AAC Meeting Minutes: April 22nd, 2021

In attendance: Jazmyn Thomas, Sarah Roth, Clint Smith, Lana Summers, Crystal Nourie, Emily Ullsmith, Derrek Drenckpohl, Janet Tulley, Soemer Simmons, Brent Kane, Wendi Whitman, Amy Hurd, Jess Ray, Mindy Kinney

I. Chair's remarks
   a. Welcome Mindy Kinney!

II. Secretary/Treasurer Report
   a. Approval of minutes- motion by Brent, second by Lana

III. Old Business
   a. Advisor Caseload Concerns – Brent
      i. Reviewing options with the Provost for between 6-8 new positions starting July 1. Two are going to the College of Business due to their high caseloads. Searches would need to happen fairly quickly, likely towards the end of May or first part of June.

IV. New Business
   a. Advisor Search Workgroup – Jazmyn
      i. Sarah and other advisors on AAC had previously recommended a group of AAC and non-AAC members to inform administrators of their perspectives regarding advising needs on campus. A survey was another option that was proposed. Would need clarity of purpose; elected AAC advisors should provide input.
         1. Working group likely does not make sense given the tight time frame that is now known.
      ii. Need for transparency to reduce negative feelings and any resentment within the advising community regarding who gets help and who doesn't. Administrators want to get input, but know they can't please everyone. Also, it's very difficult to figure this out because there are so many different factors to consider.
      iii. Currently having conversations with Associate Deans about needs and different ideas, such as perhaps merging smaller areas.
      iv. Develop an AAC survey- what are people actually doing in their positions? The concept of what an advisor does can be misconstrued by administration. Advisors have complex roles.
      v. Hiring additional advisors is a rare opportunity. Making decisions quickly and looking at building some flexibility into the roles to be able to pivot

if/when needed. This would get some relief in the short-term and then as we do more long-term planning, can move people around.

vi. What are the top areas AAC advisors feel need advising help? Suggestions: Physics, Psychology, Biology, IT, HSC, Nursing, Math, CSD.

vii. Which departments/schools have been requesting help in recent years? Have those requests gotten to the Provost level?

viii. How much weight should be assigned to the various advising tasks? Such as number of programs, minors, teacher ed programs, involvement in curriculum management, involvement in enrollment management, etc. Factor in GA or student help.

    1. Would AAC work on some sort of tool to measure this? This would help with transparency and long-term planning, but can't be done quickly.

ix. Want to get some consistency among job descriptions and establish an expectation for professional development.

x. Identifying those with the largest caseloads should be the top priority right now because even if you're not doing other things, it is still impossible to meet with all of your students in a semester. Start here.

    1. In the past, NACADA has said major advising loads between 325-375 depending on complexity, and undeclared/specialized at 250-300.

xi. What does Assessment data say? Students typically don't blame their advisors for availability issues. Advisors have found other ways to reach and help their students.

xii. Registration is a time sensitive process- booked during peak periods. Can't maintain that level all the time because it leads to burnout.

xiii. AAC can create best practices to help supervisors understand what we need to do our jobs. An advisor needs to be able to give an override, for instance. Need systematic training.

xiv. Advising 101 conversation beginning- PowerPoint that each advisor could take to a meeting that outlines what advising consists of- it's not just picking 5 classes every semester. Scope has moved away from the Catalog and course selection- this is now a fraction of what we do. Standard presentation that people could add or change to reflect their reality. Important for chairs/directors to understand what we're doing, and also important for administrators to encourage change from the top down.

xv. Staff Success Group within Academic Affairs to reconvene. Administrative aides and clerical staff also want supervisors to know what

they do. Working on better training for chairs/directors who often haven't had administrative/management experience prior to this point.

    xvi.   Task force 15 years ago led to the creation of AAC. Materials are from 2005-2009 on the AAC website. Could look at the membership list to see representation as a starting point for a new task force.
1. https://emas.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/aaac/advisement_taskforce083105.pdf
2. https://emas.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/aaac/advisement_steering_committee_report.pdf

    xvii.   New advising positions could be part-time or full-time. Everything is on the table right now.

    xviii.   To help with transparency, need some sort of report or justification to provide to advising community regarding why these departments were allocated help. This seems possible.

    xix.   Advisors wish there was more time to weigh all the pieces. AAC advisors don't feel they have enough information right now to make specific recommendations.

    xx.   Amy Hurd can keep us updated after she meets with the Provost.

    xxi.   Need to hire individuals now and then also look at better strategic, long-term plan with tools and instruments that will improve advising environment. We are losing talented individuals. Human talent is important.

    xxii.   Need to do something like the previous task force that was done. Next AAC meeting- what would that structure look like and what would be their task?

b. ALEKS Update – Sarah
   i. ALEKS is no longer going to be proctored- plans for that put on pause for now due to a recent lawsuit in higher ed. Testing Services website is the best place to refer students to if they have any issues with ALEKS.

c. Future Planning - Amy

V. Campus Solutions/Registration
   a. CS was lagging some this week. Concerns that on Monday when freshmen register the system may be slow.

VI. Committee Updates
   a. Assessment
      i. The report may not be ready by finals week due to delayed registration.
   b. Technology
      i. Did not meet.

       c. Teacher Education
           i. No updates.
       d. PDT
           i. End of the Year Wrap Up is Tuesday May 11 1-3pm. Sent out email invitation.
       e. Mentoring & Connections
           i. Coffee hour Friday, May 7 at 9am. If council members have any ideas for fostering connections after July 1 return to campus, please let Sarah know.
       f. AAC Awards Selection
           i. Discussed plans at the last meeting.

VII.   Student Representative Report
       a. No update today.

VIII.   Other Business?
       a. How has the delayed registration time frame gone since the last meeting? Fine Arts advisors did not have a positive experience this last week. UC says they have been getting a lot of emails.
       b. Trying to help Housing with their housing block for students who do not have a contract on file. Housing placed the block on Tuesday, and it's going to catch some students off guard tomorrow on Transfer Day if they didn't have an advisor assigned. Best to call Housing and talk to someone on the assignments team.
           i. Meeting with Julie Huber to get some data on blocks- how many there are, who they're affecting- need to discuss if this is the best way to handle these issues.
           ii. Advisors said they are getting significantly more emails in the past year with questions about Housing, Financial Aid, etc.
       c. Need to circle back to Degree Audit in CS and whether the fixes that were implemented last year are enough. Does Degree Audit feel reliable to advisors and students? If so, how do we want to re-promote Degree Audit? If not, how do we want to re-group?
           i. New process implemented by Theresa has really helped issues this semester- great improvement.

IX.   Next meeting – May 6th

Submitted by:
Sarah Roth
April 26, 2021