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First-Year Success Program: Student Success Hub

Student Success Hub Working Group

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**Student Success Hub Final
Friday, May 31, 2019**

Charge: “Develop a set of recommendations about ways in which UMaine could develop a centrally-located resource hub for students.”

1. Recommendations

Please list your working group’s recommendations in prioritized order. State each recommendation succinctly in one to three sentences. For each recommendation provide a brief one paragraph description of the action your group is proposing.

Recommendation One:

Establish a centralized and visible location for a Student Success Hub within the Memorial Union. Expanding the current First-Year and Transfer Center into the Student Success Hub would provide an advantage to expand current services already being provided to students at an increased level. The staffing should include 1 director, 3 professional staff, 1 administrative assistant, and 1 graduate assistant. We also recommend that 1 of these 3 professional staff members be a License Clinical Social Worker (LCSW).

Recommendation Two:

Advisory board to work with the director of the Student Success Hub. A point person must be recommended for each academic college and/or departments (i.e. Associate Deans, Department Chairs, Program Coordinators), academic services (i.e. Tutor Program, Writing Center, TRIO), Student Life/services programs (i.e. Resident Life, Student Accessibility Services) along with diverse student representatives (i.e. cultural identity, academic programs, first-year, transfer, non-traditional, veterans, first generation).

Recommendation Three:

Dedicated support from Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL), Information Technology (IT), and the Division of Marketing and Communication to create a strong online presence. This online presence would include two-minute tutorials for online resources (i.e. MaineStreet, Blackboard, Navigate) while creating up a centralize resource directory website for both academic and student services, and an instant message/chat communication system created online.

Parallel Recommendations that encompasses overall goals:

Change in faculty advising culture through incentivization through tenure and promotion to ensure students who are referred from the hub to their faculty and staff advisor receives quality services.

2. Background Information and Rationale

Please provide the background information needed to understand the rationale for your recommendations. In the chart to your working group you were provided a set of questions to consider as you completed your work. These questions can be used as a guide to this section for your report but you are not required to respond to each question.

Recommendation One (Centralize and visible location for a Student Success Hub):

The background and rationale for this recommendation is based on the need for students to easily locate this resource on campus. Throughout our working group meetings, there was a reoccurring theme of instances where students often feel they are referred to numerous locations to find the answer to their questions. There needs to be a better and more efficient system in place where students can find the answer to their question by visiting no more than two locations. In order for the Student Success Hub to be successful, and benefit students in finding resources and answers in a timely manner, it needs to be in a location that is easily visible. Because the Memorial Union is a major access point for many undergraduate students on campus, this would be a suitable location. If the Student Success Hub is unable or has the authority, to answer a question at hand, this resource will be able to get the student to the exact location to have their question answered.

Furthermore, there are two reasons why we recommend the First-Year and Transfer Center is expanded into the Student Success Hub. The first is that many of the programming and resources we would like to see made available is currently taking place at the First-Year and Transfer Center, but at a smaller scale. First-Year and Transfer Center has provided programming that has ranged from MaineStreet navigation and creating wish lists, to hosting writing center hours, and served as a satellite location for financial aid for basic questions. However, since space and staff are limited, we imagine that these resources and events can be greatly increased to better serve students on campus. The second reason is from a fiscal stand point. If a designated budget has already been established to operate the First-Year and Transfer Center, then there wouldn't be as large of an investment for starting from scratch on creating a separate resource in addition to the First-Year and Transfer Center.

Recommendation Two:

Establishing an advisory board to work with the director of the Student Success Hub. This is an essential piece for the success hub in order to provide relevant information to students and ensuring accurate referrals. Because academic curriculums are constantly changing, and campus services are adapting to student needs, it is important for the director of the Student Success Hub and staff be aware of these constant changes and improvements. Furthermore, it will be a way to break down silos that can often occur on higher education campuses where common knowledge and resources are not effectively being shared. The structure of this advisor board will model the Advising Collaborative Committee that John Mascetta has chaired over the past 7 years.

It will be the responsibility of academic colleges/programs, academic services, and Student Life to appoint staff, faculty, and students to represent their respective departments. These appointments will help serve two areas. The first is to attend committee meetings that will take place once a month in order for the Student Success Hub to be aware of updated resources and policies to better inform students with questions and referrals. The second is for the faculty and

staff representatives on this advisory board to be the point people on the Navigate platform when student concerns are shared by university faculty and staff. By centralizing the communication and function of the Navigate Platform “triage system”, appropriate communication can take place for the Student Success Hub and serving students. The Student Success Hub will follow up with students to ensure their concerns have been resolved.

Recommendation Three:

Dedicated support to create a strong online presence. The working group feels that though a web presence can be helpful and informational for students, it can be a detriment if not managed efficiently and updated on a normal basis. Furthermore, it must provide helpful information that is mobile friendly in which students can use efficiently. Providing short video tutorials of the multiple online tools required for students to use (i.e. MaineStreet, Google Drive, Blackboard, Navigate) will help students develop their needed skills to be successful academically. However, these videos and website content must be created by skilled professionals that have the knowledge and training in such areas. Because of the wonderful work CITL has offered to faculty, we recommend added financial support towards CITL to develop such resources for the Student Success Hub. These much-needed video tutorials can be used by all colleges and departments. In addition, a relationship with the Division of Marketing and Communication will also be vital in order to properly advertise and promote the Student Success Hub as a reliable and efficiently resource for any student. In our research, we have found a website from the University of Minnesota’s One Stop that models the online presence we would like to advertise to students regarding the Student Success Hub: <https://onestop.umn.edu/>

Finally, collaboration with Information Technology (IT) and/or the Office of Student Records (OSR) is important in order to create a ticketing system. A ticketing system will allow staff from the Student Success Hub to follow students through the process of seeking help on the UMaine Campus. Navigate could possibly be a tool to support this kind of referral and response needed to assure success.

Parallel Recommendations that encompasses overall goals:

Change in faculty advising culture is needed. We understand that this may be a sensitive suggestion for some. However, there has been a culture of inconsistent faculty advising due to the lack of training and recognition when compared to the extremely important contractual requirements of research, teaching, and publications for faculty. However, we fear that faculty advising will remain inconsistent if faculty are not incentivized for their service at a greater level through tenure and promotion. Peer committee guidelines, peer committees, and administration need to recognize, value, and promote effective advising, and the faculty community needs to expect improvement for those who do not meet the higher expectations. Furthermore, the Student Success Hub success of referrals are based on the performance of the faculty and staff students are being led to. If faculty advising is not completed at a quality level following referral, students may not utilize the Student Success Hub at the level we wish. Or, students may expect the Hub to perform an advising service that is not meant to be done if academic colleges wish for academic advising to remain in their individual departments. Because the change of faculty advising through incentivizing would be a large cultural switch, we recommend and encourage ongoing conversations with faculty senate, academic deans, and the Provost to

consider such a structure. The various advising centers on campus could provide trainings and workshops/conferences in order to provide support and best practices for advising.

3. Resource Information (optional)

Your charge did not include the development of an estimated budget needed to implement your recommendations. Nonetheless, if in the process of completing your work you gathered information about key resources needs (e.g., operating expenses, personnel, space, equipment, software), please include that information.

If this proposal is approved, we would like to request approximately \$3000.00 to send two members of the Student Success Hub to visit one of the three college campuses we identified that offers models of a Student Success Hub.