

NASSAU COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Garden City, New York 11530

Academic, Student Affairs & Enrollment Committee Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2023

The meeting of the Academic, Student Affairs & Enrollment Committee of the Board of Trustees was held on the eleventh floor of the Administrative Tower. The meeting was called to order by Trustee Tuman at 5:35 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Donna Tuman
Lynne D'Agostino
Kathy Weiss
Aniruddh Patel
Jorge Gardyn (ex-officio)

Also in Attendance: Wanda Jackson, John Durso, George Siberón, Ronald Rosenberg
Acting President Conzatti, Acting VP Alvarez-Ortiz, Asst. VP Follick

1. Approval of Minutes

Trustee Tuman requested a motion to approve the minutes of January 10, 2023. Trustee Weiss moved the motion; seconded by Trustee Patel. Motion carried 4-0.

2. Enrollment Updates

Dr. Follick presented the Spring 2023 enrollment report comparing February 7, 2023 to February 4, 2022, noting that the news is not as good as we want. Overall Spring enrollment is down 1.5% even with the late start, which was on the past Tuesday. Acting President Conzatti, AVP Follick and Registrar Barkan are inspecting the data, particularly after the drop period has expired, to try to determine factors contributing to the decline, such as trends with modality, from fully online to asynchronous to face-to-face, as well as, reviewing student types, whether new or continuing. More data will be forthcoming.

Dr. Conzatti interjected to ensure that the Board and the community have a clear understanding. The semester started off with a 3% increase. She explained during the drop-add period, students make changes in their schedule. Between drop-add and the census date when data is reported to SUNY, there was a decline, which is reflected in the number on the chart. Starting with an increase is an indication that we do not have a recruitment issue; rather, we have a retention issue. Twenty-one days into the semester, we have lost students during the normal drop-add period during which we expect them to change their schedules, and are trying to figure out why they are leaving. Dr. Conzatti made a mental note this past Fall when the College had an initial increase followed by a decline during drop-add, so when this Spring revealed the same pattern, the data was dissected to figure out why this is happening.

Trustee Siberón asked if we have any idea why?

Dr. Conzatti responded that the data indicates some 1,100 fully online students have dropped. Again, she, Dr. Follick, and Registrar Barkan continue to review the data. In standard business operation, we start the semester with what we identify as a 1% balance of student services for which we expect about 4,000 changes to schedule during that one week, and then it stabilizes. Instead, students are continuing to drop. She reiterated that we do not have a recruitment issue, which is why we reported early last month that the numbers were all positive. Now, 15 days into the semester, they have decreased.

Chair Gardyn requested this slide and the last five years of data for the Board to review the trend, because beforehand it seems as if everything was OK, and then in 2022-2023 there has been a shift.

Trustee Siberón underscored how the concern remains that we are able to recruit students and not to retain them. Are they choosing to work because the economy has been tough? We need to figure out why they make the time and effort to enroll here and then drop out only a couple of weeks into the semester.

Dr. Follick replied that we are coordinating our plan to reach out to those students to find answers and what we might do differently in the future.

Trustee Tuman asked how many students are we talking about?

Dr. Follick answered that we do not know the overall numbers of drop-ads, as we are trying to pinpoint the population since some students have dropped multiple classes, and so we need to make sure we contact individual students once.

Dr. Conzatti remarked that we are tracking some students who have registered for late start, as well.

Trustee Tuman asked for the number of credit hours that we lost?

Dr. Follick estimated a couple thousand.

Vice Chair Weiss, referring to the large number of fully online students who have dropped, more than 1,000, inquired about conducting a random search. She noted the nationwide trend of students who had adjusted to different modalities during the COVID-19 pandemic, and wondered, since the return to student-faculty interaction, if it might be of interest to ascertain whether the reason students drop is the schedule or the professor or the realization that they do not like to sit at length in front of a computer, which would be important for planning future synchronous courses.

Dr. Follick assured her that conversations are taking place on how we can reduce the number of drops for that modality, with Dr. Conzatti echoing that this item has become a priority.

Trustee Siberón sought clarification that the discussion is about dropping a full course load, as opposed to any particular class(es).

Dr. Follick confirmed that we have both sets of data and are differentiating them.

Chair Gardyn asked what is our total number of online students?

Dr. Follick responded that he could provide that data at the next meeting, with Dr. Conzatti giving a reminder that Registrar Barkan would typically field a question of this nature, but he is absent.

Trustee Jackson reinforced we need to appreciate that part of the five-year data set includes the pandemic, and so data before and during it would not be analogous; and Vice Chair Weiss underscored that the data since we returned face-to-face will differ, as well, with the online and remote dynamic having changed significantly after March 2020, at the request of the Governor, as noted by Chair Gardyn.

Dr. Follick resumed the presentation. Final Spring numbers are extremely positive for non-degree students, which are those taking classes for personal enjoyment, prerequisites, and graduate programs. For Fall, our visiting student numbers are relatively small. Our large majority of visiting students come in the summer, registration for which is launching on March 13. Our online admissions application was activated today. Fall registration is scheduled to begin on April 10. With late start and 1,000 available seats, we achieved about an 86% fill rate, which is very strong because, about a week prior to the late start, we were at 50%, and most of the students who selected the seats were continuing, which means they were dropping their full semesters, but were able to add the late start. A late start class simply runs a little bit longer each meeting to make up for the course having started two weeks later than the regular semester commencement, and then we also have a second-half semester cohort of about 15 – 20 classes. Postcards and text messages will be regularly issued for upcoming summer and Fall. Our webpage is ready to be deployed on this day. For first-year degree-seekers, our application admits and registered students are up even though Spring is notoriously slower and quieter, as there are fewer graduating high schoolers.

A large percentage of new students come from transfers. We are up 423 applications and have netted 150 students. All transfer students, whether they went to one school or four or five, must have their credits evaluated manually by only three full-time admissions counselors and then receive both general academic and discrete program advisement, so we should all be very proud to have brought in such an amazing number of admits and registered students. NCC re-admit population, students who had stopped attending and have returned after a lapse in semesters, is also up. Looking ahead to Fall, we already have 823 applications, which we can attribute to the SUNY Free Application Week. In our last weekly report to SUNY, we had our largest number of applications at 950. He and Dr. Conzatti participated in a Presidents and Chief Enrollment Officers meeting yesterday, and it was gratifying that NCC was the leader in increases in applications. The number of admits is relatively low right now because we will be starting placement testing in the coming weeks. We are working with the Math Department to see how we can change the current math placement.

Chair Gardyn requested confirmation that we are still conducting math and English placement?

Dr. Follick responded “Yes”: for math, we focus on the overall math GPA over 3-4 years; and for English, we review overall high school GPA along with Regents and SAT scores, which is what we have been using for a long time. Roughly an 80 GPA is required to place into introductory Math 100. We ran some data simulations, and, in his mind, not all students were being placed correctly, so earlier in the day he and the Academic Senate committee discussed how we can work together to devise a resolution through shared governance to make the placement process more student-centered,

and the proposal was sent back to the department for consultation. He noted that a lot of our students have not taken the Regents since the pandemic, and, hence, many of this year's high school seniors will not be eligible for the Regents exemption, but, as we move forward, Regents testing will resume. The SATs and ACTs are optional for many schools. SUNY has not made its recommendation for this year.

Trustee Patel asked whether we are still accepting SATs and ACTs?

Dr. Follick replied "Yes" for SATs, ACTs, Aps, IBs, and previously dual enrolled students. With ongoing dialogue with the Academic Senate committee, we are very close to having all multiple measures become student-centered.

Trustee Tuman inquired about first-year applicants: do we have an initial breakdown of the major programs that these students are entering and, of these, which are the most preferred; and, further, how do certifications and licenses factor into the selection, as, for instance, students may apply for a math course required for an eventual license?

Dr. Follick reported that early data reveals a lot of students work within a traditional Liberal Arts major. For high school seniors, our Nursing program is in the highest demand of any Allied Health Sciences, especially now that it is a four-year program. We have multiple pathways to the Math Department for STEM and non-Stem majors.

Trustee Tuman followed up whether those entering as Liberal Arts majors have opportunity to redirect pathways into medical programs?

Dr. Follick responded that students can certainly request a change of program for hyphenate courses or for any program with department approval.

Transfer student numbers are up, but it is extremely early since most transfers take place after Spring grades have been posted. He also cautioned that a lot of those students are from Nursing and Allied Health Sciences programs, which have limited space. Likewise, the re-admits typically take place right before the semester starts.

Spring Placement Testing overall numbers have been fluid for the last couple of semesters. Interestingly, this semester more students tested on campus, rather than remotely, so for the Fall, we are continuing to offer both modalities.

Trustee Patel asked how many students are choosing the SAT and ACT options rather than Placement Testing?

Dr. Follick replied that the SAT and ACT options are the least selected, particularly since the number of students who took the SATs during the pandemic was extremely low. Students used to have to register well in advance, but now are able to register as late as two days beforehand.

We offered two winter session courses for Intro to Nursing for high school students in collaboration with our Nursing Department and Center for Excellence and Innovation (CEI). Both cohorts were wonderful, with students coming here after school from 3:30 p.m. – 6:45 p.m. for four straight days to learn about the nursing profession, as well as about other Allied Health professions with which they may have been less familiar. Our Medical Assistant program has enrolled 19 students from Northwell Earn and Learn. Northwell has been very supportive of this program and there has been discussion to continue this Fall. In a collaboration with CEI and the Communications Department, 13 students are taking an Intro Communications course after school on campus, as well. In addition, a unique collaboration between the Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work Department and the Nassau County Correctional Facility enabled us to pilot an Intro to Sociology course this Spring, which is fully online. We are hoping to be much more aggressive in the future. At an informational meeting, SUNY will be highlighting NCC as one of the few community colleges working with county rather than federal correctional facilities.

Trustee Patel asked what is the age bracket for students attending this innovative Intro to Sociology course?

Dr. Follick indicated that the course is fully online, so we have students who are at the traditional college-age level, with some having obtained their GED while incarcerated, and also a non-traditional population into which we are looking to expand in the future.

Trustee Tuman asked if there were any other items for the Committee to consider. There being none, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne E. Brandi
Secretary to the President and
the Board of Trustees