UTIA-UT Knoxville Reunification Student Services Working Group

Submitted March 15, 2020

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UTIA – UT Knoxville Reunification
Student Services Working Group (SSWG) Process & Timeline

The co-chairs met shortly after the teams were announced to develop a strategy for the Student Services Working Group (SSWG). A SharePoint site was established for sharing materials. The SSWG met four times, at two week intervals, to answer the four charges the group with which the group was tasked. Prior to the first meeting, the SSWG group was asked to review the UTIA-UTK Reunification Committee report and other materials. Additional information was collected and discussed online and through the SharePoint site as needed. A draft report was circulated for approximately one week for input by the members prior to completion.

December 19, 2019	Initial meeting of the working group co-chairs to review roles, responsibilities and develop a timeline for the working group.
December 20, 2020 19	SSWG members receive information regarding working group meeting schedule and access to SSWG SharePoint. The site contained UTIA-UTK Reunification committee report and other supplemental materials that would help the working group complete its work.
January 15, 2020	**Meeting #1.** The Student Services Working Group held their first meeting. The focus of the meeting was to review structure, process, timeline and work on committee charge #1. The focus of charge #1 was to identify the top five opportunities or ideas relating to enhancing student services for UTIA students, whether they are identified in the report or generated by the working group, and to recommend specific actions that need to occur to take advantage of those opportunities or ideas.
January 29, 2020	**Meeting #2.** The meeting focused on committee charge #2: Recommend ways in which UT Knoxville can gather feedback on student services provided on the UTIA campus.
February 12, 2020	**Meeting #3.** The focus of the meeting was to work on committee charge #3. The focus of charge #3 was to recommend ways to increase collaboration between students who spend most of their time on the UTIA campus and students who spend most of their time on the Knoxville campus.
February 29, 2020	**Meeting #4.** The final meeting focused on charge #4: Recommend solutions to problems related to student services that may be referred to the working group as reunification efforts move forward in 2020.
March 15, 2019	The Student Services Working Group report submitted to Chancellor Plowman and Senior Vice Chancellor/Senior Vice President Cross.

Introduction & SSWG Membership

On December 12, 2019, Chancellor Plowman and Senior Vice Chancellor/Senior Vice President Cross announced the establishment of five working groups composed of faculty, staff, students, and administrators to review and prioritize the opportunities and ideas identified in the UTIA-UTK Reunification Report. The five working groups were as follows: student services, research, academic affairs and shared governance, communications and marketing, and finance and administration.

This report summarizes the proposed recommendations of the Student Services Working Group (SSWG). Members of the Student Services Working Group were as follows:

Frank Cuevas, Co-Chair	Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Life
John Stier Co-Chair	Associate Dean, Herbert College of Agriculture
Kari Alldredge	Vice Provost for Enrollment Management
Brian Browning	Executive Director of Auxiliary and Support Services
Justin Cross	Student Representative
Lannett Edwards	Professor and Graduate Director, Animal Science
Deb Haines	College of Veterinary Medicine Administration
Mary Mahoney	Assistant Director, Center for Career Development
Amadou Sall	Lecturer, Africana Studies
Samantha Ward	Manager, Pendergrass Library

Scope & Work of the Student Services Working Group

At the first committee meeting held on January 15, the committee reviewed their formal charge and reviewed working group process and timeline. The scope of the Student Services Working Group was to consider and prioritize opportunities and ideas associated with student support services identified in the UTIA – UTK Reunification Report.

The four specific areas of the committee charge were as follows:

1. To identify the top five opportunities or ideas relating to enhancing student services for UTIA students, whether they are identified in the report or generated by the working group, and to recommend specific actions that need to occur to take advantage of those opportunities or ideas.

2. To recommend ways in which UT Knoxville can gather feedback on student services provided on the UTIA campus.

3. To recommend ways to increase collaboration between students who spend most of their time on the UTIA campus and students who spend most of their time on the Knoxville campus.

4. To recommend solutions to problems related to student services that may be referred to the working group as reunification efforts move forward in 2020

In order to facilitate our work, SSWG members were provided access to a variety of documents and resources related to Student Services on UTIA. The documents uploaded to the SSWG SharePoint site included the following:

- Student Service Working Group Charge
- UTIA – UTK Reunification Report
- Transportation and Parking Schedules
- Pendergrass Library Student Usage Headcounts
- Overview of meeting schedules
- Summary of comments and remarks related to student services from the Reunification Report

Student Services Working Group Recommendations

Student Service Working Group Charge #1: To identify the top five opportunities or ideas relating to enhancing student services for UTIA students, whether they are identified in the report or generated by the working group, and to recommend specific actions that need to occur to take advantage of those opportunities or ideas.

The group identified four primary opportunities to enhance student services. Any UT student who takes a class or uses space on the UTIA campus could benefit. The opportunities identified should also promote a better working environment for staff and faculty.

1. Enhance Transportation Services: Identify where students actually need to be in order for bus service to be useful—the current path for the Agriculture Express may not be the most useful. Bus service needs to be promoted, including easel boards at bus stops, which identify the stops along the routes, with updated parking maps would be helpful. Increased parking/flexibility for faculty teaching across the campus to park, areas for loading/unloading

   Actions: Engage parking and transportation consultant to review bus routes, have registrar identify main class sites across the campus. Promote all available parking routes, shuttle/bus stops, and alternative transportation (e.g. add more bicycle racks). identify 30 min spot for faculty or instructors to allow loading/unloading at key sites when teaching on opposite sides of campus.

2. Increased and improved dining options (including hours)
   Actions: Evaluate existing spaces to implement dining options. Student representative from UTIA on campus dining services advising committee. Add more places to store/heat packed lunches. Survey faculty/staff/students on dining options.

3. Provide collaborative spaces to facilitate sense of community and student learning including group project spaces (e.g., reservable rooms). Currently, except for Mabel's, there is not a clearly defined informal gathering space on campus. Gathering space(s) should be in a relatively central location and provide a welcoming environment for current and prospective students, staff, faculty and visitors.

   Actions: Review current use of spaces and needs, identify potential sites that could be repurposed or enhanced to provide collaborative spaces, ensure collaborative spaces are accessible. Market collaborative spaces as such, including adding branding when/where it fits facility guidelines; Review quality of wireless access throughout the campus and enhance where appropriate.

4. Create mechanism to receive student and faculty feedback to enhance existing services and develop new ones as appropriate. Consider parsing feedback by student level (e.g., first year vs senior vs graduate student) and faculty level
   - Create a "One Stop" student services center if data shows need.
     - *Determine which services are truly needed or already available*

- Improve information to students on existing types of student services
- Increase GTA help/tutoring for assisting students
- Expand access to and convenience of student services for students on the UTIA campus
- Apps that identify problematic back-to-back courses for travel (registrar-scheduling?)
- App that identifies services using key words

Actions: Engage students, staff and faculty to help collect information, determine what is working well and what is not. Review current/existing data about how (levels of) students utilize existing services

Student Service Work Group Charge #2: To recommend ways in which UT Knoxville can gather feedback on student services provided on the UTIA campus.

The committee offers the following **recommendations and strategies** for gathering student feedback regarding student services provided on the UTIA campus:

- We recommend the ***creation of survey tools*** to gather regular student feedback regarding student experiences and student services on the UTIA campus.

- UTIA and UTK administration should hold frequent ***listening sessions*** to hear from students regarding their experiences with student services present on the UTIA campus.

- Collaborate with ***student organizations*** on UTIA campus to gather information from them regarding student services and other ways to enhance the student experience on the UTIA campus.

- Partner with ***UTIA advisors*** and UTIA teaching faculty to solicit feedback from students at the end of their advising or class session regarding student perceptions regarding student services on the UTIA campus

- Place ***survey kiosks*** in high student traffic areas such as Pendergrass Library, Ellington building, College of Veterinary Medicine, and other common gathering spaces to obtain student feedback.

- Develop ***social media campaigns*** to drive student feedback.

- Develop ***targeted outreach campaigns*** to students involved with various UTIA campus programs such as CASNR Living and Learning Community students, Ag Ambassadors, and specific First Year Studies classes.

- Include ***UTIA student participation*** on University-wide committees.

Student Service Work Group Charge # 3: To recommend ways to increase collaboration between students who spend most of their time on the UTIA campus and students who spend most of their time on the Knoxville campus.

The group identified a number of existing types of collaborations which in some cases could be enhanced to increase both the actual and perceived collaborations of students. Examples include use of the UT Gardens, study abroad, undergraduate research, university level committees and organizations (student Senate, Provost's Advisory committee, intramural sports and clubs). Specific suggestions for improving collaboration were suggested both by the committee and the student Ag Ambassadors.

- Maintain and enhance General Education offerings on the agriculture campus provided by other colleges (e.g., English, Chemistry, Math, etc.) and vice-versa (e.g., Food Science 150). Good transportation will be essential.
- Hold night classes on the agriculture campus
- Install a food concept in the developing Energy & Environmental Science Research (EESR) building that is desirable and not available on main campus.
- Have University-level clubs/groups/SGA meetings on the UTIA campus
- Host Welcome Week events in the UT Gardens (e.g., Scavenger Hunt in FYS)
- Market and host events to all students broadly
- Host Ag Day in the Spring and other agriculture and natural resource programs on the main campus.
- Develop special programs such as Vol/Alternative Spring Breaks specifically to include multiple colleges; work with the Jones Center for Leadership & Service to do so
- Ensure events planning activities include requesting and welcoming students from agriculture and non-agriculture majors, e.g., the 225 year anniversary.
- Encourage and facilitate intercollegiate club activities. For example, the African Student Association could partner with the Smith International Center and Rwandan students. Leadership of MANRRS could be shared with multiple colleges in order to engage more students from outside of the Herbert College of Agriculture.
- Increase library international coffee partnerships, occasionally holding them in Pendergrass
- Rotate the International Food Festival between the main and agriculture campuses.
- Identify and market spaces and accommodations on the agriculture campus that can be used for events (e.g., UT Gardens, planned rooftop garden on, and banquet hall in, the EESR building)
- Facilitate the presence of the agriculture and natural resources clubs and organization leaders on main campus, e.g., ensure invitation and promote attendance at the annual conference facilitated by the Office of Student Life
- Have more agricultural and natural resource items in the main campus media (pictures of the agriculture campus, marketing of student activities, Ag Day information posted on the jumbotron during football games)
- Host an "I Heart UT-AG week on the campus.
- Develop partnership between the Office of Student Life, the Herbert College of Agriculture and the College of Veterinary Medicine to promote and expand student-centric events like CarniVOL, VOLeyBall, and Trivia Night to students from outside of the agriculture campus. Sponsor a Donkey Ball event on the agriculture campus.
- Have agriculture and natural resource-related speakers on the main campus to engage students and the public at large in areas of interest to all. For example, have a Farm Bureau speaker present on food production in the Becker seminar series.

Student Service Work Group Charge #4: To recommend solutions to problems related to student services that may be referred to the working group as reunification efforts move forward in 2020.

The committee offers the following **solution and strategies** to problems related to student services on the UTIA campus:

Transportation Concerns: A comprehensive review of transportation needs should be conducted on the UTIA campus. The broad review of transportation services should include examination of current bus schedules, regular and express service routes to ensure timely delivery of students to location(s) where much of their courses are being offered. Effort is also needed to identifyUTIA campus locations placing bike racks.

Course Schedules: The Registrar's office should extend time between classes to allow students and faculty to get from one part of campus to the other part of campus. A fifteen minute commute time is not enough time for students and faculty. Students and faculty report that classes must end early and/or students must leave class early in order to avoid being late to their next course. Additionally, a better scheduling system should be implemented to allow for some common core education classes to be held on the UTIA campus to reduce travel time for students.

Communication: The campus should investigate a better means of communicating what existing student services are available to all students on the UTIA campus. One example provided was the Herbert Writing Center.

Student Programming: The UTIA campus is being underserved when it comes to campus-wide programming. The work group acknowledges that the lack of suitable meeting spaces serves as a barrier to creating robust student programming and other programs on the UTIA campus. Bringing campus-wide programs to the UTIA campus will help with reunification efforts. One example provided to the committee regarded the lack of programming that was held on the UTIA campus with respect to the recent 225th celebration.

Multi-Use Community Gathering Spaces: There is a common lack of general meeting and community space on the UTIA campus. The work group recommends that the campus make some infrastructure investments on the UTIA campus in order to address the overall lack of community and gathering spaces for students, faculty and staff. Renovations to the existing Pendergrass Library to include more individual and group learning spaces, common space, and meeting rooms (similar to Hodges Library) would significantly increase student engagement. Students from Sorority Village, other nearby residence halls, and throughout UTK frequently utilize the library for study sessions, poster printing, 3D printing, and equipment check-out. Improved spaces will allow the library to better serve an ever-increasing number of students; this will, in turn, improve student success and engagement.

Increase the recognition and use of the UT Gardens for students, staff and faculty. Peer-reviewed data show even a short sojourn in a natural environment can promote mental and physical health of

college-aged students (Meredith et al. 2020, Minimum time dose in nature to positively impact the mental health of college-aged students, and how to measure it: A scoping review, Front. Psychol. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02942).

OTHER ITEMS FOR REFERRAL

Our group identified the related items below as being important yet tangential to our main charge. Consequently, we recommend other appropriate committees review the below items.

- Determine appropriate logo use, including answering why do two logos exist and under what circumstances it makes sense to use the Power T versus the UT – Communications & Marketing Working Group

- Increase time between classes to 20 min – Finance and Administrative Processes Working Group