

Admissions, Retention and Financial Aid Committee (ARFAC)

Meeting of 25 September 2003

Present: Laurel Carrington, Paul Jackson, Wendell Arneson, Beth Christensen, Bill Green, Katherine Ruby, Barb Lundberg

1. Committee members created and reviewed a list of issues that are expected to comprise the year's agenda. The first two issues listed are high priority items.
 - Continue conversation and receive updates about Need "blind" vs. need "sensitive" admissions policy.
 - Inform policy development related to financial aid paperwork and the ability to guarantee meeting the demonstrated needs of returning students.
 - Discuss current policy of meeting full demonstrated needs of students.
 - Discuss production of a timetable for financial aid notification to students and families, especially as it regards possible first year students.
 - Discuss the challenges and procedures involved in recruiting athletes that meet current admission standards.
2. Committee asked Barb Lundberg to provide some additional information and context to the proposed agenda items as well as speculate about timetables for the highest priority items.
 - Need "blind" vs. need "sensitive" admissions policy will be going to the Board of Regents and the College Council in the next few weeks. The Executive Committee of the Board has asked Barb to supply a white paper for consideration at the October 2003 meeting. The original timetable for movement from "blind" to "sensitive" admissions was slated to take 3-4 years with a decision to formally adopt in the Spring 2005; however, current budget projections have underscored the need to possibly accelerate this process. At the October 2003 meeting, the Board may ask the admissions and financial aid staff to implement many features of this new policy during the current admissions cycle; consequently, the offices involved have taken steps to prepare for this possibility. If this request occurs, ARFAC will need to generate and help implement effective ways to dialogue with the campus community about the changes and possible outcomes.
 - The financial aid office has started working toward a policy about financial aid paperwork for returning students that will guarantee the college will meet their demonstrated need. Barb and Kathy will be developing and presenting various

policy scenarios to the committee so that feedback can be gathered to help inform the policy with the goal of having a policy in place before the next financial aid cycle begins.

3. General information was exchanged about the faculty's role in both admission and retention of students as well as the current 10 day retention numbers.
 - Many students and families continue to comment on the positive impact interactions with faculty make on college choices once they arrive on campus. The connections made between students, faculty and families really pays off in admissions.
 - 10 day retention rates - soon to be publicized broadly. Improvements continue and the data looks great. 92.3% retention in the class of 2006, 89% retention in the class of 2005, and 85% retention in the class of 2004. This suggests that student experiences at St. Olaf continue to be positive, the fit is good, and that the four-year graduation rate may also increase if the trend continues.
 - Briefly discussed how transfer students are recruited and the candidate pools from which they originate.
 - FALL OPEN HOUSE is Thursday and Friday, October 16-17, 2003
4. Next Meeting. Thursday, October 16, 2003. Time: 9:30 AM Location: Buntrock 222

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Jackson