First Year Advisory Board

Fiona explained the role and priorities of the first year advisory board. Initially it will:

- Create and Implement an assessment plan
- Devise structures and processes to capture more formal feedback
- Create a reworked budget given fiscal constraints

This led to a discussion of learning communities as they are a driver of costs in the first year program.

Learning Communities

- Currently freshman students are required to take one learning community, but advisors strive to get them to do a second in the spring
- Originally faculty participated in “building days” but there was a lack of enforcement which may lead to inconsistent communities. There is also a lack of clarity in sequencing for students.
- If money can be found we could potentially have a short list of requirements. They could make the FSP part of a distinctive program for branding
- NSSE show us generally strong on high impact practices, but perhaps collaborative learning could be enhanced though since that seems to be low scoring

Waiver Policy for WRIT101

In response to John Chapin’s question about dealing with students who wind up in WRIT300 before 101:

- There was general agreement that we shouldn’t lower the number of writing courses required, but should have something like a writing intensive course in the major
- Catherine will approach program directors and ask for such a “Candidate list” of courses
- Advisors can then work with students to ensure sufficient writing practice and instruction

GEC Structures and Responsibilities

- The Assistant Dean position should cover the sophomore seminar
  - The will facilitate scaffolding between the two courses
  - It will also ensure someone is responsible for an assessment plan, scheduling, and faculty support
- The read should be picked by a subcommittee, however there is a critical need to consider what kinds of events and other programming can support the book and make it used in other ways on campus
• The MSHEC self study will help by leading to recommendations for action about General Education structures. In the mean time we can research structures for support.

• GEC members should examine how other schools deal with:
  o Funding
  o Staffing and implementation
  o Events related to General Education
  o Assessment

• Some initial ideas about restructuring:
  o GenEd needs to be housed in a discrete location with a single point person
  o There is a real problem with silos that a modified structure should address
  o Our structures need to fit the culture

Advisor Questions

Several questions posed by the advising staff were discussed:

• It was not the intent of the GEC to undo the idea of upper division general education experiences common to all students with the new program. There is conflicting documentation regarding IDIS 302 but the general opinion of the counsel is that all students should have to take the course as part of a University Graduation requirement, outside of general education.

• The idea of “double dipping” needs to be addressed as a university policy approved by the faculty senate. At a minimum the policy which is developed should:
  o Be careful to ensure that there is a limit to the number of times a student can do this, too much would undermine the nature of general education
  o Take care to ensure that students still meet all COMAR requirement

In the closing minutes of the meeting Kelly reminded members that a poll will be forthcoming to attempt and arrange a day in January for a retreat for the GEC to deal with issues that are beyond the scope of a normal meeting.