The HEO Steering Committee held its regular monthly meeting virtually on Monday, April 20 and focused primarily on issues and concerns that have arisen due to the campus closure and movement to virtual processes for teaching and conducting business remotely.  The HEOs are concerned about the additional demands placed upon some of their colleagues and the overall lack of recalibration time provided to HEOs and other administrative personnel: with little notice, offices had to move all business to a virtual model, and had to learn many of the approved technologies in the moment, without a chance for timely training before having to go "live".  On the other hand, faculty and students were provided a one-week recalibration--even those who were already teaching and learning online, and who would naturally not need any adjustment period.

It has also come to the group's attention that multiple HEOs are being required to provide very detailed records regarding student contacts, numbers of phone calls made, number of students advised, number of emails sent, and the like.  While we understand that there is a need to ensure that student contact in the virtual world is necessary, if this tracking was not already happening as part of an office's regular business practice and data collection (for annual assessment purposes), it becomes a workload issue, as it can take away from time needed to work with the very students whose interactions are being tracked.

The group is also hopeful that additional guidance can--and will--be provided by the upper administration regarding an official policy for HEOs to work out flexible work schedules with their supervisors.  Many College personnel are having to balance their own work-from-home responsibilities with the need to supervise a child's (or multiple children's) home-schooling work, the demands of having a partner who is also working from home, and the likelihood that there's not enough technology to go around in the home.  Combine these factors with the knowledge that students are often more effectively reached outside of "normal" business hours, HEOs need the option to make a schedule that is sensitive to outside forces while still ensuring that necessary tasks are being completed appropriately and efficiently.

We're working to set up our regular meeting with President Fritz and members of his team, and we look forward to hearing his responses to the various questions that have come up during the recent town halls held by Academic Affairs and for the HEOs.