SPECIAL MEETING OF THE DEAN’S ADVISORY CABINET:
ADMISSIONS DEADLINES & RELATED TOPICS

Tuesday, May 3rd
10:30am-12:15pm
Mother Rosalie Hill Hall, Room 209

MINUTES


Excused: W. Ault, P. Krist, J. Mantle, G. Neiger, R. Stein

Facilitator: Paula Cordeiro
Notetaker: Kate Sheridan

The meeting was called to order at 10:35am.

1. Paula welcomed the group to the meeting and invited discussion about any topics not related to admissions before beginning the Admissions discussion. No additional items were brought forward.

2. Paula reminded the group that, in light of the discussions that took place during the April DAC meeting, this meeting would be a discussion about admissions deadlines and financial aid. A summary of the discussion follows:

   • **FAFSA:** The current deadline for the FAFSA is April 1st but Pelema said there is no reason SOLES cannot promote the completion of the FAFSA application by an earlier (perhaps “priority”) deadline. One suggestion was to push this deadline back to March 1st and be diligent about reminding students of this deadline (i.e. website, brochures, open houses, etc.). Steve clarified this issue as being important because we often lose students due to issues with Financial Aid and an inability to guarantee students aid at the time of admission. Paula announced that Pelema will have a new title effective July 1st: Assistant Dean of Admissions for SOLES. This reflects efforts to centralize Admissions processes and the collection of more accurate data – “knowing admissions in sophisticated ways.” This is a strategic attempt to streamline the admissions process and approach admissions practices in a more coherent way across programs.

   • Heather discussed some concerns that she has about admissions processes in the Department of Learning and Teaching regarding rolling admissions and the yield that the department currently sees. She is hopeful that having deadlines will help the department to pull in a higher caliber of applicants.

   • Paula discussed some of the outcomes of the admissions processes and what SOLES is doing around the whole package of enrollment through graduation and job placement. She cited the John Tracy Clinic and its alumni who all get jobs when they complete the program due to the specialization of the program and the credential they receive. She also discussed the data that is made transparent on the INER website around alumni job placement and encouraged other programs to making similar data for prospective students.

   • Lonnie discussed some concerns about changes to the processes and mentioned that he would like to see some data around some of these Financial Aid issues and how they relate to student yield. Most programs lose some of their best applicants because of the financial aid packages that SOLES is able to offer. Pelema mentioned that changing the FAFSA deadline does not solve the issue of the amount that SOLES is able to offer students but will at least allow applicants to receive information about the packages at the time of admission.

   • Paula discussed the use of merit money and how it differs across programs. She mentioned that she would like to take a look at how some other schools and programs use merit funds for their students. She pointed out that when there are students that programs are targeting this money should be used to further support these applicants. Pelema pointed out that the earlier students can be notified of admissions and financial aid decisions the more informed their decisions can be and this will ultimately have a positive impact on the overall admissions process in SOLES.
• Paula asked the group about the types of universities their applicants are coming from and whether or not the programs are getting the type of diversity among their applicants that they seek. Paula discussed the scholarship program that has been developed between SOLES and Francis Parker and some of the concerns she has had about the recipient selection process moving forward.
  o Cheryl asked whose responsibility it is to collect and analyze the types of data that Paula requested (i.e. ethnicity, undergraduate/graduate universities). This is the type of work that will fall under the responsibility of Pelema’s office but it will take a few years to get there. Linda pointed out that this data is already available but exists in a different place than the reports that are currently sent to the program areas.
  o Paula pointed out that one of the common responses during the “Harvey Bubbles” exercise during the SOLES Monthly Meeting was that SOLES did not do well collectively on the diversity objective of the strategic plan. She discussed research being done on “Microassaults” and discussed its potential implications for what is happening in SOLES, and possibly in considering directions for the new strategic plan.
  o Paula discussed the conversation she had with a student in her class who recently completed an Action Research project on the issues faced by Latina/o students in Leadership Studies. She stated that SOLES has to offer other structures within the programs to help facilitate opportunities and add to the culture of the programs, citing the presence of Visiting faculty like Rose Martinez, Zachary Green, David Herrera. Paula would like to see similar efforts made in other program areas. Pelema would like to see a new support structure in place before any efforts to ramp up efforts at increasing diversity and reaching out to students of color. Steve mentioned that he would like to screen the film A Sense of Belonging at a future Monthly Meeting.

• Scholarship Allocation: Pelema mentioned that it would be helpful if scholarship decisions could be made at the time of admissions instead of this being a staggered process. Cheryl discussed the process Leadership Studies follows in order to make admissions decisions. Todd discussed some of the timing issues with the MFT program particularly with regard to needing to interview so many applicants to the program. He mentioned that the program can try to expedite the process and make scholarship decisions in conjunction with the interview process but it is difficult to make these decisions particularly taking into consideration early admissions applicants. Todd and Ana pointed out that merit money does not tend to be a decision-maker for most students, and the concerns they have for students who are struggling financially. They would like to see allocation of money be “needs-based” in the future.

• MFT Admissions Deadline: Pelema recommended that MFT have one application deadline, pointing out that it might be more beneficial from an applicant’s perspective to have only one deadline. This would also allow for a more defined period of time during which to make decisions. Todd and Ana both feel that the program needs both fall and spring deadlines to meet student needs and plans for completion. Todd expressed concern about limiting the admissions period to only one deadline, but is willing to try keeping only the January deadline and seeing what kind of pool the program receives. Todd and Ana discussed the admissions process, noting that MFT privileges interpersonal skills and how applicants perform in the interview; the paper applications are reviewed after the interview process has been completed. Paula mentioned that before making this decision she would be interested in seeing some data on admissions in MFT and consider this possible change.

• Counseling Admissions Deadline: The February 1st deadline was effective this year. The admissions process is labor intensive for the Counseling program as well and includes a group and individual interview. Lonnie noted that initial screening reduces some of the work by eliminating applicants who do not meet the minimum requirements and those that remain are guaranteed a group, individual or phone interview. Counseling interviewed 65 students for Counseling/CMHC.
Lonnie discussed the rubric Counseling uses for admissions in which faculty evaluate 6-7 items on scales of 1-5. Cheryl discussed some concerns that she has with the rubric used by LS faculty and how the data is used to assess students. It is used as a “conversation piece” and not as a definite cut-off.

**ACTION:** Paula asked that the program areas share their rubrics with one another via email.

- **Leadership Studies Admissions Deadlines:** Pelema discussed the rationale for a potential PhD program deadline of December 1st, noting that applications would be ready for review in January with the potential to hold interviews that month as well. This deadline is also a bit more common among PhD programs. Moving the Masters deadline to February 1st seems like a viable option.
  - Paula mentioned that it might be beneficial to look at schools and programs that SOLES considers competition to see what their deadlines are.
- Cheryl mentioned that she would like to shift some of the merit money in the department to support Masters students. She would like to do some research/analysis on where the money has been most effective and would like to shift some funds specifically towards diversity.
- Steve reminded the group about the policy around admissions that states that a student can be reconsidered if they provide additional information to the admissions committee. In general Steve mentioned it is not a good idea to get into the specifics of why prospective students are not admitted.
- **Learning & Teaching Admissions Deadlines:** Paula mentioned that she would like to see some work towards a certificate in early childhood education within the Department of Learning and Teaching. There was a brief discussion about some of the dis-incentives that exist in K12 and how this has impacted applications to L&T programs. Heather mentioned that programs like TESOL and JTC are attracting applicants and she believes there is enormous room for work to be done on outreach to international schools. She would like to see a more consistent review process with rolling deadline (i.e. faculty meet to consider applications every 6 weeks and those meeting times communicated to students). She is okay with trying out new admissions deadlines for the next application cycle. Heather mentioned that the longer-term solution is to re-work some of the programs.
  - There was a discussion about the differentiation between Masters-ready students and credential-ready students. Steve mentioned credential-only and MA students are identified in the same way, and credential-only undergraduate students are packaged as 5th-year students. There was also a discussion about the current process of admitting credential students to the Masters program – currently there is not a formal process. This needs to change.

**Next Steps:** Kate will send notes from today’s conversation to the group. Pelema will meet individually with directors and chairs to finalize the new admissions deadlines.

Paula asked if there are any scholarships for which an earlier deadline would make a difference for students. Linda said that if admissions deadlines are moved then scholarship deadlines will be moved to correspond more closely.

**Next Meeting:** Kate will send a Doodle Poll to DAC members later this month to schedule the Summer DAC meeting.