allow significant expansion of study abroad opportunities for students from the other two universities.
- Prioritize sites that expand the diversity of countries and types of international experiences beyond those already available through existing single university programs.

Metric

- Implement infrastructure leveraged collaborative study abroad programs at six sites by 2015.

3. Develop collaborative certificates in globalization that would allow undergraduate and graduate students to demonstrate additional preparation and proficiency in globalization. The certificates would allow students to combine on-campus courses, courses delivered by distance technology, and study abroad experiences from one, two, or all three Regent universities to meet the requirements of the certificate. The certificates would each include some level of language proficiency other than English, appropriate academic course work, and at least one experience outside the United States.

Specific Actions

- Jointly develop an undergraduate Regents' certificate in globalization as described above. This certificate would document additional preparation and experience in the international arena in conjunction with a disciplinary undergraduate degree.
- Jointly develop a Regents' certificate in globalization for prospective students who have already completed a bachelor's degree. This certificate could be attractive to working professionals, as well as current graduate students, who wish to document additional competence in the international arena.

Metrics

- Develop a Regents' undergraduate certificate in globalization by July 1, 2012.
- Develop a Regents' graduate certificate in globalization by July 1, 2012.

4. Investigate mechanisms for increased collaboration to offer non-English language instruction via distance technology to enable students at all three universities eventually to have access to all languages that are taught at any of the universities.

Specific Actions

- Identify and implement distance technology enhancements (hardware and/or software) that are necessary to effectively offer language courses at a distance.
- Identify highest priority languages for initial implementation of distance language instruction.

Metrics

- Initiate collaborative distance language instruction of one non-English language by Fall Semester 2011.
- Initiate collaborative distance language instruction of at least three non-English languages by Fall Semester 2015.

Outreach to and Recruitment of Iowa Racial/Ethnic Minority Students to Regent Universities

Increasing higher education opportunities for Iowa racial/ethnic minority students should be an educational and economic imperative for the Regent enterprise, given the State of Iowa's changing demographics. In particular, the Latino/Hispanic population is the largest and fastest growing group in the state and very few Latino/Hispanic students undertake a post-secondary education. Students who do not prepare for some form of post-secondary education limit their life opportunities and reduce their contributions to Iowa's economic and civic future.

Rationale for an Enterprise-wide plan:

The vision is to develop a Regent-wide plan and work collaboratively with the Department of Education (DE), community colleges, and local school districts to encourage more Iowa racial/ethnic minority high school students to attend and graduate from college, regardless of whether they attend SUI, ISU, or UNI or where they begin or complete their academic career.

Proposal:

The Board of Regents, State of Iowa, Inter-institutional Task Force on Retention, Graduation, and Diversity identified efforts to improve retention and graduation of undergraduate students from groups underrepresented in higher education, assessing their effectiveness, identifying proven best practices and gaps between the universities' practices and best practices, and identifying avenues for collaboration among the universities. Noted below are the specific recommendations for collaboration related to outreach and recruitment identified by the Task Force (Report of the Regents Inter-Institutional Task Force on Retention, Graduation, and Diversity; May 2008).

A committee composed of the admissions directors, financial aid directors, chief diversity officers (or the coordinator for racial/ethnic minority recruitment and retention), the provosts of the Regent institutions, and a Board of Regents (BOR) Office representative will be charged with implementing the recommendations related to pool development and inter-institutional cooperation developed by the Task Force on Retention, Graduation, and Diversity.

Action steps:

In order for the Regent universities to successfully support underrepresented minority students to graduation, there is a need to recruit underrepresented minority students who are prepared to succeed at the universities in numbers sufficient to approach a critical mass. A pool of college-ready students is a prerequisite for successful recruiting. Therefore, the following pool development and inter-institutional collaborations are recommended.

 Publish and distribute a document emphasizing the value that the Regent universities place on a diverse student body, the resources available to support underrepresented minority students, and the pathways to admissions to and success at the universities. This publication can be produced and distributed in ways similar to the current Regent publication, *Building Your Future*. This publication will be distributed to middle school and high school students during Fall 2010.

-  Extend the potential of community college collaborations to include a focus on diversity since many underrepresented minority students choose to begin their studies at community colleges. The Regent institutions will shape their efforts to more specifically recruit underrepresented minority students at community colleges in support of the diversity goals at the universities. These efforts will begin with the existing Regent-community college admission partnership and 2+2 programs, although new initiatives will be explored by the Committee in consultation with the community colleges. Each Regent institution will develop the diversity component of its partnership plan for presentation to the Committee by September 15, 2010. The Committee will review each plan with a focus on determining potential inter-institutional collaborations.

-  Investigate a pilot project, working collaboratively with the Department of Education, community colleges, and local schools, to seek funds from state, federal, or private grants to encourage underrepresented minority students to take the ACT. Research suggests that underrepresented minority students, even those whose ITED scores suggest that they would do well on the ACT, are less likely to take the ACT, and perhaps less likely to take a rigorous curriculum, than other students. Because ACT (or SAT) is required for admission to the universities, and because each of the universities relies heavily on lists of ACT takers for recruitment, increasing ACT taking is likely to increase the numbers of students prepared to enter the universities. The Committee will form a subcommittee by May 1, 2010 composed of Regent, DE, community college, and local school representatives to explore this option. The subcommittee will report its findings to the Committee by October 15, 2010.

-  An assessment plan for these actions and metrics for enrollment growth will be developed by the Committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the actions steps and to ensure that progress is being made. An appropriate schedule of periodic reports from the Committee to the Board of Regents will be developed in consultation with Board Office staff.