

Student Access Committee
August 7, 2018
Notes

Present: Anddrikk Frazier, Chair; Alison Barlow, Byron Shinn

I. Call to Order

Mr. Shinn called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

II. New Business – Action Items

There was a motion to accept the minutes from the July 17 meeting. Motion passed.

III. New Business - Information Items

a. Introduction and Context

Mr. Shinn provided an overview of the purpose of the meeting, agenda, public comment process and opportunities for input and feedback online. He also provided a summary of the first and second hearings held at USFSP and USFSM and noted this was the third and final hearing.

President Genshaft welcomed the subcommittee, staff, students and community members. She said the highest priority remains to provide a world class education to our students and this happens through all student experiences and interactions.

President Genshaft said USF was thrilled to receive a \$2.5 million grant from the Helios Foundation for the Black Leadership Network. She also mentioned that in addition to the recent designation as a preeminent research university, USF was just awarded a chapter of the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa National Honor Society – the oldest national honor society in America.

b. Testimony

i. The Financial Aid Process

Glen Besterfield, Dean of Admissions at USF, and Billie Jo Hamilton, Associate Vice President of Enrollment Planning and Management at USF, gave an overview of the financial aid process.

The office of admissions administers merit-based scholarships based on ACT/SAT and weighted GPA. Currently, the Tampa campus makes the largest scholarship awards. Going forward, USF will change them subtly so that they are the same across the system. Dean Besterfield also noted there is a very limited amount of transfer specific scholarships.

There was discussion about cost of attendance differences at each campus. In state tuition on Tampa campus is \$6400, while it is slightly less at USFSP and USFSM, but housing is more expensive at USFSP. The cost of attendance factors into the amount of dollars of financial aid a student will receive.

The unified scholarship grid will go into effect in one year; anyone who is currently in a scholarship program will continue with that program. The unified grid will increase the profile of all students on the three campuses.

Ms. Hamilton described the Financial Aid process. In the last year of the Obama administration, they moved up the deadlines for FAFSA to align with admissions deadlines. Students can fill out the FAFSA beginning October 1.

There is federal aid, state aid, and then institutional-based funds. There are three cycles of awarding financial aid. For new freshmen, it begins December 1; USF is intentionally the earliest among public universities in Florida. If a student fills out a FAFSA, they begin receiving award offers starting December 1 and after they have been admitted.

Transfer students begin with financial aid awards in the middle of April, and continuing students begin second week of June (after grading).

The US Department of Education selects certain students for a process called verification. This disproportionately affects Pell-eligible students. This is an additional challenge to help these students navigate the process. Ms. Hamilton said that it doesn't stop just with FAFSA; verification can be difficult in terms of determining eligibility for aid.

Ms. Hamilton described a multitude of initiatives for helping students file the FAFSA, including specific initiatives at each campus.

Chair Frazier asked how USF stacks up in regard to merit-scholarships when compared to private institutions and specifically HBCUs. Ms. Hamilton responded that larger scholarships are not necessarily better, that the student and his/her parents need to look at total cost (subtract financial aid from direct cost to get the balance) and determine whether it is a renewable scholarship and what the renewable criteria is.

Mr. Besterfield said that it would be hard for out of state schools to compete. He ended with the recommendation that USF enhance messaging about the admissions process and available scholarships.

ii. Minority scholarship programs and recommendations

Sharon Hamisak from the USF Foundation provided an overview of minority scholarships. USF Foundation's Diversity Initiatives and Scholarships Office handles the fundraising and management of private scholarships. They worked with the USF Diversity and Inclusion Office as well as the scholarship office. Their mission is to enhance student access and success.

Ms. Hamisak discussed the Latino Scholarship Program for undergraduate, incoming freshmen (4-year students) and junior-level transfer from surrounding counties (2-year students). Preferences for Spanish speakers who are first generation university students. There are 143 students and the awards are about \$2000 per year.) The program provides a mentor. Of the recipients for this current cohort of 143, four are from Sarasota and six from St. Petersburg. Trustee Shinn described a situation where a company wanted to donate funds for a Latino scholarship and wasn't able to because of Foundation rules. Shinn asked how we could channel such organizations into a way to

Black Leadership Network is an undergraduate program (one scholarship is available for graduate students) founded in 2016. Strong consideration is given to first generation students. There are currently 24 students who will be funded of \$36,000. It was founded by community leaders, and includes a mentoring program.

Ms. Hamisak described how her office markets the programs to incoming freshmen and transfer students. She said that previous efforts haven't marketed to USFSP and USFSM but will begin to do so and advertising on some websites and social media.

Ms. Hamisak concluded with the following recommendations:

- Continue reaching out to local guidance counselors as well as community college contacts.
- Include St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee incoming students in postcard promotion.
- Enhance social media awareness campaign to target students from St. Petersburg and Sarasota-Manatee.

iii. Admissions data on transfer students and recommendations for partnerships with state colleges.

Mr. Besterfield from Tampa, and the directors of admissions from USFSP Serge Desir, and from USFSM Andy Telatovich, gave an overview of admissions data and recommendations related to transfer students.

Dean Besterfield said that the admissions team has made a lot of progress in moving toward single admissions, combining recruitment efforts and getting the staff to know the different campuses. There are currently different criteria for transfer students based on campus, level, and program. This will change with the consolidation.

He said that transfer students include those from the Florida College System, other SUS institutions, and then private, out-of-state and international. He said that the conversion rate from those who apply to those who are admitted is 30% for FTIC and 60% for transfers, while yield (from those who are admitted to those who enroll) is about the same.

Mr. Desir said that 60% of USFSP transfer applications come from St. Petersburg College. For a lot of people, USFSP is still a commuter institution. SPC is the main feeder but also offers four-year programs, as does State College of Florida, where 80% of USFSM transfers originate.

Recommendations included increasing recruiting resources for transfer students, continued development of the FUSE programs and reassessing the FTIC and transfer scholarships.

Mr. Desir says USFSP identified 200 students for FUSE. He said he thought next summer and AY 2019/2020 would see a boost of transfers under FUSE.

At USFSM, the first FUSE students will be enrolling this year and there are about 50.

There was concern that it is difficult for some FUSE students to be accepted into limited access programs (e.g. Business, Engineering).

Recommendations:

- Single unified admission criteria for transfers.
- Increase recruiting resources for transfer students.
- Continued development of the FUSE program across the FCS.
- Re-assess FTIC and transfer scholarships in 2018-2019.

iv. Managing the USF brand while encouraging student access

Joe Hice, USF Chief Marketing Officer, provided an overview of the USF Branding efforts. He said that USF needs to tell a story that resonates with students and parents, and that differentiates USF from other public universities in Florida and private universities. Mr. Hice noted that though we have many recent and new accolades, our reputation has not caught up.

Brand awareness and reputation scores remain low. USF lacks a consistent message across the three campuses. The new brand is “United, We Shape the Future” and the rally cry is “Be Bullish.” President Genshaft will introduce the new brand in her Fall address and the full campaign will be rolled out at Homecoming.

c. Public Comment

d. Open Discussion

The committee members summarized key takeaways: 1) We need a more consistent message to the community in terms of USF’s offerings and the application process. Also, one size does not fit all and available pathways must be communicated. 2) We need to connect with students at an early age and provide them with resources to prepare for the process.

IV. Adjournment

The next meeting for the Student Access Committee will be a working meeting on August 16 from 3-5 pm at USF Tampa Patel Center for Global Sustainability, Room 140

Chair Frazier adjourned the meeting at 4:08 p.m.