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Women's Center Site Review Summary Report

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This report has been written to summarize the findings of the Site Review conducted by Darci Lane-Williams, Dianna Abel and Maria Parrilla de Kokal from January 12-13, 2017.

The goal of the program review process is to ensure that the Women's Center is providing effective programs and services while striving to continuously improve and demonstrate alignment with the strategic goals of the division of Student Affairs and Weber State University.

The site review team had the distinct pleasure of meeting with Weber State University students, faculty, staff and administrators in addition to meeting Ogden community partners. During the site review, we were able to identify strengths and areas of improvement for the center. Within this report, we have made recommendations that we hope will aid in moving the center forward. Prior to the site visit, we reviewed the self-study document prepared by the Women's Center's professional staff. We found that the self-study document demonstrated department alignment with the program review standards.

Unit Mission, Goals, and Outcomes

“The WSC Women's center (WC) advocates for the best educational and campus experience for all members of our community. We accomplish this by advancing social justice and by working towards a safe and healthy campus. “

The Women's Center (WC) has undergone significant changes in the last two years. The current mission statement reflects a shift from a primary focus of serving the needs of women re-entering an educational setting and striving to balance their educational success with meeting the needs of their families to providing prevention education and advocacy services. Emphasis on social justice has also become a priority as the center strives to educate the Weber State University community.

Programs and Services

The WC has four core programs and focus areas:

- Women's Center Operations
- Safe@Weber Violence Prevention and Advocacy Services Program
- Social Justice Education, Action and Resource Program
- Leadership and Professional Development Program

Women's Center Operations:

This focus area refers to maintaining the daily operations of the center in order to fulfill the mission of the department.

Safe@Weber Violence Prevention and Advocacy Services Program

This area focuses on providing prevention education to the community as well as response to incidents that violate Title IX. Due to the increase in the number of Title IX cases, providing advocacy services has become the primary focus of the Advocate and Program Specialist.

Strength:

It is imperative that the WC respond to incidents of dating and domestic violence, stalking, harassment and sexual assault. This is the requirement of federal regulation. The staff of the WC has been doing an excellent job responding to the needs of victims and survivors throughout the past two years.

Challenges:

The Advocate and Program Specialist position requires both providing advocacy support to students as well as providing prevention education programming to the community. The current staffing of the center makes it challenging for one staff position to do both.

Recommendations:

Limited resources require thoughtful prioritization and boundaries. Until an additional staff position is provided for the WC, advocacy services should be limited to assisting students with navigating campus systems. External advocacy services, provided by community partners, should be used to navigate community systems including the legal system and accessing medical services. In addition, community advocates may be helpful with accessing social services for students.

This change may allow for the Advocate and Program Specialist to serve more students while also focusing more time on programming and outreach if at all possible.

Once a staff position is added to the WC, it is recommended that the advocacy services be part of one job description while the programming be part of another. It is clear that providing both prevention education and advocacy may be too time-consuming for one staff member.

Social Justice Education, Action, and Resource Program

This program includes providing workshops on feminist issues, stocking a media lending library, providing access to a lactation/advocacy room and, art gallery and resource pantry.

Strengths:

Providing workshops on feminist issues allows for students to learn about feminism and how to advocate for themselves and women on campus. The Generation F* program provides a path to empowerment for both experienced feminists and young adults new to the beliefs and practices.

Having a lending library on-site allows for students to have access to education materials to supplement what they are learning through workshops and programs.

Access to a lactation/advocacy room provides a safe, convenient private space for nursing mothers to pump and express during their time on campus. In addition, this room is available for students who may be reporting Title IX incidents and need a safe place to do so.

The art gallery adds charm and character to the space while also allowing for recognition of feminist artists on campus.

The resource pantry allows access to health and beauty aids that students may need for various reasons, including home displacement and exhausted resources.

Challenges:

Due the time that has been devoted to advocacy and prevention education, less time has been spent developing the Generation F* program.

The lactation/advocacy room is currently used for two very different purposes. Use of the space is often in demand by more than one party at the same time.

The art gallery space is limited to various walls in the center as opposed to having a dedicated, labeled space.

The resource pantry takes up space in the center and also requires staff assistance to access. In addition, staff must manage drives to restock the shelves on a consistent basis.

Recommendations:

Once a new staff position is added to the center, part of the job duties of that position may be to oversee the Generation F* program. This will allow for increased oversight that the Director and Advocacy and Program Specialist cannot provide at this time. This position may also provide supervision to the students who might manage the program.

Options for dividing the lactation/advocacy room into two separate rooms should be explored. This will allow for greater privacy for students attempting to access the space. Dedicated lactation space should be available for that purpose if nursing mothers are dependent upon it to remain on campus for classes. At the same time, advocacy space should also be readily available as crisis support is difficult to schedule as the need is unpredictable. If dividing the room is not feasible, another space in the Union Building should be considered to create a lactation room. Such an initiative could be led by student government representatives such as the Nontraditional Senator or others.

The art gallery space is suitable with the current center location. However, a student staff position is dedicated to maintaining the space and soliciting art. This may not be the best use of limited human resources for a space and program that are small.

The resource pantry also uses student staff. With the existence of community resource pantries, as well as Weber's own Weber Cares Food Pantry, it may be a better use of space and resources to discontinue the pantry in the center. The hall space may be used for small workstations for student workers. In addition, referring students to resources on-campus as well as off-campus will assist staff in finding time to focus on other initiatives. At a minimum, the WC could maintain a supply of feminine hygiene products and condoms to meet students' needs.

Leadership and Staffing

Professional Staff

The Women's Center has two full-time staff positions, the Director and Advocate/Program Specialist. At this time, these two positions manage the daily operations of the center, all advocacy, prevention education, outreach, training and programming. With the assistance of several student staff, these two positions serve a campus where women make up 53% of the student body.

The Director is responsible for providing supervision and oversight for all of the student workers in addition to providing all of the Safe@Weber training to the campus. In addition, she is responsible for daily center operation. The Director also serves on multiple committees, taskforces and boards on and off campus.

The Advocate/Program specialist is responsible for providing advocacy services to the entire student body in addition to delivering prevention education programming. In addition, this position also requires regular contact with community partners which involves serving on boards and being part of various taskforces and coalitions.

Strengths

Both the Director and Advocate/Program Specialist positions are currently filled by two passionate, dedicated staff members. As a result, they have dedicated themselves to working 50-60 hours on average to meet the goals of the center. Their passion for advocacy, prevention and social justice is an asset to Weber State. This view seems to be consistent amongst campus and community partners as well as students.

Challenges

Two staff positions and a fairly new part-time administrative support staff position are inadequate to meet the growing needs of the center. The Advocate/Program Specialist position combines the work of what is often two positions in other Women's Centers nationwide. Some centers have one or two positions but serve a smaller student body.

Recommendations

Another staff position is crucial to continue the work of the center. With colleges and universities required to be Title IX compliant, prevention education and advocacy response are more important than ever.

Adding a Program Specialist or Outreach Coordinator position would allow for the WC Advocate to focus on advocacy and supporting the Safe@Weber initiatives that require collaboration with the community on a regular basis. This position may also be able to assist the Director in providing oversight to the invaluable student staff who coordinate much of the center programming.

Student Staff

According to the WC organizational chart, there are 16 student staff positions in the center. Five of these positions are grant-funded and therefore will end at the end of this academic year. The remaining 11 positions consist of various coordinator and leader positions which are both hourly and tuition waiver

funded for 10 to 20 hours per week. According to the organizational chart, 7 student positions are vacant at this time.

These student staff are participants in the leadership initiatives of the center. Student center users often become student staff of the center.

Strengths

The students that currently work in the center report a high level of satisfaction fulfilling their current duties. They find meaning and benefit from the professional development that comes from opportunities the center provides. The students are also responsible for much of the research conducted by the center. The student staff are also invaluable in delivering relevant programming to the WSU campus. Without the students, the Director and Advocate/Program Specialist would not have been able to deliver the many quality programs that they have throughout the academic year.

Challenges

Hiring, training and supervising so many student staff is time-consuming for the Director. To ensure a quality leadership experience for a dozen or more students, weekly supervision is required for each position. This may be difficult to maintain, especially with the increasing demand for advocacy services. Also, hiring student users may create a dynamic in which the student becomes more emotionally dependent upon the professional staff, making boundaries regarding time and guidance difficult to maintain.

In addition, tuition-waiver funded positions create a unique problem when compared to hourly student positions. Students receiving tuition waivers receive funds applied directly to their student account at the beginning of the term. At times, receiving the funds before any work is performed has led to some students inconsistently dedicating hours to the center.

Recommendations

The student leader positions, funded by tuition waivers, may be eliminated to create a more equitable environment for all students. If student positions are all hourly, the expectation for work is more consistent. If the tuition waivers remain, the 10-hour leader positions may be combined into 20-hour positions to allow students the opportunity to become more committed to the center and complete more projects. Positions such as the Resource Pantry WC Leader and the Art Gallery WC Leader may be combined into one position with a different focus should the pantry be discontinued.

With the large percentage of non-traditional students at Weber State University. It may be helpful to have a student leader or coordinator position which focuses on programming and meeting the needs of this population.

In addition, hiring student users may not be ideal if the students are continuing to deal with the very issues that brought them to the center. It may be better to put together a hiring committee to hire students across the university who may not have been users in the past.

Financial Resources/Budget

At this time, the current Women's Center budget includes salary, wages and benefits dollars along with funds for programming.

Strengths

The Haven program, through EverFi, allows for online training for Weber students. This program allows for educational content to be delivered to more students than the professional staff of the center can train at this time. The budget for this training, along with additional dollars approved by the President's Council, is housed and overseen by the WSU Police Department.

The professional staff of the WC successfully applied for and received a grant from the Utah Department of Health which allows for additional student staff and programming.

Challenges

A full-time professional staff position would require additional budget dollars that are currently unavailable in the WC budget.

The one-year grant from the Utah Department of Health has been secured for one year. Once the grant period ends, the student position and programming dollars from the grant will no longer be available.

Safe@Weber, the campus-wide violence prevention program which assists Weber State with required Title IX training for the university, hasn't been funded at a level sufficient to support the programmatic goals.

Recommendations

Another staff position is crucial to continue the work of the center. Because colleges and universities must be Title IX compliant, prevention education and advocacy response are more important than ever. Providing funding for this position for the 2017-2018 academic year would allow for Title IX compliance.

Although securing a full-time staff position is the most crucial goal, the programming necessary to ensure the success of Safe@Weber requires financial support. If additional funding is necessary, the WC staff may submit a programming budget proposal to include programming for the 2017-2018 academic year

Facilities, Equipment, and Technology

The Women's Center currently shares space with the Nontraditional Student Center. This has been the case for several years as the two centers have both grown.

The WC currently has workspace for a limited number of student staff.

Strengths

The space shared by the Women's and Nontraditional Student Centers is warm and inviting. It appears that both centers have made an effort to create a welcoming environment for student users.

Challenges

The mission of the WC has changed significantly over the past two years. Title IX requirements have shifted the focus of many similar centers across the country. As a result, more time and resources are spent on violence prevention education and advocacy services.

The Nontraditional Student Center continues to serve the needs of nontraditional students, which often include students who might also receive services at the Women's Center.

Although the two centers often serve the same students, the goals of the two centers are no longer in alignment. As a result, the shared space has led to tension due to discussion of topics that are inappropriate for mixed company (adults and children for example). In addition, with increased demand for advocacy services, more students are accessing the WC to report Title IX offenses than in past years. Students in these circumstances would benefit from more privacy than the current setting provides.

The WC relies heavily on student staff to fulfill the mission of the center. These students currently don't have adequate work spaces to perform their work duties. They also do not have adequate technology hardware or software.

Recommendations

In order to protect the privacy of students accessing the Women's Center to report Title IX/ Clery reportable offenses, a separate advocacy office is ideal. The current configuration creates a barrier to reporting as survivors have to navigate a shared space that may be overwhelming with the lounge and high traffic areas. It is preferable that the WC and Nontraditional Student Center no longer share space to allow for privacy, the free expression of views and ideas, and a clear distinction between the two departments.

If separating the two offices is not physically possible at this time, reconfiguring the existing space may be possible. This reconfiguration should allow for a separate lactation and advocacy room, adequate workspaces for student staff and a more discreet method for survivors to access advocacy services.

Both the Women's Center and Nontraditional Student Center are unable to expand programming due to constraints created by the space they share. Both programs would benefit from the separation. Although physical separation is ideal, both centers will continue to collaborate to provide support to users who use both centers.

Providing adequate workspaces for students, with modern computers equipped with software to meet the needs of the center, will allow for the student workers to more effectively meet the needs of the students the center serves.

Ethical and Legal Responsibilities

The Women's Center is currently designated as a non-confidential reporting location. The professional staff of the center must report any knowledge of Clery reportable incidents to the campus Title IX Coordinator.

The WC utilizes various software programs to manage data collection and maintenance in their office.

The EverFi Haven program is utilized to deliver training materials to WSU students. At this time, program completion is not mandatory.

Strengths

The WC being a non-confidential reporting location ensures that the university is aware of Title IX violations and Clery reportable offenses in a timely fashion. This allows the Title IX Coordinator and Weber State University Police to assess the safety of the campus and take necessary action to ensure community safety.

The WC staff have been resourceful in using various programs to meet most software needs in their office.

The EverFi Haven program has been distributed to students which allows for additional access to educational materials. Program completion that is not backed by a hard mandate may be more appealing to non-traditional students who may not relate to the program content.

Challenges

Many survivors will not report a Title IX offense if they are reluctant to have their experience shared with authorities. The Women's Center would appeal more to survivors if it is designated as a confidential advocacy center. At this time, no colleges and universities in the state of Utah have Women's Centers designated as confidential. This fact creates a barrier to reporting, especially in cases involving domestic violence in which the survivor's desire to protect their family may be more important than creating accountability for their partner. As a result, many survivors won't come forward and benefit from the support the center can provide.

Utilizing multiple software programs creates confusion and additional data entry across multiple platforms.

EverFi Haven program completion is not required. The absence of a hard mandate means that students may choose not to complete the educational program and therefore not be exposed to the information contained therein.

Recommendations

Although designating the center a confidential advocacy center might be ideal for survivors, doing so does not appear to be in compliance with Utah State Law. In addition, some key stakeholders at WSU are not in agreement that this change is proper, ideal or in compliance with Clery. As a result, it is recommended that students desiring confidentiality continue to seek support from the Counseling and Psychological Services

Center. In addition, it is recommended that WC advocates continue to partner with community advocates who can ensure confidentiality at this time.

It is recommended that the WC receive the funding to purchase a software license for one software program that they can use for multiple purposes. It is recommended that the WC research software that will meet their needs and add this expense to their budget proposal for the upcoming academic year.

Although a hard mandate is ideal for the EverFi Haven program, it may not be realistic for the student body at Weber State University. It is recommended that student employees, leaders and athletes be required to complete the training. The rest of the student body should be strongly encouraged to complete the programs, with incentives provided, but not required. Although all students benefit from having access to this information, respect must be paid to the fact that the majority of WSU students are well into their adult years.

Summary

The Women's Center is an invaluable resource at Weber State University. It is staffed by passionate professional staff and students who are addressing the needs of many at-risk students. The shift in mission has allowed for more prevention education, outreach and advocacy. The newest initiatives of the center, especially Safe@Weber, have contributed to a safer campus environment for all.

Campus and community partners support the goals of the staff of the center. They admire the integrity, passion and work ethic of the current Director and Advocate/Program Specialist. At the same time, concerns for the health and well-being of both staff members was brought to the attention of the review team time and time again. There is concern that the staff are working too hard to meet ambitious goals that exceed what is reasonable and expected of the center. There is concern that both of them are doing too much, too fast, putting both of them at risk for burnout. It is the hope of the review team and stakeholders alike that a staff position be added to the center as soon as possible.

The current mission of the center focuses on educating the community and responding to the needs of survivors of violence. In addition, the emphasis on social justice is moving the center in a different direction with new goals and initiatives. At the same time, the majority of the students at Weber State continue to be nontraditional students. Many of these students have responsibilities that include caring for children and families. With the new mission of the center, concerns have been expressed that "the pendulum may have swung too far" and that user demographic changes may be partly due to alienation of traditional users. Although the Nontraditional Student Center continues to provide some of the services discontinued by the Women's Center, it may be useful to look at targeted programs for single-mothers and nontraditional women who may align with feminist and social justice ideals in different ways.

It is important to remember that the Weber State University student body is a unique one made up of a majority of students who are nontraditional and part-time. Although Women's Centers across the country are focusing more on Title IX compliance, social justice and prevention education and outreach, it is important to meet the students of Weber State where they are.

The staff of the Women's Center have done very admirable work and their progress cannot be denied. With continued support from the university, it is clear that the center will continue to provide impactful

programs and services. At the same time, the staff must be careful to practice self-care, including maintaining healthy boundaries, while modeling these behaviors for their students.

Although confidentiality might be ideal at the Women's Center, requesting it at this time is another example of advocating for change at a pace that the university may not be ready for. In addition, designating the center a confidential resource may lead to an increase in reporting numbers which may be difficult to manage with the current staffing structure.

Simply having a Women's Center demonstrates that Weber State University is aware of the unique needs of women students. By continuing to fund this department, the Division of Student Affairs is committing to the advancement of women that is crucial at this time. Complying with Federal laws while meeting the needs of a changing student body can be challenging. We hope that the observations and recommendations provided in this Site Review Summary Report will help the WC achieve their goals.