DE sessions on retention – summary notes
(see also PowerPoint and YouTube tape of the session)

Two Sessions (Thursday, February 20; Friday, February 21)
Present and participating: Lisa Yogi, Gaynell Buxton, Shidong Kan, Ron Pine,
Karen Hastings, Rob Edmondson, Cynthia Smith, Ross Egloria

Both sessions began with brief presentation of some background information
(see Powerpoint):

I. Numbers (cumulative across DE classes)

DE Orientation PowerPoint with data (pages 8 – 9) - summary numbers
(Fall 2009 – Spr. 2013)

DE Strategic Plan (Appendix A - pp. 14 - 17)

Quick Observations: There are differences between online and cable classes; have shown improvement (higher completion meaning receiving A-D grade; fewer withdrawals) between 2009 – Spr 2013, but dip in performance since 2011.

Major finding - performance in semester/yearly figures = 13 – 20% gap between DE courses and Face to Face (FtF) with DE students having lower rates of completion. There was a gap of 4-5% between DE and FtF students in terms of rates of withdrawal, with DE students w/drawing at higher levels.

II. Need to address

* Plans to include requirements to show improvement in CC Online Learning Strategic Plan (currently in draft form); evolving draft includes metrics for these measures and goals for improvement in terms of reducing the gap between DE and FtF student numbers.

* A quick overview indicates some campuses are helping to improve student preparedness and expectations:

Leeward CC – DE pages links to self assessment quiz
http://www.leeward.hawaii.edu/DistanceEducation

Windward CC DE page links to orientation and self assessment for other
http://windward.hawaii.edu/online/
III. Open discussion on possible causes for high levels of withdrawals/disappearers and lower than desired levels of completion, and remedies

Below are summaries of some key points raised in the two discussions.

Causes

Students enter class without necessary preparation in terms of:
- Study skills
- Time management abilities
- Accurate expectations of what the work load will be
- Academic preparation
- Computer skills

Emphasis on fact that students have unrealistic expectations of their abilities, of the time they can devote, of their ability to fall behind and then catch up etc.

Financial Aid delays – cannot get the textbook, cannot get a bus pass/pay for transport, distracted by economic problems. So fall behind, never catch up.

Students do not use/check email frequently enough (so miss key messages, fall behind)

Too busy – simply take on too much

Lack discipline / maturity if not coming to class, don’t get work in, fall behind, incapable of catching up.

Program based responses:

* Need to get disaggregated rates for specific classes and get to instructors for them to see areas for improvement, compare between courses of same instructor etc.

* Need a DE Orientation: Have in place orientation for DE students. There are many existing models and examples we can use/build off of. There are different ways to approach this:

- Target to first time in College
- Target to first time in DE course
- Have all students required to take before registering
- Have instructors require of their students to take
Find a way to have them **have to do it** as necessary step to accessing Laulima / registering

* Self Assessment tools: Again, can readily adopt or include tools that already exist (like LCC and WCC).

  - Have instructors require taking self assessment during first week, or even prior to first day of class
  - Instructors can build their own set of questions (form of self assessment) e.g. 'are you ready for this class' as a quiz or initial assignment in their course to be done first week or first day of semester.
  - Indicate in Banner comments language that they must take the self-assessment prior to start of semester
  - Extreme step – require instructor approval to register - after showing they did self-assessment and are have adequate readiness

* Track those who have dropped before (studies = more likely to do so again)

* Investigate implications of withdrawing and failing (disappearing) in terms of Financial Aid obligations and future costs – and then publicize to students so they are aware of consequences.

* Learn from those who withdraw – e.g. questionnaire to be completed when withdrawing for partial refunds

* Track/investigate disappearers to find out why

**Instructor based:**

Rethink, be more vigilant in determining necessary preparation. Redo pre-requisites if necessary.

Assign questions or assignments **early on** to help gage readiness and advise to drop if not.

Provide more reminders/frequent communication – e.g. text blasts (since not using email). Ross is looking into to text blast tools to supplement email.

Encourage those not prepared/not doing anything first few weeks to drop.

Drop no shows more aggressively (e.g. first week, no contact, no response, not even looked at Laulima (can track through site stats), then drop.

Don’t let them enroll late if there is little chance they can succeed. Be tougher and more realistic = don’t set up for failure. If only a few succeed coming in late, do not let students do it anymore.
Provide them more frequent – and honestly tough – status reports (e.g. if you do not start to work, you cannot possibly pass so should drop).

Make use of Academic Alert/Starfish etc.

Collect and share tips on time management – distribute to students.

Provide screen shot tutorials showing initial steps of an individual class e.g. which specific tools are used for a particular class; where to find them – visual explanations of opening steps to minimize confusion.

Be sure to have copies of textbook in Library on reserve, can help some struggling with FA issues.

**College based:**

Provide more accessible support services/workshops/ skills training.

- Student services / those providing workshops need to make them available online – capture via video etc.
- Create video tutorials regarding study skills, workshops etc.

Need to work on standardizing system expectations: authentication of students (proctoring); rigor of classes (evaluations/assessment requirements?)

Big issue:

If focus is on retention – will have smaller classes (e.g. higher pre reqs; weeding them out early). Is admin ready to support this? Likely a trade off between fill rater and enrollment, and retention.