

**INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS REPORT  
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS  
2005-2006**

**Executive Summary**

**Section 1 - Overview**

1a. – Vision/Mission/Purpose

The document *The Nature and Purpose of the Division of Student Affairs* is the mission statement of the division, which derives from the University Mission and Purpose Statement and consists of four broad functional areas. These are:

**promoting individual student development** through educational programs that generate awareness of the relationship between the student's education and skills and attitudes needed to function in a changing society;

**providing services** which accommodate and stimulate the learning process and promote wellness;

**fostering a campus community which promotes student involvement** in their intellectual, social, cultural, spiritual, emotional, and physical development;

**developing the human and facility resources** necessary to support the increasingly diverse and more traditionally aged student population.

Within each of these functional areas are three to ten division goals which departments in the division respond to in the planning process by establishing objectives, action plans and assessment plans in those goals appropriate to each unit's purpose. Assessment results are then used to inform the planning process for the following planning period.

1b. – Alignment of Division Goals with University Goals

Attachment 1 illustrates the relationship of the Division Goals to University Goals and the number of initiatives in each goal area during 2005-2006.

**Section 2 - Reflections on Effectiveness**

2a. – Comments on Planning, Implementation and Assessment Processes

While the planning process within the division is not as tightly linked to the annual reporting process as is the case within Academic Affairs, it is an effective one that is directly linked to a yearly assessment cycle. The division has completed its sixth year of utilizing a database format to archive and query all goals and objectives for a given year.

At the beginning of each year, each department and unit identifies what major objectives they hope to achieve for the coming year along with their expected outcomes and assessment plan for measuring effectiveness. In addition, they match these objectives to broader division and university goals thereby linking their efforts to higher level planning and goal formulation processes. At the end of the year, the departments and units complete the assessment cycle by adding in activities undertaken in support of each objective, their assessment findings, and any changes they have planned for the subsequent year based on their progress.

The database allows the division to search goals and objectives and assure alignment with university goals and objectives. The database also allows each unit to contribute objectives to both division and university goals and to analyze movement toward the achievement of those goals. Using the database, the division and its units are able to manage the goal setting and achievement processes in real time. The use of this database continues to influence both the planning process and assessment of goal and objective achievement for the division.

While the database is not the primary planning tool for the division, it has demonstrated its usefulness to the planning process in a number of ways. At the beginning of each annual cycle, all department and unit objectives report on their respective expected outcomes and assessment plans for the upcoming year. The database automatically groups this information by division and university goals in order for the vice chancellor to quickly identify common themes and areas of concentrated common effort to report to the chancellor and chancellor's cabinet prior to the start of each year. This process also allows the vice chancellor to quickly identify gaps in the planning process by the lack of either expected outcomes or objectives in key areas of interest to the division or university.

These groupings or commonalities are also used to identify reporting themes for the division's annual institutional effectiveness report in addition to providing both themes and key findings for inclusion in the divisional annual report. In short, the database has assisted the division in its ability to rapidly arrange and report on the key functions of the division from a variety of perspectives that are used in both the reporting and planning processes.

All department objectives are reviewed at the beginning of the cycle year allowing earlier discussion, development, and implementation of more appropriate assessment instruments than in previous years. An internal process was developed in 2004-05 to flag departments or units with missing or inadequate assessment plans so that more timely assistance with measuring outcomes could be provided by the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Systems Development.

The database reports from this past year indicated that while the division made contributions to all university goals except goal two (increase faculty and student research), approximately two thirds of our major initiatives occurred within two goal areas: enhancing student and community life (goal six) and to graduate students with

depth and breath of knowledge across a spectrum of skill areas (goal eight). The majority of statistics regarding the division's focus on expanding program offerings was obtained from the database. Concern areas that were documented within the database and discussed in the annual report were the significant efforts in student leader training programs (18 objectives), student life facilities design and construction (23 objectives), and assessing the student experience and improving retention (20 objectives). Also documented in the database and added to the annual report were the substantial utilization increases in both the Health and Counseling Centers.

## 2b. - Examples of Assessment Findings

In terms of how emerging themes are identified within the division, the matrix template (Attachment #1) contains shaded areas in the last column of the matrix where the number of objectives within a division goal are highlighted. It is from these "major activity" goals that our reporting themes are generated. A high number of objectives within a goal area typically represents a concentration of effort and energy around a common issue. The database reporting system allows us to obtain additional information down to the department and unit objective for theme greater clarity.

Since all of our objectives contain a required section on assessment findings, the balance of this section contains a small selection of representative examples on the uses of our assessment findings.

An example of an issue that emerged is seen in Attachment 2 where the Greek Life Office identified that while a substantial number of new students expressed an interest in the Greek system, participation in the membership recruitment process resulted in a fairly low yield of new students added to Greek system. Database entries in the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 years not only shed light on this issue, but an action plan was developed that would research why so many interested students dropped from the process.

An example of a problem that emerged through this reporting system was an outcome of the Academic Engagement Survey (AES) process last fall (Attachment 3a). Data collected from the survey indicated that a substantial number of our incoming freshmen and transfer students had not received course feedback or grades by the end of the traditional midterm period. Since integrating other university data into the AES dataset was a key component of the process, the team was able to examine this issue further by reviewing unsatisfactory grade submissions and actual academic performance. The same conclusions regarding inadequate grade notification that the survey uncovered were confirmed using university data (Attachment 3b). This information was immediately shared with the provost and a number faculty governance groups. The end result was a re-emphasis to the faculty on the importance of students receiving early course feedback and especially receiving feedback on unsatisfactory academic performance through the unsatisfactory midterm grade reporting process this fall.

An example of a success was in the Housing and Residence Life detailed examination of positive impact of their recently implemented "Connections" programming model on

student satisfaction with living on campus and with their resident advisors (Attachment 4). This objective was a multi-year project that first proposed researching new programming models, developing a best-practice model on our campus, implementing the model and finally assessing the impact of the model against a wide array of dimensions utilizing several national benchmarking studies over time. Their research, both quantitative and qualitative, serves as a solid example of how their initial ideas and progress towards developing a new programmatic improvement are documented and reported using this database system.

#### 2c. – Changes Made or to be Initiated in 2006-2007

The first example of changes initiated or made was in the Dean of Students Office. The staff was concerned with identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the out-of-court settlement and student court hearing processes. Historically, obtaining useful feedback from students who have run afoul of university codes of conduct is problematic. They are mad at themselves and at the university and are unlikely to respond to survey questions objectively after the adjudicative process is complete. In fact, annual surveys typically have a yield in the low teens and contained little useful information. Utilizing real-time data collection through PDA's, a capability made possible through our StudentVoice contract, the office was able to design a survey that was administered to students immediately after they had presented their side of a case and before a verdict was determined. This allowed the office to obtain information about judicial process awareness, hearing fairness and being treated with respect among other issues (Attachment 5). As the example indicates, they are now incorporating this information into their training processes and are continuing to collect data on this issue.

The second example from Housing and Residence Life addresses another change issue. Through a new objective in 2005-2006 (Attachment 6) that was designed to investigate the sophomore residential experience, they discovered both a lack of national research on this issue and confirmed that sophomore students were less satisfied with their overall experiences across a number of dimensions than were freshmen. This objective has since been modified in 2006-2007 to include a continued review of current sophomore experience literature and investigation of programs and services offered by comparative institutions, continued assessment of the residential sophomore student needs through student feedback (EBI data, focus groups, etc.), and to initiate a workshop in partnership with other departments during the fall semester as a pilot program to judge sophomore interest in programs specifically focused at their demographic.

In summary, these examples serve as illustrations of a larger process where local objectives are formally tied to both division and university goals and are evaluated for effectiveness on an annual cycle.