

SESSION IV – GROUPS A-D

STUDENT FEES AND FINANCIAL AID

Question 1: How can our financial aid strategies support our enrollment strategy?

Discussion Items

- FAFSA is difficult to navigate for all students/families but especially 1st generation college students and families.
- We have heard from parents that UNC is the last school to send financial aid information to the family.
- Are there things we can do to make it easier for students/families to access information about gaining residency?
- Some families receive information from schools letting them know exactly what aid/scholarships the student may be available to the student. Does UNC, A) send out this type of information? And B) if so, do we know if we are timely with our information in regards to our competitors?
- Not customer service friendly
- To deal with financial aid problem, you have to jump through so many hoops
- Front desk is a rough experience—students feel like they are defending themselves at the counter
- We have low-income students and we are making students feel like they have to defend their experience and a sensitivity to those students-
- Students spend a lot of time worrying about financial aid
- Students don't have their money distributed in a timely manner—to buy books, to pay bills, etc
- Reduce the cost of attendance
- Data needs to be used to define what works/what doesn't and what makes a difference
- Financial aid has to have a policy that is more flexible---it cannot be fixed (March 1 or Feb 1)—get rid of the deadline date—
- Getting the best students requires money
- Is it our mission to reach more regional students vs. out of state students
- How do we provide financial aid to fulfill our mandated state mission
- There is a role for outstanding students – high index students need to be attracted to UNC
- Need to increase our average index score
- Is our purpose to educate only talented students, have we done more when we educate more “average” students? The most educational improvement is done with our average students
- Many rules need to be followed makes it difficult to use as a recruiting tool
- All freshmen that had a 0 family contribution received 100% coverage.
- When do students fill out FAFSA? Optimal date is March 1, but any date is acceptable for the above
- 2007 freshman survey for all incoming freshman indicated that student relying on loans were the ones that did not return the following year. Would the impact of the above grant have an impact on the students and what would that impact be?
- Each year will be different with the funding. Regardless, with 0 family contribution students will receive at least \$6000.
- COF doesn't really make a difference to students. Do students not take advantage of COF? Usually not an issue and students can do it at any time.
- What difference to the grants make? It all depends on the school and costs.
- Are we competitive with local competition? Yes except with institutional awards. UNC does not have funding for institutional awards. CSU charges many more fees' than UNC, but parents don't see the fees when looking the cost. Seems to be unknown to most faculty and staff at UNC.
- Many variables regarding the costs and how do we make that clear to students/parents.
- Specific to fees' how do we make that information clear?
- UNC is beginning to separate out fees' to make it clear

- BOT seems to be reluctant to change fee structure and to add new fees despite evidence that other schools are higher.
- Would it be good to increase freshman index score? What impact would this have on retention? The higher the score the more competitive the environment to compete against.
- Resources are not available and the fee's provide for them.

Action Items

- Find new ways to help prospective student/families understand and complete all different types of financial aid.
- Educate prospective and current students on loan forgiveness programs by creating some sort of online or hard copy directory for the ways to access these programs.
- Each college develops a list of the available state, federal and private aid programs/scholarships that could possibly be available to certain majors or to students in general.
- Partner with local high schools (all of them) to do presentations on all financial aid strategies.
- Offer instate tuition to out of state students who are the children of UNC alumni
- Make sure faculty and students know about the available summer application processes
- Financial aid office needs to be customer-service oriented—compassionate financial aid
- Must be aware of who are students are—first-gen/low income and be sensitive to them
- Financial aid needs to be student-advocates—need to find ways to work policies that support students education
- Need to invest in data to make decisions about financial aid
- Rethink and reinvest resources in when we have priority dates and how to send student-friendly letters
- Target scholarships to those students who we want to attract who we don't
- Keep student accessibility in mind at all times
- Need to look at other ways to raise funds for financial aid (Not state funds)
- Use the difference in fee's to market. If CSU is so much hirer then why not market that.
- Show comparative costs to prospective students
- Separate fee's out of tuition costs so that it can be clear how much money is being spent.
- Adjust timing of when to make offers of aid sooner. Currently awarded in March.

Question 2: What is the proper mix of merit-based and need-based grant programs?

Discussion Items

- Who decides whether the scholarship is merit or need based?
- We would like to know the break-down of how many students who received merit-based scholarships could afford UNC without the scholarship.
- Is there any correlation between socio-economic status and grades/GPA? If so, is there a high percentage of students who receive merit-based scholarships that could be better used as need-based?
- Students feel unappreciated when they don't get anything
- Need to spend a lot of time with research---many unanswered questions
- How many of our Merit based students stay? How many of our need-based students stay?
- In PVA, there is a need for talent-based scholarships to compete
- Money is more important to the parents than the students---parents want to know their child is appreciated through receiving funding to go to school
- If we want out-of-state students, we have to have money to attract them
- Financial aid process is challenging for program areas—programs may work outside of financial aid to avoid going through the process
- Identity of the University would impact what sort of grants we should give and how many of them.
- There are a lot of good things, yet enrollment is decreasing. Why is that and what needs to change?
- Do we have a good balance between need and merit based aid? Is our balance typical of other state school?
- Regarding cultural centers Asians are decreasing because Greeley cannot support their needs. What needs of the students are being offered.
- What jobs are available? There seems to be a disconnect between the student job needs and

available employment. Only work-study students can be hired at most offices. Only about 400 students can receive work-study based on the budget. There are more jobs for work-study students than there are students that can work. Work-study award amounts are not increasing. Many students that are awarded work-study are not working and so financial aid over spends by about.

- Are there stats on students that have work-study and their retention? It seems there is a “family” feel among employers and students.
- Working students do better according to a national survey
- There is work-study employment off-campus with select employers. Good for student experience, pulls from on-campus work-study employees.

Action Items

- Research—use data to make these decisions—hard to make these decisions without data
- We need to shot for a good mix of talented and average students who can work together to get all students to a high level – raise all the boats. Look at our enrollment as a “portfolio” and balance need based avg. stds with talented stds.
- Need to know how much of our scholarship \$ are need based and how much are merit.
- Offer something to Asians students that the city currently isn’t offering. This can expand to other student populations.
- Get stats on retention and employment specific work-study.
- Offer incentives to students or alumni that recruit other students to come. Generational scholarships.

Question 3: How can we use student employment more strategically to support student retention?

Discussion Items

- It is important to employ students to increase student/faculty/staff interactions. Students receive job skills and increases mentoring opportunities.
- Need to create a greater pool of work-study, students who want to work should be able to work
- We want students to work, so we must create ways to have jobs on campus---campus jobs are only taking work study
- Could we raise money through the alumni or others for student work options—we are not going to get an increase in Federal dollars
- Increases mentorship opportunities—need students to be able to work with faculty and staff
- Employment is very important in retention
- Campus employment works better to accommodate student’s schedule
- Student feels more connected when they work on campus
- Builds sense of community

Action Items

- Increase the ability to employ students
- Find an easy-access point for students to know what is available
- Encourage Greeley businesses to open a campus version of business – kiosk or booth – have a presence on campus.
- We need summer employment to keep students here over the summer
- Expand work-study
- Expand undergraduate research with work-study
- Turn financial aid to “work study” where they are able to build resume and experience – undergrad research.
- Work-study awards need to be notified in time to not have to look for work off campus
- Provide financial aid for students involved in internships
- Look for opportunities for foundation giving to support internships. Sustainability is an area that may have many opportunities for internships and outside financial support.
- Focus on emerging industries here in Colorado (Vestas, etc) for internships, scholarships.

Question 4: How do we reengineer the process of offering and awarding financial aid and scholarship?

Discussion Items

- Lobby for changes in FAFSA process
- Universal Scholarship is primarily for sophomores and above...but there is a communication issue that is a problem
- Nice to have faculty have some input into what is written for essays—
- Alumni office working to publicize who donates and why and what it means to students
- When are we losing students, freshman, sophomore?

Action Items

- Rolling deadline dates
- Distribute funds earlier
- Change the dates for merit-based Scholarships application that are not FAFSA based—universal scholarship app should not have to be the pre-requisite
- Data—understand the recruitment cycle—differs by group—we really need to mine the data so that we understand this information
- Create an easy way to find scholarships—on the website
- Help parents and students understand the FAFSA process
- Notify students of awards much earlier in the year
- Demonstrate how nice it is to attend UNC and make the students believe we care about them very early in the process. They need to feel valuable at the beginning of the process
- Recruit at the community college level, low cost alternative
- Close gap in scholarships at sophomore level. We need to sustain students over 4 years.

Question 5: Is a “First Generation Scholarship” something that would be useful at UNC?

Discussion Items

- Yes, we must value first-generation students—for marketing alone, we must find a way to compete—and saying this is a population of students is important to us
- In comparison, UNC has more first-gen students than CSU and UC---this could be a v. important niche for us
- 41% of freshmen are 1st generation
- CSU lowered standards for index, will they have a problem in retention next year. Need to watch.
- With 41% first gen.
- How many first gens have financial need?
- Are there other programs on campus that meet their needs
- How do you prove that they are 1st gen?
- Why target that population and how are we supporting them.
- What is the strategic goal and will that meet the university needs?
- Would it be better spend as a scholarship or better to be invested in other programs that already exist?
- Do we feel we are not getting enough first gen students?
- Why are there so few students from Greeley coming to UNC? Do we capitalize on that? UNC isn't targeting local students.
- The university used to invest in recruiting trips to other areas and doesn't seem to be any more

Action Items

- Yes, we must offer this scholarship! Might be worth offering it over 4 years-or 5 years
- Do not make the 1st generation student scholarships only 1 year. If we take it away, we have a retention problem
- If we are more concerned about retention, perhaps we need to focus more on talent
- If you want to admit more of these students, do we acknowledge we may have lower retention rates?
- First gen scholarships should be tied to need. Not necessary to award to a std who is not needy.
- Recruit and market in local high schools.
- Create a Greeley resident scholarship, not
- Free credits for local graduates – Aims did this a few years ago.