

Monday, March 6, 2017

General Meeting

- What are we?
 - The CEAS student government branch
 - Undertake curriculum change
 - Put on events
 - Take on various initiatives
- Student Government Campaigns
 - Leugers Price: President/Vice President campaign
 - Platform focuses on a few items that are feasible, not a long list of things that won't get done
 - Textbook prices to be lower
 - Medical (alcohol) amnesty
 - Transparency about what the general fee funds
 - Includes a timeline for when things will be done
 - Emily Demjaneko
 - Online scheduling for CAPS...more streamlined
 - Increased visibility at crosswalks
 - Kareem Elgafy
 - Enhance the dining experience/dining halls
 - Capture the co-op experience
 - Bridging the gap between students and administration
 - Sinna Habteselassie
 - Promote diversity and inclusion – mandatory diversity training
 - Institute a master calendar to replace 25 Live
 - Ensure textbook affordability
 - Audrey Torrence
 - Sustainability – work to make sure every building has a water bottle refill station and increase the availability of recycling bins
 - Community outreach -want to maintain a voice in Clifton
 - Cultural education – new students to undergo basic cultural awareness training
 - Mental health – add QPR (question, persuade, and refer) training
 - Misc.
 - Wants to switch from a DAAP Senator to an at-large senator because it would give her a year long, constant platform to work with
 - Sam Mangold-Lenett
 - Current Director of Transportation for undergraduate student government
 - Wants to ensure transparency from student government
 - Wants to revitalize how UC does Title IX
 - Wants to bring back money for CAPS

- Expand where the Bearcat card can be used (OTR, the Banks, etc.)
 - You have one vote for a President/Vice President slate and 8 votes for the at-large senators
- CEAS Elections
 - Will be electing 2 senators after spring break
- Innovations Committee
 - They help to complete new projects that are proposed by students or tribunal and will benefit CEAS students
 - Meeting this Thursday at 4:30 in ERC 435
 - Contact Michelle Fordos with questions
- Special Events
 - Zoo, Cyclones game, Relay for Life, Sigma Sigma Carnival, Order of the Engineer are all coming up
 - Contact Sam Dunker with questions
- Learning Communities
 - Dean Arthur
 - Dean Arthur deals with all undergraduates
 - They are NOT looking at eliminating LCs altogether; just want to rework how they're done
 - Have received feedback that some students don't feel like they are a good use of two hours per week
 - Bring in ~1200 freshman but only graduate ~650 students. LOTS of room for improvement
 - Send out ~350 "you're in trouble" letters after fall semester of freshman year
 - Want to improve retention, possibly through learning communities
 - Students thought that LCs would be a "study time," but it's not
 - Most students struggle with math, so grouping by math would be helpful
 - Some schools (like Case Western) already send students backwards in course sequence if they fail a midterm
 - PK Imbrie
 - There are many different models of LCs at different institutions
 - We're drifting further behind on retention
 - Most have an overall retention of 60% +
 - Want to change the model to impact more students
 - Having an LC carry credit has an effect on student performance
 - Having the LC carry credit and a requirement towards graduation would force more students to be an LC
 - Connect LC to living on campus...be a "living community"
 - Most students within an LC are all in ENED1020, 1090, and chemistry (math is not part of this)
 - For leaders, it's a spectacular program
 - If changes are made, how would people still be able to get those leadership experiences

- Why they're here:
 - NOT getting rid of LCs
 - To hear what we have to say
 - Hear about areas of improvement
- Student feedback:
 - Need to improve on the academic focus within the LC; use it more as a study time
 - Some of the info learned in LCs was good. But setting aside one day a week to focus on class material could be beneficial
 - Question: What about having more supplemental instruction sessions instead of an LC?
 - LAC already offers math tutoring. Free. Can go back to the same tutor every time
 - Students come in thinking that LC is more a study hall, so when struggling with the transition, they didn't have that study group
 - Students didn't take LCs very seriously, and looked at it as a social group
 - Supplemental Instruction will be more helpful/beneficial if it is in some way required, especially for students who are struggling. Students who are willing to work to succeed are already taking advantage of these opportunities
 - Non-CEAS LCs require that students go to the math tutoring center at the start of classes. This ensures that students know that the LAC exists
 - At what point is it less of an issue with the LCs and more of an issue with the math department?
 - PK's response: LCs were not created to be a help tool for math. They were created to help students transition from a high school model of success to a college model
 - LCs are there to help develop a community during the second year
 - Want to bring in a faculty member with a focus in mathematics education
 - The success of the LC is often dependent on how much the students in the LC care about their success in college. If students in the LC don't have enough drive/don't put in enough effort, the LC can struggle as a whole
 - Peer leaders encourage the students to create a community together; they need to have one or two friends in the LC to rely on and work with. For a peer leader to sit there while the students just do homework would not be beneficial
 - On a transitional issue that also relates to studying, not everyone will form study groups with the other people in the LC. LCs are often grouped by major, but having more diversity of majors, demographics, etc would be a good change

- PKs response: the college has increased the number of women, but we are way behind in terms of getting minority representation. We are focusing on being more inclusive
- LCs are a place to build relationships with their peers. That's way more useful than just using an LC for a study hall. This is where students build their entire support system, and make connections for the rest of their college career
- Is there a breakdown of the retention number in terms of knowing how many people realized engineering just isn't with them, etc.?
 - PKs response: Want to help students make the right choice from the beginning. We want them to make informed choices. Don't want students to fail math, then hate engineering and immediately leave before even finding out what engineering really is. Want them to make an informed choice on *engineering*, not just "freshman" classes
 - Dean Arthur's response: it's very hard to get data from people who have left. But not making excuses.
- Is this data about retention rates, etc. publicly available?
 - PKs response: yes, some is already available
- Rough timeline for when plans are taking place?
 - PKs response: Tough question with many things at play, including getting students' input. The longer they wait, the less likely it is to make changes. Trying to understand the strengths and weakness of what we have and models we're proposing. Could make a change as early as fall of 2017, or possibly wait one more full academic cycle
 - Face-to-face meetings are much more beneficial because he can ask questions and get "live" feedback. Just set up an appointment
- One way to improve LCs would be to combine them with recitation periods. This would help keep LCs as a community, to share learning techniques, etc., but also have that study aspect
- PK: freshman year is a change for students, but there are still similarities to high school (chemistry, math, etc.). Sophomore year is a bigger transition, there are more concepts, just more "new" things
- Some students go on co-op fall of sophomore year. Many students go on this first co-op with little idea of what engineering really is. This is where they can find out. LCs are beneficial because freshman will have an upperclassman student leading them, mentoring them, sharing experiences, what they did on co-op. Need more prep for freshman students in terms of what engineering and co-op will be
- The program has gone through changes over the past few years. Is there data with current students in terms of retention? Has this changed?

- PKs response: Yes there's data. There's been no change in retention. Changes have been made in programs, but the big picture hasn't changed.
- For transfer students, there's no transition help. The switch is just as shocking. Are there plans for helping with this transition?
 - PKs response: looking at how to include everyone when everyone is coming in with different backgrounds. When looking at "living communities," need to also think about commuters. Need to have a transfer student orientation to help
- How does one leave the college? Can we have an exit survey?
 - PKs response: There are different models or processes that can be done. Surveys are used, but the data is either not reliable (student putting down whatever to get the survey done) or not given back (if they've already left the program).
- People are talking about math and how it's organized. Chemistry is a well-run program, with SI sessions, instructors who know what they're doing, etc. Why not make a change with the math program?
 - PKs response: We can't control the math program. But we can have a focus on helping students learn study techniques and help them learn the material.
- How significant is the cost of the program in making a decision?
 - Dean Arthur's response: cost is not an issue. The retention rates have not changed
 - PKs response: it's still a value added problem. If the money is being spent and we're getting good value, we'll spend the money. But when nothing is changing, that throws a red flag
- First year experience works to pair a learning style with a mentorship style. Are you working with them instead of just doing your own thing?
 - PKs response: we're working with first year experience
- Considered forming LCs around interests and not just classes/major? Could help break barriers and create more connections and make people feel comfortable
 - PKs response: yes, that is one model being considered.
 - Dean Arthur's response: there are so many combinations of cohorts, majors, math level, etc. Looking at other models and how to adapt them. Some colleges recommend specific housing options, but CEAS does not. Housing recommendations can immediately help form "learning communities" within housing from the start.
 - PK: this goes back to the "how soon?" question. This needs to be an evolutionary process, and will be something changing over time

- Dean Arthur: we sell UC on the fact that you're in a major your freshman year. Maybe that's not the best thing here. Needs to be considered
 - PK: 45% of students who start and finish in engineering change the type of engineering
 - Has there been a survey of students to find out what model students would prefer?
 - PK's response: No. When LCs were started, people weren't surveyed. It was done because it was the right thing. But if a survey were done, only a portion of students would respond. This means a small portion of students would dictate what's done by all students. They are getting ready to send out a broader survey (non-first years) to get some feedback, but it won't directly dictate what is done. Likely after spring break. First year students already had a chance to give feedback.
 - Different schools have different models for LCs. Why are LCs being targeted and not overarching changes, like changes to a math department or creating a general freshman engineering program?
 - Dean Arthur's response: we have no control over the math department. They don't have to listen to CEAS
 - PK's response: The perception of what a learning community is a group of people who have bonded from experience. Here a group of students are grouped by classes they're taking, and that's it. Why not partner this with a credit bearing class? Have one, two, three, or however many peer mentors per class
 - PK: really cares about student success. Doesn't care what this is called, or what tag it has, as long as students are successful. Wants to help improve the program and help students succeed.
- Resources:
 - Use them before it's too late