Student Learning Committee (SLC)
Minutes from Meeting on March 2, 2020

Attendees: Paul Overvoorde (Chair)

Nancy Bostrom

Terri Fishel

Dylan Larsen

James Heyman

Adam Johnson

Donna Maeda

Patrick Schmidt

Claire Sislo

Andrew Wells

Unable to attend:

Jeff Allen

Joan Ostrove

I)   HLC Process: Retention and Completion Rates
   a. Review of draft document "Reaffirming Macalester's Commitment to Student Persistence, Retention, and Completion
      i. 4C1 Requirement: What are the institution's outlined goals for student retention and completion?
      ii. Retention and completion goals were last set in 2015. These goals include "a six-year graduation rate of higher than 85 percent, along with a first to second year retention rate that approaches or exceeds 95 percent." Do these goals remain appropriate benchmarks for us?
      iii.
      iv. Nancy: Do we disaggregate retention and completion figures to ensure that we are meeting our targets for students from all population groups, e.g. differences in retention rates among students of color, first generation students
      v. Donna: Could one of our goals be tracking and collecting data on more specific experiences- instead of analyzing experiences of students of color as a whole, breaking these groups down to understand differences (example,

Japanese American students experience things differently than other Asian students)

      vi. Nancy- Could we look at Pell recipients, and investigate rates among those students who have more financial need?

          1. One challenge is that the criteria for Pell changes from year to year. But there may be other markers we could use to identify students with high finanical need.

     vii. Donna- Jamie Washington workshop with faculty- students graduating to spite or in spite of the institution, not because of it. This suggests that we should look beyond retention and graduation rates, and also include information about student experiences and outcomes Can this be investigated?

    viii. Nancy- in the Council subgroup committee she's in, they are looking into participation in experiences such as High Impact Practices, and results climate studies. There is some existing data from IR, and the subgroup has requested additional disaggregated data on a few key measures. Their report will likely recommend standard disaggregation categories for the future.

II)   Demonstrate Intellectual Depth and Breadth-Major Selection for Sophomores

   a. Nancy presented results from the Fall 2019 Sophomore Survey (See the full document included in the SLC folder)

      i. Question: do we track students who change their major? Can we identify those who were "decided prior to coming to Macalester" but changed their mind? Patrick: I feel that the number of students who felt they were decided before coming to Mac could be larger than reflected here.

          1. Adam- we capture the student's "intended major" and compare to what they actually major with; the amount of students that major in their intended major are quite high (high 50%)

      ii. Question: Is there data on the study away deadline and its impact on major selection?

          1. Nancy- in open-ended comments, very few students mentioned the study away deadline as a significant factor in the timing of their decision, but for some students, the idea of study abroad planning could be integrated into their larger plans for their academic experience. The next time we ask this question in a survey, we will use the open-ended themes to build the pre-listed options. The study-abroad deadline could be included in that list.

     iii. Question: Are there other things that inhibit or impact this process? Planning for major? Ridged major structures?

          1. Nancy-Yes--although I don't recall all the details. Today we're sharing only excerpts from these results, full details will be available in the full slide presentation, which will be added to the SLC shared folder in google drive.