Academic Affairs/Student Affairs Task Force on Advising and Career Placement

May 1, 2006

This Task Force originates jointly through the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs of West Virginia University at the urging of the Implementation Team for the 2010 Plan.

Rationale:

The visibility of WVU graduates in their employment, as well as in professional and graduate programs, demonstrates the success of the university, indicates the value of a WVU education, and functions to recruit additional students. College-level analyses in response to Goal 1 of the 2010 Plan highlight academic advising and career placement as important activities that assist students as they progress through and beyond their university education. Advising occurs at many levels, through a general university advising center to college-specific offices, and from student peers to designated advisors to faculty mentors. Career placement includes helping students prepare for graduate and professional schools as well as helping students find that initial job. The university’s different departments treat career placement distinctly, for example professional programs may prepare students in different ways than liberal arts disciplines.

Charge Statement:

This task force is charged with evaluating the current practices and strategies for academic advising, career placement, and graduate school preparation and recommending action items to increase the effectiveness of these activities. The task force should:

- inventory current assets used by the university, the colleges, and departments;
- define the responsibilities and roles of the university-level units and those in the colleges responsible for advising and career placement; and
- develop best practice recommendations to enhance advising and career placement.

Since no single strategy will provide a definitive method for enhancing advising and career placement, the task force should develop a series of recommendations that will reinforce each other when implemented across the university.

Topic 1: Academic Advising

- Define advising. What resources are currently allocated to academic advising? What are best practices, in and outside of WVU, for advising? How does advising influence student retention?
- Consider advising strategies. What alternative models (such as group advising, pre-major advising, on-line advising) could be utilized as the university strives to reach its enrollment goal of 30,000 students? How can the services of professional, faculty, and peer advisors be effectively employed?
- Employ technology. How can the STAR system and other information technologies enhance advisor-student interaction? How can technology increase advisors’ ability to work with the increasing student population? What advising strategies can be
implemented to develop a sense of community and meet distinct the needs of off-campus and on-line students?

**Topic 2: Career Placement**

- Assess current programs. What is the career advising infrastructure at WVU and what are its assets? What best practice models are currently employed by some departments that could be used by other departments? What do faculty, students, and alumni say about career planning services? How might career placement services be extended to alumni pursing new careers?
- Identify student opportunities. What job placement practices are used throughout the colleges? How can internships assist with career planning and placement? What capstone or service-learning projects will prepare students for employment? What might WVU encourage aspirational placement sites (government agencies, Fortune 500 companies) to hire WVU graduates? What changes to current placement activities (job fair, monsterTRAK) would make them more available to students and more effective at placement?

**Topic 3: Graduate and Profession School Preparation**

- Identify requirements of specific careers. How are students requiring specialized advising and career planning (pre-law, pre-med) served? Where do students obtain information about applying to graduate or professional school? What resources (test prep, writing workshops, resume workshops) could help increase acceptance rates?
- Determine undergraduate awareness of further education. How can graduate or professional school be encouraged as a career development option? What models will encourage top undergraduates to earn advanced degrees at WVU (4+1 degrees, direct admits to graduate programs)? How can WVU graduate students, faculty, and advisors inform undergraduates about graduate and professional school opportunities?

Note: The advising and placement of graduate and professional students is also undergoing evaluation, but is not the responsibility of this task force. The Provost’s Task Force on Graduate Education and the Graduate Student Experience will deal directly graduate and professional student advising and placement.

The task force should report action recommendations to the Strategic Implementation Team by mid-September, 2006.

**Task Force Members:**

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- Tricia Petty, co-chair
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