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A Message from the Vice President
September 20, 2013

It’s been a busy year with the revamp of the Division of Student Affairs’ Mission, Vision and Strategic Plan. We kicked off a Division-wide update of our Strategic Plan for 2013-2018 at the beginning of 2013. The goal was to create a working “road map” for Division-wide and departmental initiatives for the next five years.

I asked members of the Student Affairs Leadership Team (SALT) to review the previous plan. Based on their suggestions, we reduced the number of strategic goals from seven to five and worked to clarify them.

For the next several months, a dedicated group of staff members from across the Division worked to involve as many staff people as possible in a discussion about these goals and then came together to write drafts.

Thank you to Brooke Bulow, Chris Burnett, Phil Butler, Edna Domínguez, Jennifer Hammat, Susan Hochman, Sarah Key, Megan McMillin, Nicole Olmeda, Susie Smith, Gale Stuart and Mark Zentner for all of their hard work creating multiple drafts incorporating feedback from SALT, departments and individuals. The group brought drafts to the SALT meetings for comments, questions and concerns. We then refined the product and finalized it with the blessing of SALT.

Throughout the process we asked ourselves, "What should our Division 'look' like five years from now?" “How will we be better than we are now, what will be new, what will be different, what might be gone?” We don’t have answers to all those questions but we now have a road map to help us find our way there.

These goals, outcomes and action steps will help us do, evaluate and improve our work. They tie into the university’s Core Values and strategic mission to increase our four-year graduation rate to 70 percent by 2016. The university faces challenging times and difficult decisions. But difficult times provide the opportunity for us to determine what is most important to our work and be innovative.

The most important part of all? This Strategic Plan is for every staff person within our Division. Each job contributes to the advancement of our goals. Not all staff members will find themselves or their work in every single action step. However, every goal should have something to guide each staff member’s decisions in the coming months and years.

With this road map, I look forward to working with you to accomplish these goals during the next five years.

Gage Paine
Vice President for Student Affairs
The University of Texas at Austin
Mission

As EDUCATORS, we support students throughout their university experience by providing the best and most innovative programs, facilities and services.

Vision

To be a LEADER in the creation of a campus culture that engages all students and inspires them to change the world.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD
Core Values
The Division of Student Affairs is guided by our commitment to students via the university’s core values and code of conduct.

LEARNING: A caring community, all of us students, helping one another grow.
DISCOVERY: Expanding knowledge and human understanding.
FREEDOM: To seek the truth and express it.
LEADERSHIP: The will to excel with integrity and the spirit that nothing is impossible.
INDIVIDUAL OPPORTUNITY: Many options, diverse people and ideas, one university.
RESPONSIBILITY: To serve as a catalyst for positive change in Texas and beyond.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD
Strategic Goal 1

Improve transition to college and support and promote student success through graduation.

UT Austin’s core purpose is “To transform lives for the benefit of society.” Student Affairs shares in this purpose by providing programs, facilities and services that engage students in opportunities for personal development, and is committed to working with all students throughout their entire university experience.

Outcomes/Action Steps

1) Student Affairs will play an integral role in students’ successful transition to UT Austin.
   a) Partner in the implementation of UT Austin’s Enrollment Management initiatives.
   b) Partner in the implementation of the programs related to improving the four-year graduation rate.

2) Student Affairs will interact with and positively impact every student at UT Austin.
   a) Create and promote opportunities for student engagement.
   b) Create and promote opportunities to improve wellness and enhance safety.
   c) Partner with the Graduate School to increase engagement with graduate students.

3) Student Affairs will play an essential role in academic success for students.
   a) Collaborate with other areas in developing programs that support academic success and graduation.
   b) Develop a long-term assessment plan to measure impacts of Student Affairs programs and services on student success.
   c) Develop opportunities for student research and academic partnerships.
Strategic Goal 2

Create a shared culture that values and includes all students.

Two of UT Austin’s core values are “Learning – a caring community, all of us students, helping one another grow” and “Individual Opportunity – many options, diverse people and ideas, one university.” Student Affairs has an important role in the creation of a caring, inclusive university culture.

Outcomes/Action Steps

1) Students will feel they belong at UT Austin.
   a) Promote easy-to-access ways to capture student voices and concerns.
   b) Develop programs that facilitate student involvement (i.e., HornsLink).
   c) Support programs that engage diverse populations, especially underrepresented students.
   d) Provide opportunities for students to showcase their involvement and ways they have contributed to the campus.

2) Students will benefit from the diversity of campus life.
   a) Create and promote opportunities for intercultural dialogue.
   b) Implement programs that create opportunities for students to engage with the diverse UT Austin community.
   c) Provide staff training that will include both the importance of inclusion and diversity and ways to integrate these practices into our work.

3) Student Affairs will develop a defined culture of excellence that supports individual students.
   a) Define the “culture of excellence” for the Division.
   b) Implement a Division-wide culture of excellence.
Strategic Goal 3

Enhance student experiential learning opportunities for civic engagement and the development of integrity and leadership.

Two of UT Austin’s core values are “Leadership – the will to excel with integrity and the spirit that nothing is impossible” and “Responsibility – to serve as a catalyst for positive change in Texas and beyond.” The work of Student Affairs creates opportunities for students to explore, develop and practice leadership and personal responsibility.

Outcomes/Action Steps

1) The Division will have unified principles for developing integrity and leadership.
   a) Define shared principles of leadership and integrity as well as a shared understanding of civic engagement.
   b) Implement Divisional programs and training and civic engagement opportunities that incorporate these principles.

2) Students will develop leadership competence and confidence to succeed.
   a) Practice Divisional principles of leadership, integrity and civic engagement through participation in programs, services and student employment.
   b) Provide opportunities for students to develop leadership competence based upon the Division’s unified principles.
   c) Provide opportunities for students to develop the confidence to succeed based upon the Division’s unified principles.

3) The Division will demonstrate how students benefit from experiential learning opportunities.
   a) Create and implement a Division-wide system to capture experiential learning data.
   b) Use data to improve these experiences and to promote the value of experiential learning.
   c) Highlight students’ leadership and civic engagement stories to inspire.
Strategic Goal 4

Provide programs, facilities and services that foster a culture of health, wellness and safety.

UT Austin is committed to student success at all levels. A campus environment that prioritizes wellness facilitates a student’s capacity to be an effective and engaged learner.

Outcomes/Action Steps

1) The Division is actively engaged in creating a healthy and safe campus environment.
   a) Develop policies, systems, environments, infrastructures and procedures that help create a healthy campus.
   b) Offer safe, secure and healthy facilities and environments.
   c) Participate Division-wide in the Wellness Network.
   d) Work with campus partners to share data and expertise to advance initiatives.

2) Students are prepared to maintain a safe and healthy lifestyle.
   a) Partner with students to change campus norms to promote health and safety.
   b) Promote healthy behaviors that contribute to academic performance and prevent physical and emotional health-related barriers.
   c) Increase use of wellness-related resources, services and opportunities.

3) The Division will provide programs and services that enhance students’ ability to succeed.
   a) Articulate a shared vision of health, wellbeing and safety.
   b) Evaluate and identify priority health and safety issues that impact students’ academic performance.
   c) Set campus benchmarks using national data.
   d) Develop and implement evidence-informed strategies to address these priority issues.
   e) Educate campus community regarding the relationship between health and students’ ability to thrive academically.
Strategic Goal 5

Develop new practices for asset and resource management.

UT Austin is committed to ensuring that the university remains affordable and accessible to all students. Student Affairs plays an essential role in this effort by providing excellent and cost-effective programs and services, efficiently managing our facilities and developing staff to their fullest potential.

Outcomes/Action Steps

1) The Division will foster a culture of excellence in resource management.
   a) Evaluate current assets, resources and revenue streams.
   b) Find ways to partner across the Division and university to increase efficiency.

2) The Division will create opportunities for fundraising initiatives.
   a) Create a Division-wide committee for development.
   b) Analyze existing fundraising strategies.
   c) Create and implement development and stewardship strategies for the Division.

3) Create an ongoing Division-wide education program for staff to help them develop to their fullest potential.
   a) Create a Division-wide committee for staff education, recognition and networking.
   b) Implement the committee’s recommendations.
September 20, 2013

Dear Student Affairs Colleagues,

I had the honor of serving on the writing committee of this Strategic Plan. One question that arose was "What is the difference between a strategic plan and an assessment plan?" As Director of Assessment for the Division, I would like to explain how both plans are different yet fit into our work.

A strategic plan leads to action, builds a shared vision within the organization, is externally focused, is based on quality data and requires openness to questioning the status quo. This 2013-2018 Strategic Plan provides a road map for getting to where the Division of Student Affairs wants to be in five years. It provides our leadership with direction for how best to spend our limited resources of time, personnel and funding so that we keep on that road until we reach our desired destination by the end of the allotted time.

Notably, a strategic plan is not an assessment plan. Assessment is a process devoted to improving student learning and development or optimizing processes. An assessment plan is a list of objectives and outcomes that help us know how well we are doing with these efforts. An assessment plan is not a road map. Instead it informs us of what we need to do to continuously improve student learning and operational efficiencies within our organization.

Then how do we know we have achieved our strategic goals?

The process of knowing this can be as simple as checking-off our action steps one by one as we complete or implement them. Also, starting with the 2013-14 academic year, we will include a new kind of objective in our assessment plans specifically for measuring strategic initiatives. In general, a strategic plan requires different measurement than an assessment plan, but we will want to ensure that we have quality data where necessary to validate our achievements. We as a Division will be keeping close tabs on how well we’re doing with implementing the strategic plan. Just as the process of creating the plan was inclusive, it is our shared responsibility to ensure we are achieving the 2013-2018 strategic goals.

Fortunately we have the five years ahead to work on this plan and will probably need most of that time because our goals are ambitious. With everyone’s help on a regular basis we will know when we have arrived at our destination and we will know how we got there.

Gale Stuart
Director of Assessment
Division of Student Affairs
The Counseling & Mental Health Center provides individual, group, and crisis counseling, psychiatric consultations, and prevention services that facilitate students’ academic and life goals.

Housing and Food Service provides first-class housing and food service on campus. They promote an inclusive, nurturing community for students to produce a comprehensive out of classroom learning experience that will foster life-long connections.

New Student Services spearheads orientation for thousands of freshmen and transfer students each year, ensuring they successfully transition to campus and register for classes. The department also leads programs to promote student engagement, academic success and student leadership opportunities throughout the year.

The Office of the Dean of Students facilitates student growth as a resource for student rights, responsibilities and ethical leadership. The office helps students and families navigate challenges with emergency assistance, veteran services and legal services, and advocates for active student life, supporting 1,100+ student organizations.

Recreational Sports offers a comprehensive array of facilities, programs, services, special events and student employment opportunities. This student-centric unit features six program areas – Fitness/Wellness, Informal Recreation, Instructional, Intramural Sports, Outdoor Recreation and Sport Clubs – and nine facilities with over 500,000 square feet of indoor and 40 acres of outdoor space.
Texas Parents serves all students' families who need assistance navigating university resources. The Texas Parents Association, the university's official parents' association, provides benefits to members that support their students' college experience.

The Center for Students in Recovery provides ongoing support for alcoholism and other drug addictions by offering students a pathway to recovery and academic achievement.

University Health Services is an on-campus accredited healthcare facility that includes general medicine, women's health, sports medicine, urgent care, allergy/immunizations clinics, nutrition services, physical therapy, a 24-hour Nurse Advice Line, radiology, lab services and a health promotion office.

The University Unions include four unique and multi-faceted facilities (Hogg Memorial Auditorium, Student Activity Center, Student Services Building and Texas Union) as well as a vibrant student organization. They provide a wide array of student services, leadership development opportunities, study and event spaces, and food venues to enhance the student experience.

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