Ad Hoc Committee: Orientation Class
Meeting
Wednesday, April 1st


Student Representatives Present: James Hamric, Brittney Rogers, and Rachel Bostic

The meeting opened with Dr. Bates’ overview of changes in the policy at Department of Post-Secondary. The department will not require that each college offer a required orientation course as part of a student’s degree plan. Offerings of this course, whether mandatory or optional, are at the discretion of each school.

Discussion followed and covered topics such as (1) this type of class is good for older students and (2) at-risk students, especially those who have been identified through the Early Warning System, would greatly benefit from this type of class. Giving new students the opportunity to meet other new students is important for making connections that aid in retention; this course will reinforce this concept.

A suggestion was made to survey faculty and students to determine whether we should offer the orientation course as a required course. Other discussion included variations of meeting dates and times, methods of delivery, and instructors.

After a lengthy discussion, the following recommendations were made:

- The course will be required for all new students beginning Fall 2009.
- Students who do not take the course within their first semester of enrollment will be blocked from registering for a subsequent semester until they register for the course for their second semester. (Note: Drop/Add changes must be monitored to ensure that students remain in the course if taking their second semester.)
- The course will be taught based on the course offerings in the current schedule for Fall 2009.
- The course will be divided into seven units, which will coincide with the seven weeks of the mini-term course. These units are as follows:
  - **Study skills** (time management, motivational skills, learning styles)
  - **Technology Skills** (e-mail, Blackboard, Online Registration, Microsoft Office basics)
  - **Policy and Procedures** (Catalog and Student Handbook)
  - **Advising and Degree Plan/Transfer Information**
  - **Campus Life** (getting involved in various activities—This would be a time to spotlight campus organizations and activities. Presidents and sponsors of clubs would be present.)
  - **Academic Life** (plagiarism, classroom etiquette, understanding the course syllabus, etc.)
  - **Career Exploration** (resumes, job interviewing, etc.)
- The format of the units will be as follows:
  - The class will meet for two hours each week with some weeks involving one week of contact time and one hour of lab time to work on required projects.
  - A standardized presentation (i.e. Power Point, video, etc.) will be developed for each unit. After facilitating the presentation, the instructor will lead the group in discussion and a follow-up group activity to apply the concepts and will then instruct the students to complete an activity.
Activities for each unit will be included in a portfolio, which the students will submit at the end of the course. The portfolio will be a major component of the students’ grade in the course.

Students who attend all class sessions will be exempt from taking the final exam.

Items for further discussion include the following:

- Developing a syllabus
- Developing a grading system (points, percentages) for the course
- Developing a standardized final exam
- Developing objectives for each unit
- Developing a grading rubric for the portfolio, including individual rubrics for each unit within the portfolio
- Identifying people to develop the standardized presentation for the individual units (preferably one person per unit)
- Identifying someone to develop the objectives for the units
- Identifying someone to develop the rubrics for the units.
- Developing an attendance policy
- Difference in content between the ORI and ORT course. The ORT course for technical students will be taught on the Atmore campus only.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Beth Lancaster