

## **Work Team 5 Report**

### **1. Summary of the Process:**

Work team 5 was comprised of the following members:

- Maria Kohnke
- George Corbin
- Tom Hoener
- Gina LaMonica
- Angela Naginey

The team met on: March 2, 18, April 13, 20, 27 and May 18

The team was charged with investigating the following outcomes:

1. Determine parameters for growth. What capacity is necessary to support our enrollment/future enrollment?
2. Determine how we want to shape the student population over the next five years.
3. What initiatives would assist us in improving retention and graduation rates?

The team began by reviewing enrollment and retention. The primary source for the enrollment and retention data was the 2010-2011 Student Retention Report prepared by Angela Naginey and Cathy Alexander. Gina LaMonica, as program director and George Corbin, as a long time ADEP adjunct, were able to present the views of ADEP students, adjunct faculty and staff to the committee.

### **2. Summary of the Observations and Findings**

An initial review of the data provided to the work team revealed enrollment of incoming students seems to have been meeting expectations. However, the team observed a number of areas that if they continue will impact future enrollment. The first area of concern observed is that while head count enrollment has remained steady or increased, the number of credits taken per student has decreased. Students who used to take eight credits (two classes) per term are now more likely to only take four credits (one class).

The economic downturn has significantly increased the level of scrutiny given to tuition pricing by the general public, government and media. The commoditization of college education has increased skepticism over the value of a degree when compared to student loan debt. Without some fundamental changes being made in our pricing model and offerings, it seems that these changing attitudes and environmental conditions will not support continuous four to six percent annual tuition increases.

ADEP students have unique needs in comparison to the traditional undergraduate population. Most ADEP students are working adults who only come to the campus or off campus sites in the evening for class. Generally, support offices and services are only available from eight to five. Due to work and family demands it is extremely difficult for most ADEP students to come to campus when he or she needs to utilize those support offices or services. In addition, some support services are not available to ADEP students at all, unless they are made available for the specific student or students who need that support service. Tutoring services is a primary example. When an ADEP student needs tutoring in a course, the academic department is contacted for tutors who are usually traditional undergraduate students. There have been difficulties in the past with ADEP students using traditional undergraduate students as tutors.

Based on the latest Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey, approximately 40% of ADEP and graduate students have children. Some of those students are single parents. Especially in the current economy, childcare is a primary concern of those parents. Finding quality, reliable childcare can get in the way of continuing enrollment and graduation. Caring about the whole student and being “family friendly” is an idea that appears to be consistent with the University’s mission and is something that would make ADEP unique in comparison with other similar programs.

Currently, ADEP is retaining 80% of its students from the first to second year. However, we are only graduating 58% of these original students after six or more years. The data indicates that students are either taking more time to achieve their degree or are attriting (leaving) after their second year. Reversing this trend appears to be critical to meeting future enrollment goals.

As is common among similar programs, ADEP is almost entirely dependent on adjunct faculty members. Improving the full-time/adjunct ratio could significantly improve the value of the ADEP student experience.

### **3. Issues that arose that CLU needs to consider in the next strategic plan.**

The following issues arose as a result of the data reviewed and input received:

- The Value Proposition will vary across programs and the unique audiences they serve. However, clear outcomes associated to employment and cost relative to similar programs should be actively addressed. Evaluating “Value” requires looking beyond academic programs and professional goals. It should entail the overall “student experience.” This experience includes the support and services offered by offices across campus to both the individual students and their families; including alum networking opportunities and a campus structure that connects the ADEP student to the greater CLU community.
- The retention and graduation rates for ADEP students needs to be further analyzed and addressed. The retention of ADEP students will be an important aspect in reaching the University’s enrollment goals for ADEP.

- The concept of being “family friendly” needs to be considered. A more in depth definition will be required along with a cost benefit analysis of its implementation.
- One of the best methods to increase quality and value in the ADEP program is to improve the full-time/adjunct ratio. This is especially true as ADEP expands its off-campus programs.
- The ADEP program needs to be open to exploring new sites and/or programs as a way of increasing program enrollment.
- CLU should consider how best to create a pricing strategy that clearly addresses the value proposition for prospective students, increases retention and graduation rates for current students and allows ADEP to shape the profile of its student body. Retention and graduation rates as well as the number of credits completed per term, per student can be improved by introducing new pricing structures and scholarship programs. Using this approach would not only motivate students to remain in the program. But could be used as a marketing strategy to heighten interest and differentiation in the market place.

#### **4. Areas that were not covered that still need to be addressed and why.**

A more complex analysis should be done to better understand the nuances of retention and graduation rates in the ADEP population. The Director of Retention, the ADEP program director and advisor along with the Office of Educational Effectiveness and Institutional Research can accomplish this analysis. The scope of this analysis is longer and broader than the charge of this work team. Questions that should be research include the following:

- a. How have students been affected by the economy in recent years?
- b. How will the “family friendly” concept assist this population in achieving their academic goals?
- c. How is CLU addressing the needs of students who do not matriculate or attrit because of inadequate academic skills?
- d. How will CLU provide academic and student support services (i.e tutoring)?
- e. What if any efforts should be implemented to decrease the years to graduation?
- f. Can there be specific scholarship programs or tuition discounting as used in the TUG program to assist students in financial need, which could also improve retention?
- g. If ADEP students want a predetermined education plan to expedite their degree quickly, would a cohort based program work?
- h. If ADEP students were placed in cohorts, would the social aspect of a cohort increase retention that would translate into increased graduation rates?

The value and cost/benefit of “family friendly” services should be researched further. The scope of this research is longer and broader than the charge of this work team.

## 5. Recommendations:

- Connecting tuition, scholarships and value with enrollment strategies:

The university should consider creating a pricing strategy that clearly connects enrollment to value. Retention and Graduation rates can be improved by introducing new pricing structures and scholarship programs. Using this approach would not only motivate students to remain in the program, but could be used as a marketing strategy to heighten interest and differentiation in the market place.

Similar to the Public Universities, Pepperdine (MBA), and Antioch University, a sliding rate scale could be used to motivate students to take more courses. Students taking 1-6 units could pay one rate, while those taking 7 or more could receive a reduction. The reduction in revenue for the greater number of units may be recouped by having more students complete the program at a faster pace.

Scholarship strategies could be implemented to nudge students to remain in their programs and complete their degrees. Furthermore, price discounting could occur for those who are near the end of their program. If a student has met certain criteria, e.g., good academic standing and making progress within a designated time period, he or she would be eligible for a scholarship during the last two courses.

Scholarships, tuition pricing, campus services, and marketing initiatives can shape the student profile of a particular academic program. In concert or singularly, these influencers can be used in a schema that will sway student quality and diversity. Depending on the program’s goals and plans, enrollments can be impacted by these strategies in a positive or negative manner. To determine and evaluate which goals and plans are most appropriate, the University needs to consider which programs support our mission and enhance the overall reputation of the school. For example, a boutique ADEP program may have a relatively small number of students, but the entire university and the community benefit from its existence. Therefore, one approach could be to develop scholarships to support such a program with highly qualified students that will make it a “flagship” program that in turn will bring national notoriety to the University. As a result, this increased attention will allow the University to “be known” for this special program, which will enhance its reputation and should indirectly impact enrollments in some of the other Undergraduate and Graduate programs. Although this boutique program may not directly produce significant net revenue, its success serves the mission and indirectly supports the budget.

- Student support services:

Student support services need to be made available to ADEP students in a way that honors the specific needs of adult students and the way in which those needs are different from traditional undergraduate students. One specific service is tutoring. This type of student support tool can meet the needs of both ADEP students requiring academic assistance, especially with technical/quantitative courses, and the children of ADEP students who can also benefit from quality tutoring from qualified and skilled CLU undergraduate or graduate students. Having tutors available for the ADEP population and their family would necessitate research on potential numbers of students in need of tutoring, interest level, facilities, liability assessment, and costs. The first step should involve an in-depth study of our current students in terms of children of school age, children with “special needs,” home location, and level of interest. (It might behoove us to include our MBA students in this research.) Another area of inquiry would involve the School of Education – students planning to be teachers participating as tutors to enhance their teaching skills in their subject area.

- Family Friendly and providing child care:

If research into “family friendly” services suggest that an after hours childcare program is warranted, a plan should be developed with the appropriate departments.

- ADEP Faculty Full-time/Adjunct Ratio:

It is recommended that serious consideration be given to hiring at least one full-time faculty member in the more heavily impacted ADEP majors, e.g., Business, and possibly, one full time faculty member per remote location such as Woodland Hills. These additions would enhance recruitment. We also do think it would strengthen CLU’s “value” to its degrees giving its programs a stronger academic foundation.

- ADEP Retention and Graduation Rates:

A program with specific goals and outcomes needs to be developed and implemented to address ADEP retention and graduation.

## **6. Appendices:**

A. 2010-2011 Student Retention Report: located at <http://www.callutheran.edu/assessment/dw/StudentRetentionReport.php>