AAC Minutes: August 6th, 2020

Present: Brent Kane, Soemer Simmons, Ryan Gray, Jazmyn Thomas, Gina Turton, Lindsey Prior, Janet Tulley, Jess Ray, Shanna McDaniels, Amelia Noel-Elkins, Wendi Whitman, Amy Hurd, and Crystal Nourie.

I. Chair's remarks
   a. Looking forward to fall meetings with this council to advocate and hopefully improve circumstances for academic advisors.
II. Secretary/Treasurer Report
   a. PDT Liaison and AAC Secretary/Treasurer back-up
      i. Shanna McDaniels is going on maternity leave from approximately October through December. Discussion ensued regarding if we temporarily replace her this fall, given these unprecedented times. Voting members voted to invite Derrek Drenckpohl, next on the last election list, to join AAC during this time. Shanna will rejoin the council in the spring.
      ii. Lindsey Prior and Brent Kane will discuss amongst themselves and one will join PDT to serve as AAC liaison during this time.
      iii. Wendi Whitman will take meeting minutes while Soemer Simmons will work with Brent Kane on Treasurer responsibilities. The latter should be fairly simple given an anticipated lack of spending due to our fall circumstances.
III. Old Business
   a. Department advisors' access to imaging – Working group
      i. Discussion on if we will be moving forward with Image Now/Perceptive Content access for department/school advisors or not. With everything going on, this had fallen off of the radar. No definitive plan discussed to return to this item at this time.
IV. New Business
   a. "Best Practices" Handout for Advising during COVID – Amelia
      i. There is the little handout we used to give out defining advisement responsibilities for both advisors and students – discussion around if we want to create a new handout of best practices of working with students during COVID-19 to disseminate in electronic form. A document to help students know how things will work during this time and what to expect, e.g. "Drop-ins will look different this year…"
      ii. Should we assign a subcommittee to look into the creation of this or can we modify the document we have as a council? Document will be shared via email to council; AAC members will consult with their constituents to make modifications that are representative of all advisor and student populations.
      iii. How will we get this into students' hands? Should we direct them to AAC website or COVID website?   We have control over AAC website, but it's best practice to link students to one central place regarding COVID changes. Can we send it in an email to students that looks like it's coming from their academic advisor, similar to the advising survey, but really isn't?

b. AAC working groups reporting process – Brent
    i. Concerns were expressed from advisors in regard to the communication to advisors about updates to the Campus Solutions student experience. AAC Tech was involved in the process. The updates happened on a Transfer Day and advisors didn't realize there was a shopping cart and other updates until walking the students through.
    ii. Can we ensure in the future that communication and guides are ready to release when the updates are? How can we facilitate that through AAC? It's not Technology Solutions' responsibility to develop those instructional guides. TS is trying to get as many projects as possible done before start of school year. Since the working group is already comprised of AAC Tech members, perhaps we can focus on more communication from them to advisors via Teams.
c. Academic advising support/needs across campus – Brent
    i. Should AAC advocate for a formal process of reporting to advising community from Provost's office? Finding out directives such as, "Contact your advisor for help," the same time as students causes frustration. What is the best way we can ensure the academic advising community is kept in the loop ahead of time when students will be directed to us? There has been increased communication from President's and Provost's office as of late, which may have exacerbated this. With the most recent shift to online, most administrators on down were informed directly before the email was sent. Encourage advising community to extend some grace.
    ii. If advisors feel they are not being informed, how can we mitigate that as a council? An internal shift must happen for advisors (and everyone else) of "we don't know all the answers either and that's okay." Have a central location for advisors to check, instead of being overwhelmed by checking multiple modes of communication, such as Advising Wiki. Ryan started AAC Teams Chat within Advising Wiki for members only to help with information sharing.
    iii. Anything else we are hearing that council could possibly help with? One thing U College has run into, with extended work from home, is many staff have decided to take desktop set-ups home but these are not WiFi compatible and some homes don't have ethernet cables, so there is a connectivity issue. Laptops are the alternative as the University cannot provide internet hookup needed.
    iv. A worry – back in the spring we made it work at a moment's notice, but this fall will new problem solving need to take place?
d. Spring Registration Dates – Brent
    i. No decisions made about spring yet in terms of starting later, starting virtually at first, cancelling spring break, etc. There are Financial Aid challenges presented with each of these. Therefore, we are functioning under the assumption that registration dates aren't changing, so we will have to decide on any alterations to spring before registration opens. Both faculty and advisors will be surveyed about these possibilities.

ii. Is it possible to tighten up juniors' and seniors' registration dates due to moving online after fall break? Instead of spreading their dates out, could we put those groups closer together since those schedules are more defined anyways? Holds present an issue here – a lot of our students are currently facing serious financial challenges and altering this may create unintended consequences.

iii. Space numbers determined in fall planning will impact registration – we may need more sections.

    e. International Student advising tips – Brent

i. What type of help can be given for those academic advisors looking for a face-to-face option for their incoming international students? Independent, in-person study on campus is an option. It's degree applicable, but there are limits to its usage.

V. Campus Solutions/Registration

    a. Advisor name listed on Class Roster Report – Amelia

i. Tabled until next meeting as this is not pressing.

VI. Committee Updates

    a. Assessment

i. Nothing to report – haven't met yet.

    b. Technology

i. Meeting today – will report at next meeting.

    c. Teacher Education

i. Nothing to report.

    d. PDT

i. Great mini session planned for next week on At-Risk Notifications with Amy Roser, George Banks, Kate Weiser, and Tracy Warner sharing information, tips, and best practices.

ii. Fall Advisor Day agenda almost finalized – waiting on presentation description and bio from our invited speaker before sending agenda out. All campus partners providing updates during the latter part of the afternoon have been confirmed.

    e. Mentoring & Connections

i. Advising Wiki has been updated to include new advisors.

ii. Committee will look into creating (or finding online) a Teams how-to because the Wiki is only as useful as advisors make it. Proper usage and "mentioning" of intended audience is key.

    f. AAC Awards Selection

i. Nothing to report.

VII. Student Representative Report

    a. Nothing to report

VIII. Other Business?

a. A $1.9 million grant was received from state – the GEERS Grant. Majority of grant is advised to be used to address digital equity gap amongst students. Low income, first generation, and/or underrepresented students would be eligible. We are in the process of ordering MiFis, webcams, headsets, etc. Advisors should send students having tech issues to Technology Support Center and they will forward requests made to Persistence Committee, a group that will review students holistically. Committee will also look at dedicating money to access codes, student fees/material fees, funding identity-based RSOs, and technology for the Multicultural Center. We will apply for another half million from GEERS grant to focus on basic needs for students (food, housing, etc.).

b. A dream of Wendi Whitman's is coming to fruition – a dashboard that pulls data from both academic and student affairs is being developed. This will allow us to see a holistic picture of students all on one dashboard. For advisors, Financial Aid counselors, etc. to have access to. Housing info is also being uploaded. If a student doesn't log-on to ReggieNet within first 5 days, their retention rate goes down to 60% - this kind of info will be available to see as well.

IX. Next meeting – August 20th

a. We will see about adjusting future meetings from 9:00-10:30 a.m. to 10:00-11:30 a.m. so that Amy Hurd can attend.

b. Brent Kane motioned, Shanna McDaniels seconded, all approved.

Submitted by:
Shanna McDaniels
8/10/20