

Program Site Review Student Programs and Services, Weber State University-Davis

Introduction and Overview

A comprehensive program site review of Student Programs and Services at WSU-Davis was conducted on June 6-7, 2011. The team was comprised of the following members: Bruce Davis, Vice Provost and Dean at WSU-Davis; Dianna Abel, Director of Counseling and Psychological Services Center at WSU; Don Guthrie, Director, Disability Resources at WSU; and Mike Mader, Assistant Dean of Students at Arizona State University.

The Student Programs and Services areas at WSU-Davis are experiencing a common set of phenomena of an emerging campus that is part of a larger university. Examples include:

- Campus offers core services, but is limited in areas of specialization.
- There is a small but dedicated staff doing a great job with limited space and resources.
- The students are passionate about the place despite the lack of some programs and services, and are especially proud of the traditions they have created.
- There is a strong sense of community at the emerging campus, sometimes at the expense of the “main” campus.
- The campus has an enrollment that is worthy of more services and programs, but dispatching more staff and expanding services to the “branch” campus is not quite justifiable
- A few staffers are wearing many “hats” and operating as generalists out of necessity. Consequently, content expertise from the “main” campus is often perceived as an “add on” by some staff members.
- Decisions on policy, procedure, and budget are often made with the campus in mind rather than the function. This dynamic creates an environment that often leads to an “us” versus “them” mentality, creates competition among units, and puts unnecessary barriers between units that should collaborate to gain efficiency and promote collegiality.

Overall, the review team found the Student Programs and Services areas at WSU-Davis to be meeting the core needs of the students, and has several areas of excellence. The unit has the unique opportunity to expand and further develop its programs and services with the addition of the Professional Programs Classroom Building in the Fall of 2013, which will include a significant amount of student programs and services space. This report summarizes the current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the program, and concludes with a number of recommendations to further strengthen the program. The site review team found everyone involved in the process to be professional and collegial, with a genuine interest in improving programs and services for the students of WSU.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (S.W.O.T.) Exercise

The site review team completed a S.W.O.T exercise for each area in the Program Review Standards located in Appendix A of the site review team handbook. The team considered this framework useful, as it provides feedback in critical service, program, and administrative areas, and also lends itself to analysis by unit members and other stakeholders. Formal recommendations will appear in the “Recommendations” section of this report.

Unit Mission, Goals, and Outcomes

Strengths

- The unit is in alignment with university and division mission, goals, and outcomes.
- Community outreach and collaboration efforts have been successful and positively impactful (e.g., Movie Night, Breakfast with Santa).

Weaknesses

- There is communication with academic programs and faculty, but integration and collaboration with academic faculty and staff is lacking.

Opportunities

- More collaborative programming with academic faculty and staff, especially with the graduate students and the faculty and staff who head up those programs.

Threats

- There are none identified this time. However, WSU-Davis must continue to keep its unit goals and outcomes consistent with the overarching mission of the university and the division.

Programs and Services

Strengths

- The Student Council is comprised of dedicated students who clearly care about the campus and the university.
- New student governance structure provides more student leadership opportunities and awareness of WSU-Davis campus to students at WSU-Ogden.
- There is a balance of programs targeted at traditional and non-traditional students.
- Collaboration with and inclusion of the NUAMES students in programs and services.
- Consistent partnerships and collaboration with community-based organizations and area businesses.
- Establishment of traditions by way of key programs (Movie Night, Breakfast with Santa, etc.).

Weaknesses

- Cross-functional communication and collaboration with Ogden in both programs and services areas.
- Awareness of programs and services among all stakeholders is lacking, due in part to very limited hours for and/or exposure to key student programs and services areas:
 - Counseling and Psychological Services
 - Veteran’s Affairs and Upward Bound Veteran Affairs
 - Career Services
 - Women’s Student Services
 - Multi-cultural/Diversity Student Services
 - Non-traditional Student Services
 - Health Center
 - Recreation and wellness.
- Promotion and advertisement of programs and services.
- Dual-track appeals process.
- Lack of graduate student representation on Davis Student Council and WSUSA.
- Lack of food service options.
- Insufficient space for recreation/fitness activities.
- Frequency of programs and activities (currently there are too few based on enrollment).

Opportunities

- The new building will provide the opportunity to build on strengths and address weaknesses, as well as the opportunity for functional peers and colleagues to work together on the design.
- Collaboration with faculty and academic staff.
- New ideas on how to meet the needs of WSU students across multiple locations through staff reconfigurations and innovative organizational approaches.
- More utilization of social media.
- Actively seeking ways to meet programming needs and interests of non-traditional and graduate student populations.
- Offer an evening section of career development course at Davis campus.

Threats

- Students’ limited time on campus (particularly the evening and non-traditional students) will continue to be a challenge.
- Silo mentality.
- “Main” campus myopia or Ogden-centric approach.

Leadership and Staffing

Strengths

- Professional staff members are experienced, highly-qualified, and engage in professional development opportunities to remain current in the field.
- Student staff members are well-trained and utilized in positions ranging from the relatively complex to basic front line customer service.

- Partnership and collaboration with NUAMES is mutually reinforcing.
- Collegiality and ongoing communication among the WSU-Davis Programs and Services staff.
- Community awareness of high profile programs.
- Student Council is strong. The inclusion of student council representative on WSUSA has enhanced awareness and created a sense of unity among students in the governance structure.

Weaknesses

- Lack of graduate student representation on student council and WSUSA.
- Lack of regular cross-functional communication and collaboration between Davis and Ogden staff.
- Inequity in key service and program delivery across all areas of the unit.
- Lack of cross-training and institutional content expert support for existing qualified professional staff to assist in service and program delivery.
- Overlap of leadership team meetings (redundancy).
- The organizational distinction/delineation of Student Programs and Student Services areas.
- Lack of registered student organizations.

Opportunities

- Professional development and career enhancement for graduate students.
- Student engagement in clubs and organizations.
- Increase communication and collaboration among student affairs professionals across the university.
- The new facility provides a unique opportunity to discuss staffing and leadership.
- Identify administrative duties that could be performed by one staff across the university at the functional level to gain organizational efficiency.
- Merge programs and services functions under one Assistant Dean.

Threats

- Reliance on students to assume professional roles outside of their skill set.
- Budget constraints that do not allow for strategic expansion of staff based on enrollment growth, professional practice, and assessed needs.
- Lack of creativity and innovation to address program and service needs in the absence of additional professional staff or increased budget.
- Unnecessary specialization in areas where a generalist is sufficient, if not preferred.

Financial Resources and Budget

Strengths

- Sound stewardship of relatively small budget.
- Student Affairs Fellowships (recruit and retain student leaders to drive programming).
- Leveraging of community resources.

Weaknesses

- Separate budget pools for programs and services create tension and competition for resources between Davis and Ogden.
- Student fee allocation process is perceived as being inequitable by Davis students and staff.
- Small programming budget.

Opportunities

- Access to more student fees to support programming.
- Block booking of high cost, high profile speakers, concerts, etc. (e.g., one performance or showing at Ogden and one at Davis).
- Budget planning at the functional level across the university rather than at the campus level.

Threats

- “Us” versus “Them” mentality with regard to budget and resources.
- Acceptance that Ogden holds all resources and then dispatches them to Davis.

Facilities, Equipment, and Technology

Strengths

- Efficient and creative use of limited space.
- Facility is well-maintained and people take pride in it.
- Cooperation among Davis staff to best use limited space.
- Safe environment.
- ADA compliant.
- Relationships with community to utilize off-campus space.

Weaknesses

- Limited space creates a work environment where it is difficult to maintain confidentiality or professionalism (e.g., “The Haven”).
- An overall lack of space in all programs and services areas.
- Severe lack of space for student events, activities, and social interaction.
- Limited access to student databases by Davis staff.
- Lack of food service options.
- Underutilization of website and social media.
- Portables (while necessary in the short term, they are unattractive and unprofessional).

Opportunities

- Improve website.
- Use facebook, twitter, and texting more often to publicize programs and services.
- Videoconferencing and teleconferencing with colleagues across the university to improve and integrate service delivery, communicate changes, and promote collegiality.

- Utilizing videoconferencing and web-based technology to complement in person services.
- A new building design that factors in student programs and services needs.

Threats

- Loss of close-knit community after new building comes on board and enrollment grows.
- Maintaining tight relationship with local community after new building makes Davis less dependent on off-site spaces.

Ethical and Legal Responsibilities

Strengths

- Prompt and willing compliance in providing necessary equipment for Counseling and Psychological Services to meet legal and ethical standards (i.e., white noise machine, designated computer, panic button).
- Sound practice with regard to hard copy and electronic files.

Weaknesses

- Overlap of service areas may present ethical and legal issues with regard to privacy.

Opportunities

- Proactive consideration of ethical and legal issues in the design of new building.

Threats

- Lack of confidential space.
- Utilization of students who are not appropriately skilled to perform certain job functions.

Assessment and Evaluation

Strengths

- Effective shift from satisfaction-oriented surveys to assessment of student learning outcomes for programs.
- Appropriate focus on student leadership development.
- Unit is in compliance with division expectations with regard to assessment and evaluation.

Weaknesses

- None

Opportunities

- Unit can serve as the model for others student affairs units.

Threats

- None

Recommendations

These recommendations are not in priority order.

- Increase cross-functionality of services and programs areas across university.
- Communicate expectations on what collaboration “looks like” between Davis and Ogden campuses in order to facilitate more collaboration.
- Hold an all student affairs leadership team retreat to address the challenges of serving all students in a multi-campus university.
- Develop a meeting structure that allows for communication among functional service providers.
- Leverage technology to complement programs and services, enhance communication, and reduce travel between campuses.
- Use the opportunity of the new building at Davis to enhance and expand programs and services and meet compelling space needs, as well as foster collaboration among student affairs content experts in scope, programming, and design.
- Develop a strategic organizational, budget, and facility plan for student affairs that factors in growth of Davis.
- Continue the strong and positive relationship with NUAMES and include the Principal of NUAMES in the programming and design of building to ensure their needs are considered.
- Improve and enhance promotion of programs and services via website, facebook, twitter and texting.
- Raise awareness of programs and services among staff and faculty.
- Intentionally seek out faculty as partners in programming.
- Improve building signage for programs and services areas.
- Ensure that appropriate Davis staff members have access to databases and information that will allow them to complete job duties and responsibilities.
- Initiate a process that gives graduate students a governance voice at the university. Davis campus should take the lead on this effort based on the high overall percentage of graduate students enrolled in programs at Davis.
- Review the dual track appeals process and consider simplifying it to better serve students.
- Offer an evening career development course at Davis.
- Work with WSU-Davis Student Council to encourage students to create registered student organizations.