



**Task Force on Undergraduate Retention and Graduation:  
Meeting Documentation  
April 7, 2011**

**Part 1. Attendance**

<b>Committee Numbers:</b>	Lisa Axe, John Bechtold, John Cays, Barry Cohen, Ian Gatley, Jack Gentul, Sharon Morgan, Theodore Johnson, Judith Redling, Cheickna Sylla; Perry Deess
<b>Meeting Aim:</b>	“It is the purpose of the Task Force on Undergraduate Retention and Graduation to complete an analysis of undergraduate retention and graduation and to recommend tactics for implementation that will yield improvements on both areas.” President Altenkirch Charge to the Committee, February 3, 2011
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	April 7, 2011
<b>Meeting Time:</b>	3:00 pm
<b>Meeting Location:</b>	398 Fenster Hall
<b>Chair:</b>	Ian Gatley
<b>Vice Chair:</b>	Jack Gentul
<b>Meeting Purpose:</b>	To review the ViSTA model for the task force; to focus on systems of advisement at NJIT

**Part 2: Agenda**

<b>Agenda Items</b>	
1	Approval of minutes from March 31
2	Review of ViSTA model report from April 7, 2011
3	Define common goals of professional advisement and faculty involvement
4	Analyze a plan to incorporate professional advising model into learning communities
5	Discuss advising of undecided students and managing changes of major

### Part 3: Discussion of Agenda

Discussion on Agenda Items	
1	What people in the institution are best prepared to advise students and where are they in the organization? NCE reports a significant transfer of students to SOM, but this happens very late in the student’s academic career. What can we do to make this happen sooner?
2	At Pace University, there is a “Dept of Transitional Advising” which mediates transfer early in student’s career.
3	The Academic Advising office at RIT plays a big role in helping students navigate and find the major best for them.
4	At the Savannah College of Art and Design, students are all advised centrally first.
5	At Indiana State the philosophy is to never say “no” – student’s are inspired by what’s possible. Students are required to come to advisement center.
6	At Drexel, students that first intend an engineering degree often change majors to the Commerce and Engineering program. Let me offer a correction to implication that SOM is a “safe haven” for students transferring out of NCE. SOM has its own retention problems.
7	In the current system, there is little feedback to administration from advisor on students who leave.
8	In the first year, many students want to transfer out of engineering in first semester, but decide to give it a “second shot” in second semester. The replacement of grades upon retake, as well as parental pressure, incentivize this.
9	When you ask students “what do you want to do for the rest of your life?” many will acknowledge they have no idea. I had this experience when addressing students at RIT. There we changed the label Undecided” to “Science Exploration”. The philosophy was the university studies should begin more broadly, then when students want to choose, we will help them.
10	We need to structure the Open Houses such they leave students more open to exploration.
12	If you “begin at the end”, it will give students a better idea of why they are studying in a particular major.
13	SUNY Buffalo showcases career paths on video at open houses.
14	In CCS we have adopted a curricular approach to the issues of changing majors. Three majors in college enroll in a single CS course. We have reengineered the course to be pedagogically dominated. The first priority is to learn concepts.
15	We need to build flexibility within college and be prepared to scale up to University level. We need staff/advisors to support this.
15	Our message first and foremost should be “This is a University, come here (rather than come to a specific program)

16	Approximately 50% of students will change majors.
17	The general sentiment I am hearing is that students should keep their options open.
18	One way to do this would be to broaden the FED curriculum.
19	Topics should be scheduled in blocks, so that dynamic adjustments can be made in first weeks.
20	How can we implement the Learning Community pilot so that it has the properties we have discussed?: a flexible approach, allowing for exploration without extending time to graduation. How can we engage the GUR requirements in a model allowing for discovery?

#### Part 4: Action Items from Agenda

Action on Agenda	
1	Discuss implementation strategy for Learning Communities such that they embrace flexibility and exploration without extending time to graduation. Include in this discussion, a model for advisement that best supports this strategy.
2	Define intervention strategies for at risk students in Learning Communities.

#### Part 5: Remaining Questions for Resolution at Next Meeting

Questions to be Answered		Individual Best Able to Provide Answers
1	What sections of the ViSTA model are at the three levels of evaluation?	IG, JG, JR
2	What work remains before the committee before the final report is due to the president on May 15, 2011?	IG, JG, JR
3	How may we increase our web presence for the task force, its processes, and its findings for all shareholders, including MSCHE?	JR, NE