



**Weber State University**  
**Nontraditional Student Center**  
**Program Review 2016**

**Weber State University Nontraditional Student Center  
Program Review 2016  
Final Report**

Program Review Team:

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## **Introduction**

The Program Review team would like to thank the Weber State University Nontraditional Student Center staff as well as the other staff and students who participated in the program review process. During our two-day visit, we met with a variety of stakeholders and interested parties including the Vice President of Student Affairs, departmental supervisors, Nontraditional Student Center staff, Student Affairs colleagues, and student users of nontrad services. We appreciate the frankness and thoughtfulness of all the participants who helped us understand the workings of the Nontraditional Student Center.

The Program Review document provided by the Nontraditional Student Center was also very helpful in giving us insight into the department's mission, programs, staffing, budget, facilities, assessments, and more. Thank you to the staff for time and effort invested in creating that document outlining the program's history over the past five years.

The Nontraditional Student Center has many strengths which we report in the following pages. Our report goes on to make key recommendations followed by discussion of those recommendations with examples of how they might be carried out. We include the specifics to provide insight into the thinking behind the recommendations and to share some of the feedback we got in the Program Review process.

## Unit Mission, Goals, and Outcomes

### Strengths

The Nontraditional Student Center Mission Statement captures the themes of inclusion and support. The mission is consistent with Student Affairs and University Mission Statements. In particular, the Nontrad Center mission statement picks up on the themes of social and intellectual development from the Student Affairs Mission Statement.

### Areas of Improvement

The statement has room for improvement. The statement currently seems to include two distinct and different points which are not clearly related and may be incompatible.

### Key Recommendations

- Clarify and unify the ideas of the mission statement.
- Some key concepts which could be included are
  - reference to encouraging student involvement and leadership on campus;
  - reference to removing barriers (e.g. child care and financial resources);
  - reference to supporting students throughout their college careers.

The mission statement seems to express a dual purpose. First, it aims to assist students “in making a successful academic and social transition” to WSU, which is related to supporting “students’ academic progress and social adjustment.” Second, it aspires “to provide a welcoming, friendly, and comfortable environment.” This second element brings up a separate point and one that does not seem to rise to the level of a mission statement. It could be argued that creating a positive environment may provide a place for students to begin to adjust socially. Even so, it is a means to an end. It may support the mission but is not a mission in itself.

In the sentences quoted above as well as elsewhere in the mission statement, there seems to be an inherent tension between two different conceptions of the Nontraditional Student Center’s purpose. There is a contradiction in the idea of creating “a center that helps all students feel recognized, valued, and completely connected to the larger Weber State University community.” If students are sequestered in the friendly, comfortable center with other nontraditional students, where is the emphasis on getting connected to the larger community?

Simply having a pleasant physical space in the Nontraditional Student Center does not seem to be a high enough aspiration for a mission statement, nor is it completely clear how that goal meshes with the other parts of the statement. A better focus might be on supporting students throughout their college careers through programs and services offered by the Nontrad Center itself as well as through university partners.

## Programs and Services

### Strengths

The Nontraditional Student Center has a variety long-standing support programs, an adequate lounge facility and computer lab. Developmental Math tutors are CLRA certified. The kitchenette is adequate and the environment is welcoming. The childcare center is licensed, well organized with an outstanding staff and planned educational activities for the children. The recent initiatives to add evening hours and to provide childcare during events on campus are positive developments as is the offering of childcare services to WSU staff as a creative way to ensure that the childcare space is fully utilized during the summer. The center's programs are connected to university core themes as well as university and division priorities.

### Areas of Improvement

The Nontraditional Student Center could improve in several areas. More programming utilizing faculty and other university departments could be helpful in the expansion of offerings. A devoted effort to increase the number of academic and Student Affairs partnerships could increase the center's visibility. A targeted campaign to promote the availability of Developmental Math Tutoring through website, orientation programs, social media and emails could be put in place. The commitment to men's and parents' programming should continue and be enhanced.

### Key Recommendations

- Expand efforts to provide childcare for campus events.
- Pursue options for offering additional childcare.
- Streamline and simplify childcare application process if possible to make access to childcare quicker for parents who need help on short notice. Consider improvements to the current payment portal as parents have found it confusing.
- Strengthen ties with and make regular referrals to the Care About Childcare @ Weber State University Office.
- Develop a process so that students who enter the Nontrad Center have their needs assessed and are connected to needed programs and services offered by the Center or others.
- Increase outreach so that students who do not use the physical Nontrad Center locations still access services.
- Review the roles of Peer Mentor personnel to maximize efforts.
- Make advising a central component of the department's services.
- Educate staff from other Student Affairs departments and staff from Academic Affairs departments, particularly the University Academic Advising Council, about services offered by the Nontrad Center so that referrals increase.
- Activate Pinnacle Honor Society.
- Carefully assess usage, satisfaction, and grade data relating to Developmental Math tutoring during the next year and continue program only if it proves to be effective.
- Reach out to nontrad students who have not completed Developmental Math and offer them advising, encouragement, and proper referrals.
- Resume programming around demonstrated needs of nontrad students.
- Partner with other departments to accomplish programming that meets shared goals.
- Be intentional about which populations of nontraditional students to serve.
- With all programming, including parents' and men's programming, base plans on students' needs and interests as reflected by carefully administered assessments.
- Keep social media updated, preferably by a full-time staff member.
- Advertise the availability of child care more widely.
- Use Student Affairs marketing resources when possible to coordinate marketing campaigns.

## Detailed Discussion of Programs and Services

### Childcare

The childcare program is full to capacity in the mornings. There is no opportunity to expand the program in the current space. However, other means of helping students with their need for childcare may be possible.

We endorse the Nontraditional Student Center's plan to continue exploring the possibility of providing childcare in the future at the Davis Campus. Although space and funding are currently obstacles, creative solutions such as seeking donors for such a project or partnering with the Children's School to provide childcare workers could cut costs. Grants are another possible source of budget for a future childcare center at Davis.

Another suggestion made during the course of the Program Review was to create a childcare center at the Swenson gym. This would encourage students to use the WSU exercise facilities rather than buy a gym membership off campus where childcare is available. The facility could also serve as an overflow for the current childcare center. Exploring space and funding options for such a project would be worthwhile.

Finally, when the Nontraditional Student Center childcare is full or not appropriate for a particular student's situation, the Nontraditional Student Center staff needs to consistently make referrals to the Care About Childcare @ Weber State University program through the Department of Child and Family Studies. A close relationship needs to be cultivated between these two offices.

### Kitchen and Computer Lab

The vast majority of students who use the Nontrad Center come for the kitchen and/or computer lab, according to the tracking done when they enter the center. Since free printing has been discontinued, use of the computer lab has dropped substantially, indicating that students may have been coming only to print. Although access to a kitchen and small, more intimate computer lab is convenient for students, these should not be the main services of the Nontrad Center. Students may be initially attracted by these conveniences, but once they've made contact with the center, they should be directed to other programs and services which would benefit them. Perhaps an intake process in which their contact information is captured and their needs are quickly assessed could be used.

Of course, the majority of nontrad students never enter the Nontrad Center yet still may need services. About half of the WSU population qualifies as nontraditional, yet the Nontrad Center serves less than 5% of that group. More outreach beyond the centers themselves is needed on each campus to reach this population. Here again, collaboration with other departments such as SIL which hold events would be beneficial.

### Use of Peer Mentors

The role of Peer Mentors should be less of an administrative function and more focused on helping students understand and prepare for the academic and social demands of college life. The tutoring component could be better publicized and advisor/coaching component could be enhanced with additional training. Peer mentoring is critical to the retention and progression of nontraditional students as they manage through the rigor of college.

### Nontraditional Student Advising

This service should be one of the mainstays of the Nontraditional Student Center. Quality advising directly and substantively supports the mission of the department. However, the data about service usage which was provided indicated that little advising is done (although it was indicated that some is done informally and so is

not documented). Both the Nontraditional Student Center Advisor and the peer mentors appear to be underutilized in this capacity.

The Nontraditional Student Center Advisor demonstrated a clear understanding of the limits of advising appropriate for the Nontrad office. It is understood that this advising should consist of academic planning followed by a referral to the Student Success Center or the appropriate official advisor for the student's major. We recommend that the Nontraditional Student Advisor and peer mentors receive further training so they are prepared to do this sort of informal advising. This recommendation is further discussed in the "Leadership and Staffing" section.

Students coming into the Nontrad Center mostly use the computer lab and kitchen but do not branch out to take advantage of more substantive services. The department needs to find ways to engage these students further. One suggestion is to have signage listing the services available. Also, students should be referred to the Nontrad office for advising by other departments. For this to happen, departments across Student Affairs and Academic Affairs needs to be made more aware of exactly what they can refer students for.

### Pinnacle Honor Society

The Nontrad Center's self-study indicates that nontraditional students can join Pinnacle Honor Society, buy a medallion and receive a certificate, pin, and honor cord to wear at graduation. It is unclear, however, how many members the Society has or whether it is active. The existence of this organization within the Nontrad Center could create opportunities for student-led programming in support of students' academics which would be directly relevant to the center's mission. For example, since service or leadership experiences and a 3.0 GPA are required for membership, could the Society hold service activities, study groups, learning strategy workshops or other events for students who are not yet members but would like to qualify?

### Developmental Math Tutoring

The desire to support students' success in math is admirable as completing math is definitely a barrier to students' retention and graduation. Although Developmental Math tutoring was used by very few students in its first year, it is reasonable for the department to continue the program for one more year and evaluate its continuance at the end of next year. Because more Developmental Math courses are being offered in formats that involve extensive in-class time with peer group work and teacher contact, the likelihood of students taking additional time for tutoring would seem to be lessened. Therefore, it will be very important to carefully track usage and results to determine if the investment in this service is worthwhile.

Aside from tutoring, to effectively help students progress through their math requirements, department staff need to become more familiar with the Developmental Math Program and be able to make students aware of the various math course options available to them. A discussion of math should be a key part of advising efforts. Staff should attend any information sessions provided by the Developmental Math program and encourage students to do the same. The department could also consider collaborating with Developmental Math to provide math success workshops to nontrad students addressing specific needs of the nontrad student population. Finally, the Nontrad Center could take the lead on contacting nontrad students who need to complete developmental math, determining their concerns, providing encouragement, and making proper referrals.

### General Programming

During the Program Review period, Epiphany and the Purple Pals Club were eliminated due to falling participation. The department is to be commended for its willingness to change direction when certain programs are not as popular as previously. The last year seems to have been a transition period in which little programming was done. Programming should be resumed around demonstrated needs of nontrad students. A three year programming plan could be added to the Strategic Plan to ensure that programs are given adequate time to evolve and become successful.

Programming need not be done solely by the Nontrad Center. Partnering with other departments will make programming more feasible with the limited staff available and will be more effective overall as it eliminates duplication of efforts.

One nontrad student need which came up repeatedly during the Program Review was financial. For example, one student described running out of financial aid and not knowing why because she had never paid attention to how financial aid works. In addition to advising individually on finances, the Nontrad Center could be partnering with the Money Management Center and Financial Aid, for example, to bring experts into the Center for students to see on a drop-in basis. This is just one example of an area in which information could be proactively offered.

Wellness is an area in which programming was done through use of an Intern. Using an intern seems to be a good way to increase staffing for the center while providing the intern with experience related to his/her major. This is another example in which collaboration with related departments is important. In this instance, collaboration benefits the intern as well as the departments and the event participants. HPHP and the Wellness Program could be prime collaborators not only for future wellness programming but possibly also for men's and parents' programming. It is recommended that a representative from the Nontrad Center sit on the Wellness committee as a way to further collaborate and assist with the scheduling of wellness events that may be attractive to the nontrad student population.

### Programming for Specific Populations

A challenge faced by the Nontraditional Student Center is that the nontraditional student population consists of many subgroups. How should the Center choose which parts of the nontraditional student population to focus on? The last Program Review of the Center raised the concern that the "NSC is focused almost entirely on children and families and is not serving the needs of young 'marrieds,' singles, or couples without children." Since then, the emphasis on families seems to have been somewhat reduced with the cancellation of the Purple Pals Kids Club. The Center still serves parents as a primary audience, and that seems appropriate and inevitable due to the centrality of childcare as a departmental service.

Nevertheless, the Center needs to continue to reach out to the variety of nontraditional students, determining which most need support. Although the department mission statement uses the university definition of nontraditional students as 25 years or older, married/divorced/widowed, or a parent, other groups which could be considered, for example, include guardian, caregiver and military veteran.

The Center currently appears to be in the process of once again re-considering whom it can best serve. The planned experiments with parents' and men's programming are promising directions and should be given time to develop and find an audience. However, they should also be monitored closely for effectiveness and should not automatically become the exclusive focus of the Nontrad Center.

### Parents' Programming

The Nontrad Center has hired a student chair to do parents' programming. This student will proactively approach childcare parents and connect them with other campus services and events. Childcare is the department's signature service, and it makes sense to leverage the contact with parents that it provides to draw in those students to become more involved in campus. Establishing a Facebook page, as is planned, should provide a practical way of creating a community for parents who don't have much time for face-to-face interaction on campus. Some of the suggestions made by parents include scheduling guest speakers around critical academic deadlines, offering workshops on a walk-in basis, highlighting more options for nontrads to get involved on campus, and encouraging parents to create google reviews to let other nontrad students know of great services offered.



## Men's and Masculinity Programming

Providing programming for men is an interesting concept which may be particularly appropriate in the Utah cultural context which puts pressure on men to conform to a strict gender role. The department has the advantage of a male staff member with a strong interest in the topic to oversee the project and its student leader. Also, the concept of examining issues of masculinity fits well with other trends on campus such as the emergence of LGBTQ concerns and may also offer an opportunity to strengthen ties with the Women's Center around the issue of how men can support prevention of violence against women.

The department expects to survey WSU men before finalizing programming topics. Any such survey needs to be widely disseminated and thoughtfully analyzed to determine the areas in which men most need support.

One concern raised about this programming thread during Program Review was that the Nontrad Center could begin to become the men's center, with the Women's Center serving the female population. Clearly, this is not the intention, yet the Nontrad Center needs to be careful to avoid this perception. Advertising men's programming as just one of multiple things the center offers will help to make clear that it is not an exclusive focus. In addition, scheduling men's programming, along with other programming, in a separate room could avoid the feeling that the Nontrad Center is filled with men.

## Marketing

The existence of Facebook and Twitter accounts is a plus. Videos posted on the Nontrad website are professional and well-done. Social media needs to be kept updated, with frequent posting, which is not currently being done, perhaps due to a shortage of staff in the last year. A full-time staff member should be tasked with this responsibility, or at least maintain close oversight over student work, for continuity.

The Nontrad Center advertises quite extensively with fliers at both Ogden and Davis Campus. We particularly appreciate the regular inclusion of the Davis Campus in the marketing efforts.

Although the center itself is advertised, childcare has not been a focus. An increase in advertising of the Childcare Center may be necessary to fill vacancies during summer and academic calendar breaks. A campaign suggesting that the Nontrad Center can help with childcare could address a felt need in the nontrad population and attract parents to the advisor for referrals as well as to the Childcare Center itself.

The department has expressed the intention to begin using the Student Affairs graphic designer. This should be attempted so that advertising is coordinated across mediums and with other departments who may be holding similar events.

## **Leadership and Staffing**

### Strengths

The Nontraditional Student Center has capable and intuitive leadership and staff members with great potential. The addition of a shared Administrative Assistant is a positive move to manage student traffic. The staff manages to provide coverage to both the Ogden and Davis campuses. The staff works to remove academic and social barriers and are knowledgeable about the nuances of the communities they serve. The staff recognizes the importance of aiding nontraditional students in transitioning to the university.

### Areas of Improvement

To address the needs of multiple campus locations and the equity of programs and services, additional staff could be added. To support additional professional development, funds could be allocated from other budget line items, or additional funding could be sought. Funding is needed for conferences and site visits.

## Key Recommendations

- Full-time staff should take advantage of further professional development opportunities.
  - Participation in the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) will provide networking opportunities with other advisors of adult learners on a national level.
  - Participation in the Utah Advising Association (UAA) will provide networking opportunities with other advisors of adult learners on a state level.
  - Innovative programming ideas could be generated with the formation of a regional consortium of area colleges and universities focused on nontraditional student issues.
- Training should be provided on WSU-specific advising topics for peer mentors as well as the Nontraditional Student Advisor.
  - Collaborate with the Student Success Center, the University Academic Advising Council, and other departments to receive ongoing training for both the advisor and peer mentors.
  - Encourage advisor and peer mentors to pursue the Coach certification as a way to make well-informed referrals to other departments on campus.
- A contract position at the Davis Campus should eventually be considered.

We recommend further professional development for the full-time staff. The Advisor has recently joined NACADA and should take advantage of resources provided by that organization as well as other advising resources such as the Utah Advising Association. In addition, he should maintain close connections with WSU departments such as the Student Success Center, Financial Aid, and Registration, attending their “Boot Camps” or other training.

A state non-traditional student center conference or summit with the support of ANTSHE could be helpful for all Nontrad Center staff. Forming a regional consortium would create a community in which the staff could discuss nontraditional student issues.

Peer mentors as well as the advisor need additional training on WSU advising topics. The current Peer Mentor training, GetSet training, and the Center-Specific training documented in the Program Review document appear to be general and do not appear to cover advising.

As the Nontraditional Student Center adds services at the Davis Campus, and as the campus grows, a greater presence there will be necessary. The Nontraditional Student Advisor currently spends, in theory, 1-2 days per week at the Davis Campus, yet in reality he is often called away for meetings and other obligations. A more regular opportunity for students to receive advising at Davis would be advantageous now but will become even more necessary within a few years and could now be planned for. The synergy of having both the Advisor in his office and a peer mentor in the Davis Nontrad Center at the same time to direct students to the Advisor could result in increased student traffic.

## Financial Resources and Budget

### Strengths

The Nontraditional Student Center budget provided by student fees appears adequate for the current needs of the department. The Director has pursued creative fundraising ideas to bolster the scholarship funds available for students. The department takes advantage of tuition waivers to hire student help.

### Areas of Improvement

It is difficult to tell from the information reported how the large allocation for “current expense” is used. Also, the cost per student is quite high, especially considering the fact that most students use only the lounge, kitchen, and/or computer lab. The per-student cost should be brought down as more students are served.

## Key Recommendations

- Continue to use interns, activity waiver-funded student employees, and hourly student employees to provide services in a cost-effective manner.
- Eventually add a contract position at the Davis Campus.
- Seek funding for additional scholarships and/or child care subsidies.

Although the Nontrad Center has a small staff, it is expanded through the use of student employees and can be further maximized through offering joint activities with other departments. The Advisor has a challenge attempting to cover both the Ogden and Davis Campuses, and if staff were to be added, a contract position at the Davis Campus would eventually be desirable.

One barrier to academic success for nontraditional students which was mentioned more than once by participants in Program Review is a shortage of scholarships for nontraditional students. Donors have been actively sought by the Nontrad Center, and these efforts have been somewhat successful.

The Nontrad Center should continue to work with the Development Office to find new ways to secure additional funding for students, including help for parents with childcare costs. Although the per-hour cost of childcare at the Nontraditional Student Center is very reasonable, it was reported that young parents sometimes still have difficulty affording it. The Nontrad Center should encourage parents to seek out state funding opportunities that may be available. They should also consider developing stronger relationships with state services to aid in the referrals to such services. Finally, the department has expressed an intention to establish an endowment to support the Childcare Center, and this should be pursued as it would seem to be an appealing cause for some donor who has benefitted from the service.

Offering scholarships and possibly child care subsidies through the Nontrad Center as well as helping students apply for scholarships through the Scholarship Office are essential services which the Nontrad Center is uniquely positioned to provide.

## Facilities, Equipment and Technology

### Strengths

The Nontraditional Student Center has a presence on both the Ogden and Davis Campuses. The Childcare Center on the Ogden Campus appears to be well supplied with equipment and materials as well as a pleasant outdoor playground which is regularly resurfaced. Establishing a separate entrance in the Women's Center for survivors of sexual violence is a positive step toward maintaining the privacy and comfort of those students.

### Areas of Improvement

Improve communication and collaboration between the Women's Center and Nontrad Center until space is available to provide separate areas for the two departments.

### Key Recommendations

- When space and funding become available, separate the Women's Center and the Nontraditional Student Center, giving each its own office and programming space.
- Meanwhile, increase communication between the two departments about scheduling.
- Use nearby Shepherd Union meeting rooms rather than the Nontrad Center when programming for larger groups.
- Increase collaborations between the Women's Center and Nontrad Center through collaborative programming (e.g. parents program and masculinity program).
- Improve collection of usage data through use of the swipe system and improve oversight of technology.
- Review whether unrestricted access to the Childcare Center creates a security concern.
- Provide a permanent shade structure for the Childcare Center playground.
- Activate the Davis Nontraditional Student Center.

## Ogden Nontraditional Student Center & Women's Center Shared Space

We recommend ultimately establishing separate spaces for the Women's Center and the Nontraditional Student Center. The focus and atmosphere of the two departments is quite different. The departments have different visions for the use of their space. The Women's Center needs space for student employees to work as well as space where personal, often uncomfortable conversations are taking place. These conversations are taking place not just in advisors' offices but informally between students in the shared public space as well.

Students use the Nontrad space to study and socialize, and tension between students has arisen due to the discomfort felt by some in the Nontrad Center over the nature of conversations overheard from the Women's Center. There is some question about whether the drop in participation at the Nontrad Center may be partly due to students' unease with the activities just across the room in the Women's Center.

This discomfort may be partly due to growing pains as students adapt to the changes in the Women's Center. Both departments reported that the situation has improved over the course of the last year. Certainly there is an opportunity for students to learn from each other and to receive appropriate cross-referrals due to the proximity of the departments. However, if students who are uncomfortable stop coming to the Nontrad Center, that opportunity is lost. Perhaps an initial tour by a peer mentor or the Administrative Specialist when students first visit could help to explain the purposes of the space and head off any misperceptions. Also, individual, informal conversations between staff and students to discuss appropriate uses of the space could be helpful.

Some discomfort on the part of Women's Center patrons has also been reported. It was reported that some sexual assault survivors felt uncomfortable because they unexpectedly had to walk through a group of men in the Nontrad Center when they thought they were coming to the Women's Center. Establishing the separate entrance for survivors of sexual violence is a good step toward eliminating this potential source of additional trauma. On the other hand, the separate entrance may contribute to a feeling of shame on the part of survivors that they are being snuck in the "back door." The best solution would be separate spaces for the Women's Center and the Nontrad Center.

Also, more generally, the nature of the space makes it confusing for students, and even staff, to know where to go. One staff member reported that she thought for months that the space was the Women's Center and didn't even realize that the Nontrad Center was there. The addition of a full-time Administrative Specialist at the door will help significantly with this problem, but, again, separate spaces would be a better solution.

We realize, however, that space to move one of the departments to is not readily available. While the departments continue to share space, they should consider the following suggestions:

1. Increase communication about scheduling so that conflicts do not arise. The departments indicated they are planning to enhance this communication with the help of the new Administrative Specialist.
2. The furniture arrangement in the entire room lends itself to the gathering of small groups but is not conducive to programming for larger groups. Programming could be scheduled instead in other Shepherd Union meeting rooms such as SU 321, a nearby room which is easy to find and holds 20-65 depending on the setup.
3. Cross training of student workers may be helpful in breaking down the "wall" that divides the two offices. If all of the student workers are able to speak of all services offered in both departments, it may create a sense of community and strength in similarities rather than differences.
4. The Nontrad Center and Women's Center should look for opportunities to share programming and resources. For example, the Nontrad Center could call on the Women's Center for help with men's programming which deals with violence against women. The Women's Center has offered books on parenting for the Nontrad Center's parents' programming.

## Technology

The addition of an Administrative Specialist shared with the Women's Center may strengthen the Nontrad Center not only by providing someone to direct students to the proper department and person but also by overseeing the technology. The Admin. Specialist at the front desk will be in a good position to monitor the computer lab and supervise the swipe-in system to make sure that information is collected on a consistent basis. This person or some other staff member should keep social media up to date and maintain email contact with students as proposed in the department's Strategic Plan.

## Security

A concern was raised about free access to the unlocked Childcare Center door. The Administrative Specialist's presence should help with ensuring that only authorized people enter the Childcare Center. However, further measures may need to be considered.

## Childcare Center Playground

The Childcare Center includes a small fenced playground with a hard surface floor. The playground area faces the south and on the day we visited was clearly baking in the sun. The frequency of high temperatures along with the lack of shade limits the usefulness of this space. Funding should be pursued to provide a permanent shade structure for the playground.

## Davis Campus Nontraditional Student Center

Increasing usage at the Davis Campus Nontraditional Student Center is a goal of the Nontrad Center for the upcoming year, according to its Strategic Plan. In order to attract students, the Davis Nontrad Center needs to add programming which gives students a reason to come to the center or use the Advisor. Currently, it was reported, the students who use the center come there primarily for a quiet place to study away from the NUAMES (high school) students who use many other parts of the campus. Although quiet study space is a valuable commodity, the Nontrad Center needs to offer more.

For example, the Nontrad peer mentor could partner with Davis SIL to participate in the very successful nontrad student events that are held at the Davis Campus. At the least, the peer mentor could attend those events to meet students and distribute information on the Nontrad Center and Advisor.

The suggestions for the Ogden Nontrad Center regarding programming and recruiting students also apply to Davis. At least some elements of any parents' and men's programming offered at Ogden should be offered at Davis as well. Other programming based on student needs (such as financial, as mentioned earlier) should also be offered. Some alternatives to offering a program at a particular hour when students may not be available would be to have a period of time when students can drop in to get information on a particular topic or take that topic to them in the lobby or in a class.

The nontrad peer mentor and advisor need to be visible around campus outside of the Nontrad Center and the Nontrad Office. This could mean staffing a table offering childcare referrals or presenting a workshop on nontrad student success for the speaker series organized each semester through Davis Student Services.

As on the Ogden Campus, word needs to be spread among other departments about exactly what the Nontrad Center does and why a student should be referred there. The Veterans Affairs office and Veterans Upward Bound are likely departments from which the Nontrad Center could receive referrals since veterans are included in the population served by the Nontrad Center.

## Ethical and Legal Responsibilities

### Strengths

The Childcare Center is state licensed, maintaining compliance with health and safety regulations. Staff are trained on non-violent crisis intervention, FERPA, and responsibilities as Campus Security Authorities. Confidentiality is maintained through the secure storage of student records.

### Areas of Improvement

None found.

## Assessment and Evaluation

### Strengths

The Nontrad Center has a 5-year Strategic Plan which is tied to university core themes and 6-column model goals. Several of the Strategic Plan goals coincide with recommendations made in this document. The department is aware of and has used Division rubrics. The Nontrad Center has used survey data to make some decisions such as the choice of hours at the Davis Nontraditional Student Center.

### Areas of Improvement

The Nontraditional Student Center does not appear to have a comprehensive assessment plan which has been carried out on a long-term basis. The department needs to establish meaningful assessments and use them consistently.

### Key Recommendations

- Use assessment to determine the most pressing needs of nontraditional students. Base programming decisions on assessment results.
- Gather and analyze usage data.
- Establish and track learning outcomes for student employees/peer mentors.
- Regularly conduct satisfaction surveys.
- Facilitate focus groups to determine what the nontrad student population want/need and to assess current programs.
- Work with Student Affairs Assessment to develop other appropriate means of assessment.

The department should use assessments to determine the critical needs of WSU's nontraditional student population and determine which of those needs the Nontrad Center can effectively serve. For example, the upcoming USHE Noel-Levitz adult learning survey results will be helpful to pinpoint priorities. Also, the department anticipates surveying WSU men as a first step in planning men's programming. This will be a crucial step to learn about men's perceptions of their roles and challenges so that programming can address the felt needs.

Accudemia headcount data was provided but not interpreted in the Program Review self-study. The numbers show wide fluctuations in usage which are not explained. The department has noted that it has had difficulty gathering accurate headcount data. This problem appears to have persisted for several years and needs to be remedied. When basic information about participation is absent, it becomes almost impossible to determine whether changes made to programs and services have a positive or negative effect on usage of the Center.

The Nontrad Center also needs to do other kinds of assessment so that it can prove the success of its efforts. Learning outcomes should be established and reported for student employee positions. Learning outcomes are mentioned in the Program Review self-study, but no evidence of their use is given.

Satisfaction surveys should be done routinely for students served, such as those who meet with peer mentors, the Advisor, and the Developmental Math tutor. Satisfaction surveys should be administered each semester and records kept so that trends can be identified. Periodic focus groups is another means that could be used to determine the extent to which programs are successful.

## **Conclusion**

The Nontraditional Student Center is greatly appreciated by the students it serves. It is run by caring staff with a deep interest in the issues of nontraditional students. Over the past five years, the Center has made many changes, seeking what works best in the service of nontraditional students. Hopefully in the next year or so, with the help of some of the recommendations in this document, the Center can identify, launch, and maintain programs and services to usher in the next phase of its service to nontraditional students. New initiatives will need to be given time to work and should be regularly reviewed based on careful assessment.

This report makes many recommendations, but they coalesce around a few key themes:

1. Determine student needs and develop programming around those needs.
2. Seek opportunities for collaboration with other departments.
3. Reach out beyond the physical Nontrad Center to both students and staff. Advocate for students and educate other departments on what you do.
4. Assess.

Other recommendations will depend on availability of space and funding, but for the long term the following should be considered:

1. Explore expansion of childcare services at both campuses.
2. Provide separate spaces for the Nontraditional Student Center and the Women's Center.
3. Consider adding a contract staff member at the Davis Campus.

Thank you for the opportunity to learn about the Nontraditional Student Center and see your good work. We hope that our suggestions are useful and provide some new perspectives that may inspire creative thought and practical action for the future.