UCR Advisory Council
Wednesday, January 12, 2011
7:30 – 8:30 a.m.  ~ CF206

Present: Aaron Benike, Armin Budimlic, John Devlin, Sam Ellis, Guy Finne, LuAnn Hiniker, Tom Horvei, Craig Johnson, Warren Oslin, Diane Schwinghammer, Jackie Silver, Estelle Souchet Graves, Don Supalla, David Thompson

Absent: Dennis Etbauer, Ron Smith

Recorder: Judy Kingsbury

Guest: Kathleen Dahl, RCTC Instructor and First Year Experience Coordinator

Call to Order
Budimlic called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes for November
The minutes of the November 2010 meeting were approved as written.

RCTC Update – First Year Experience Initiative
Supalla distributed a one-page handout highlighting fast facts about RCTC. Supalla reported that recruitment and retention are major focuses of the College, noting numerous programs have been initiated to address the issues (i.e. opening a Welcome Center, expansion of the Learning Center, and implementation of a Customer Service Management program). Supalla added a new pilot entitled First Year Experience (FYEX) will begin Spring Semester, and he introduced Kathleen Dahl as the coordinator of the initiative.

Dahl shared a PowerPoint presentation that included statistical data on the retention of students at RCTC. Highlights include 48.6% of the students are retained from one Fall Semester to the next Fall Semester; 28.6% complete a degree; and 22.9% transfer to another institution.

Dahl reported that last summer RCTC conducted a calling campaign where they contacted students enrolled in Spring Semester and eligible to return, but whom had not yet registered for the following Fall Semester. Through that initiative, 2,500 phone calls were made and 227 students indicated they had transfer plans; 221 students decided to register; and 339 were undecided. Dahl stated community colleges were once thought of as stepping stones to somewhere else; but with the changing economy, community colleges need to be thought of as a milestone for achieving an associate degree.

Dahl reported that student success is much more than just completing a course. It has to do with advancement from developmental to credit-bearing coursework and term-to-term or year-to-year retention. Data reflects that of the 1,963 new students registered for Fall Semester 2010, 1,300 students enrolled in a developmental math course; 580 enrolled in a developmental English course; and 550 enrolled in a developmental reading course. Dahl shared the data on the students enrolling from the Rochester Public Schools, adding there were no specific demographic sectors (economic or racial) needing developmental courses more than another:
• Of the 96 Century High School students enrolled at RCTC Fall Semester 2010, 30 enrolled in developmental English and 53 in developmental math;
• Of the 98 John Marshall High School students enrolled at RCTC Fall Semester 2010, 34 enrolled in developmental English and 51 in developmental math;
• Of the 90 Mayo High School students enrolled at RCTC Fall Semester 2010, 21 enrolled in developmental English and 47 in developmental math.

Dahl shared information on how the FYEX program began at the College, stating many people believe orientation to the College should include telling the student how to register or where the library is located; but the philosophy of FYEX is to empower the student so they know how to do things rather than telling them what to do. The initiative includes using the nationally recognized On Course program, which starts by training faculty and staff in the program through an intense workshop that focuses on proven strategies for empowering students to become active, responsible partners in their education. RCTC extended an invitation to Rochester Public Schools and Pine Island High School personnel, resulting in nine high school educators joining RCTC employees in the training. The RCTC FYEX pilot will be launched Spring Semester 2011 with 15 sections being offered. The curriculum is currently being used at more than 400 colleges/universities. Dahl reported that colleges that have used the curriculum have demonstrated a retention increase on average of 22%. The ultimate goal of the program is to increase student retention and improve student success.

Finne questioned who made the phone calls to the students over the summer. Dahl responded the calls were made by RCTC students trained extensively with a script to follow.

Finne questioned how the requirement of the one credit FYEX course will affect the mandatory 60 credit cap established by legislation. Dahl agreed that the decision to make the course one credit was based on the 60 credit cap; hence it is part of the 17 elective credits. Dahl added that at this time the course is only required for students that place in developmental coursework and replaces one of the health/physical education credits. Dahl added the course is designed to fit in any discipline, and any faculty/staff person can teach the course if they’ve gone through the On Course training.

Schwinghammer questioned if the data regarding Rochester High School students needing development courses was reflective of Post Secondary Education Option students. Dahl clarified that the data presented was not PSEO students because the State will not pay for PSEO students to complete development courses.

Schwinghammer encouraged the Advisory Council members to watch an animated You Tube video entitled Changing Education Paradigms. The video can be found at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 a.m.

Next meeting:
Wednesday, January 12, 2011 – 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. – UCR (Room CF206/208)
Demographics - Phil Wheeler, Rochester/Olmsted County Planning Department