Student Affairs Program Review

Guidelines Manual

2006-2007
Student Affairs Program Review is part of the institution’s overall planning process. It is to be viewed as a critical self-study designed to systematically review the achievement of a program’s purpose and goals.

Signatures:

Director

Vice President, Academic and Student Affairs

President
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STUDENT AFFAIRS

PROGRAM REVIEW GUIDELINES

Introduction

Part of the mission of Cape Cod Community College is to deliver educational programs and services which meet the diverse needs of the residents of Cape Cod, the Islands, and adjacent areas of Southeastern Massachusetts. The College's 2003-2008 Strategic Plan outlines specific goals for the Student Affairs area. Incorporated in the plan are a number of continuous improvement strategies including the use of a systematic program review process designed to assess the overall organizational effectiveness of each Student Affairs unit.

The Student Affairs Program Review Committee, including the Dean of Student Development and Enrollment Management, the Dean of Learning Support Services, and the Dean of Academic Research and Advanced Studies, met throughout winter 2004 developing procedural guidelines, framing important questions to be addressed in the unit self-study, clarifying processes for peer review, and developing a review timeline.

The group drew from various established program review models to help shape a process for its use. These models included the Northwestern Program Review Procedures, the Baldrige Education Criteria for Performance Excellence, and the Council on the Advancement of Standards review criteria. The recommendations of the Committee were discussed with the College's Institutional Research and Planning Committee. Drawing from these institutional/agency models, measurement criteria for evaluating organizational performance in Student Affairs units was developed.
Purpose of Program Review

Program review is time consuming for units as well as for the faculty, staff, and students involved in the process. In light of these costs of time and resources, it is important to emphasize the positive effect the review process is expected to have on Student Affairs planning, decision-making, overall performance, and stature within the College. As units become more familiar with the review procedures, it is anticipated that they will value their use and the benefits derived from the process. Program review provides Student Affairs an opportunity to:

1) examine the current programming, services, directions, and organizational efficiency and resource capabilities of a unit;
2) validate strengths;
3) identify opportunities for improvement; and
4) achieve high-level performance results while also serving as an important mechanism for communication within a unit and between a unit and central administration.

The objectives of program review are to:

• Assess how well a unit performs in relation to its objectives, College priorities, and Student Affairs’ goals and strategic initiatives;
• Encourage strategic thinking about a unit’s plans for the future;
• Define ways, primarily within existing resources, that a unit can continue to improve in the quality of its programs, services, activities, and operations;
• Provide evidence of the excellence and effectiveness of a unit’s programs, activities, services, and operations;
• Determine the extent to which a unit has managed its resources in an efficient and effective manner;
• Evaluate the extent to which a unit has successfully addressed student learning and development outcomes and/or business and service outcomes; and
• Identify obstacles that inhibit a unit from achieving its desired goals and develop ways in which these obstacles can be managed.

Principles of Program Review in Student Affairs

Fundamental to the success of program review is the use of a core set of principles that serve as important criterion for our work.

Principle #1: The primary reason for conducting program reviews is to ensure the continuation of high quality programs and services in Student Affairs and to make sure that our offerings are central to the role and mission, overarching goals, and priorities of Student Affairs and the College.

Principle #2: What can be gained from the process of reviewing programs and services is as important for attaining program quality and effectiveness as is the report or conclusions derived from the reviews.

Principle #3: All Student Affairs units contribute to the work of the division and therefore will be a part of the program review process.

Principle #4: It is important to establish a safe climate for inquiry as we do our program reviews. Participants need to experience a sense of trust and confidentiality in the review process knowing that sensitive information will not be shared or reported publicly.

Principle #5: Broad faculty, staff, and student participation in the reviews is essential in order to gain important insights and ideas for improvement as well as a broad recognition and understanding of unit strengths.

Principle #6: To reduce unnecessary duplication of effort and help ease the overall workload of preparing for agency/external entity accreditation, those units which are
accredited or reviewed by an agency/external entity may substitute that accreditation/review self-study for this review process.

**Principle #7:** Although reviews are unit-specific, it is important that the initiative be financially supported and administered centrally through the Office of Student Affairs. This central office commitment to evaluating its programs and services sends a strong message about the importance Student Affairs places on program review as a continuous improvement strategy. Central office coordination of reviews also ensures consistency in the review process and monitoring of results.

**Unit Self-Study/Report**

The Unit Self-Study provides the basis for the entire review process. It represents a valuable opportunity for the unit to make a candid assessment of itself and to consider future directions and options that would strengthen it. Each unit will prepare a self-study report using as its framework the Student Affairs performance criteria/questions and any other questions and/or topics that have been identified for study. These criteria are intended to provide a structure for the review and should be augmented by whatever information is deemed necessary to create an effective self-assessment.

In general, the purpose of the Unit Self-Study Report should be to:

1) address how well the unit performs in relation to its objectives, institutional priorities, and Student Affairs goals and strategic initiatives;

2) define ways, primarily within existing resources, that the unit can continue to improve in the quality of its programs, services, activities, and operations; and

3) provide evidence of the excellence and effectiveness of the unit's programs, activities, services, and operations.

Included in the Unit Self-Study Report should be documents and other materials that will inform the External Consultant about the unit, including data on performance measures.
through which a unit’s success in meeting its goals can be determined. The Unit Self-Study Report should be shared with all staff of the unit and should represent consensus, or it should state the nature of differences in viewpoints before its submission as a final report. In general, the length of the narrative portion of the report should not exceed 30 pages (exclusive of appendices and vitae/resumes). The complete report (including appendices) should be submitted to the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs. Electronic transmission of the complete report is the preferred method. If electronic copies of all materials are not available, unbound print copies of these documents should be submitted.

External Program Review/Site Visit

The External Consultant, as an expert in the field, will be encouraged to evaluate the unit in its national context and provide insight and feedback on issues and trends particular to the unit operations being reviewed. The external reviewer will receive and be asked to study the Unit Self-Study Report/Documents in advance of the site visit. The site visit should span a 1-2 day period to allow sufficient time for the reviewer to meet with the Program Review Team, unit staff, administrators, faculty, students, and others, to visit facilities, and to meet with the administrators team to discuss points that will be included in the analysis.

At the conclusion of the visit, the External Consultant will meet with the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs and other College personnel to share initial observations. The external consultant will be asked to provide a written assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, operational practices, leadership, and opportunities for the unit within two weeks of the visit. This report will be sent to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs for distribution.
Writing of the Unit Program Review Report

The Program Review Team is responsible for preparing the final Unit Program Review Report using information from the unit self-study, its findings, and the External Consultant's findings. Appendix A outlines the key elements that should be included in the final Program Review Report. The Unit Program Review Report with the External Consultant's Report attached as an addendum, is then forwarded to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs.

Following the receipt of the report a meeting is scheduled with the Program Review Team, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, and members of the unit management team to discuss the findings and recommendations presented in the final review report.

Developing the Unit Action Plan

Following consultation with the Program Review Team, the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs, and the unit management team, the unit will develop a plan of action that addresses the recommendations outlined in the Program Review Report. The Unit Action Plan should specify proposed actions, implementation strategies, and who is responsible for carrying out each action. If there are review recommendations that the unit is not in agreement with, the action plan should acknowledge these differences in thinking and, where appropriate, present alternative recommendations.

The completed Unit Action Plan is submitted to the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs for review and approval. The Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs will circulate the action plan for sign-off by the appropriate parties (as determined by the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs) with signed copies of the Unit Action Plan distributed to the proper offices.
Implementing the Unit Action Plan

The appropriate Student Affairs area will evaluate progress on the Unit Action Plan via updates included in the unit’s annual budget report and annual year-end report.

UNIT SELF-STUDY

Creating an Organizational Profile

Your unit’s self-study begins with a description of your organization, including key information about the factors that affect how you operate and the major challenges you face. Provide a short narrative in response to each item and, where appropriate, include documentation in the self-study report appendices to further inform the reader.

1) Explain your unit’s mission, key goals, and key functions.

2) Highlight your unit’s core programs and services and the methods used to deliver them to students and other clientele. Identify the primary and secondary student user groups, other clientele, and/or market segments your unit attracts and serves.

3) Explain your unit’s organizational structure, including reporting relationships, distribution of responsibilities/authority, formal and informal lines of communication, and use of management and/or cross-functional work teams.

4) Describe the major technologies, equipment, and facilities that support your unit’s operation.

5) Describe the key collaborative relationships (within and beyond Student Affairs) that your unit is involved in and explain how these partnerships strengthen its capacity to:
   • advance student learning;
   • enhance the quality of services and programs provided; and/or
   • create greater operational efficiencies for the unit.
6) Describe your unit’s staff profile. Include a breakdown of the unit’s workforce by position type and staff diversity within each position category. In the self-study report appendices, list the qualifications required for the various position categories and include resumes of professional staff. Describe staffing changes over the past five years and future anticipated changes. Explain the circumstances that brought about these changes and how these changes have/will affect your unit’s operations and services.

7) In the appendices, showcase the contributions individual staff members make to the College’s academic enterprise (teaching, College committee work, etc.) and to their respective professions (publications, presentations, leadership roles in professional associations, etc.).

8) Provide a financial overview of your unit. Describe resource changes over the past five years and future anticipated changes. Explain what circumstances prompted these changes and how these changes have/will affect your unit’s operations and services.

9) Discuss the key program/service, operational, resource, and campus environment challenges your unit faces and explain how these conditions are and/or will be affecting unit performance.

10) Describe the overall approach your unit uses to maintain focus on organizational improvement.
Gauging Unit Performance

Student Affairs is comprised of a diverse group of units that vary in size, funding structure, student/clientele focus, and function. Acknowledging these differences is essential in considering each unit's role and the contributions it makes to Student Affairs and the College's success. However, regardless of the nature of a unit's purpose and focus, there exists a fundamental set of organizational requirements that are necessary for performance excellence and the attainment of desired/valued-added results. These criteria are presented here and will be used to gauge your unit's performance relative to standards of practice.

Category 1. Unit Mission and Strategic Position

1) How does your unit uniquely contribute to and advance the College's goals and objectives (Strategic Plan), and, more specifically, Student Affairs overarching goals and strategic plan initiatives?

2) What are the primary strengths of your unit, and how have these changed over time? Identify the principal factors that determine your success. What innovative programs/services/practices has your unit instituted that puts it out front in the "best practices" category? How, using existing resources, can your unit maintain and build on these strengths?

3) What aspects of your unit need the most improvement, and how have these changed over time? What needs to occur, primarily within existing resources, to successfully make these improvements?
Category 2. Strategic Planning

1) What overall planning methods does your unit use to prepare for the future? Who are your key participants in these planning activities? What are your short and long-term planning time horizons?

2) How does your unit collect and analyze relevant data and use this information in its planning and decision-making?

3) What are your unit’s key strategic goals and timetable for accomplishing them? How do these planned objectives address the challenges of your unit?

4) How do you develop and carry out action plans to achieve your key strategic objectives?

5) How do you make decisions about the allocation/reallocation of resources to make certain that your action plans are accomplished?

Category 3. Leadership

1) What leadership practices are used to establish and promote your unit’s values, short and long term directions, and performance expectations? How are employees helped to understand how their work contributes to the success of Student Affairs?

2) How does unit leadership promote a work culture that encourages staff empowerment, innovation, risk taking, and organizational agility to more effectively meet the needs of students and other clientele?

3) How does unit leadership encourage organizational and staff learning?

4) How does unit leadership address individual, organizational, and environmental conditions that inhibit goal achievement?
Category 4. Programs and Services

1) What are your unit's key program/service performance goals or targets?

2) How do your programs and services interface and support related activities/functions on the regional campuses?

3) How does your unit determine program/service requirements, expectations, and preferences of our primary/secondary student user groups and other clientele? How effective is your unit in using this information for purposes of planning, improving, and developing new programs and services?

4) How do you establish and maintain communication with students and other stakeholders? What key methods are used to assist students and/or other clientele in getting information about your unit's program and service offerings? Where appropriate, how do you help students and/or other clientele with similar interests connect?

5) What procedures/communication mechanisms do students/other clientele use to make a complaint? How do you ensure that complaints are resolved effectively and promptly? How are complaints aggregated and analyzed for use in improvement throughout your unit?

6) Are there any new program/service functions being planned by your unit based upon users' current or anticipated needs? What is the rationale for initiating these programs/services? How will these new program/service functions change current unit operations? How will these new initiatives be funded/operationally supported?

7) Do any programs/service functions exist that should be deleted from your unit's responsibilities? If so, how would such cuts be determined and how would their removal affect current operations?
8) Is there any overlap or duplication of programs/service functions with other units of the College? If so, why do these similar programs/service functions exist/what makes them different enough to justify both being sustained? Is there any place where unnecessary overlap occurs, and, if so, how could this be reduced?

Category 5. Diversity

1) How does your unit advance the College's/Student Affairs diversity agenda specific to:
   • Program/service offerings
   • Recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting staff
   • Student learning and development
   • Staff training and development
   • Outreach and engagement activities
   • Campus and work environments

2) In the recruitment, hiring, and retention of employees, how do you ensure that staff and student employees represent the diverse ideas, cultures, and thinking of the campus community? What evidence suggests that diverse viewpoints are nurtured and valued?

Category 6. Measurement, Analysis, and Information Management

1) How do you obtain and use comparative/benchmark data to stay current with your peers and/or competitors delivering similar programs/services? What does this information tell you about your unit's performance relative to your peers and/or competitors?
2) How do you determine students’ and/or other clienteles’ satisfaction and
dissatisfaction with your unit’s performance? How do you use this information for
improvement?

3) What student learning and development outcomes are associated with your unit’s
program/service goals? What assessment methods are used to determine
whether students have achieved these learning and development outcomes?
What assessment information and data are gathered? What do they say about
the extent to which learning outcomes are achieved? How has the assessment
of these outcomes contributed to program/service improvements?

4) What specific business and/or service outcomes are associated with your unit’s
operation? What assessment methods are used to determine whether these
outcomes are being achieved? What assessment information and data are
gathered? What do they say about the success of your operations? How has
the assessment of these outcomes contributed to program/service
improvements?

5) What measures and methods does your unit use to assess whether its diversity
goals are being achieved?

6) How does your unit monitor compliance with the laws/other regulatory
requirements that apply to your unit’s program and service responsibilities?

7) What formal and informal assessment methods and measures do you use to
determine staff well being, satisfaction, and motivation? How do you use
assessment findings to improve the work environment?

8) How does your unit make needed data and information available to faculty, staff,
students, and other stakeholders, as appropriate?
Category 7. Human Resources

When responding to these questions the term “staff” can refer to full time, part time, and/or student employees.

1) What criterion does your unit use to accurately determine the correct number of personnel that are needed to effectively fulfill its mission and meet the needs of those it serves?

2) How do the current qualifications and number of staff facilitate or impede your ability to be a high performing unit? If your unit is understaffed, what strategies do you use to deal with these shortages and continue to meet program/service demands?

3) What strategies do you use to recruit, hire, and retain staff?

4) How are staff performance expectations established, effectively communicated, and understood? How is staff performance evaluated? How is your staff being trained and developed to keep current with changes in service delivery, technology, and user expectations?

5) How does your unit reinforce high-performance and a student and/or other clientele focus?

6) How do you manage appropriate career progression for staff throughout your organization?

Category 8. Financial Resources

1) What is the funding model for your unit? How has your funding structure/level changed over the past 5 years? What factors have influenced these changes? Do you anticipate adjustments in this funding model based on the challenges you have identified in Item 8 of your Organizational Profile? If so, how will your
funding strategy change? What are the anticipated affects of this new funding plan on program/service delivery?

2) How are budget allocation/reallocation decisions made in your unit? What factors influence priority use of these resources?

3) How does your unit determine “value” and “value added” in your programs, services, and key functions using such indicators as:
   - The ratio between cost and quality;
   - Productivity/efficiency measures;
   - The availability of substitute services with equal or greater value;
   - An effective system of financial control and accountability within the unit;
   - Percentage of program/service funds derived from the General Fund;
   - The unit’s financial contribution (income generating potential) to the College and its own operating costs; and
   - Cost comparisons (based on comparable performance standards) with other units providing similar services.

Category 9. Facilities, Technology, and Equipment

1) How effectively do your unit’s current facilities/space and equipment support the work of your unit? How well do the related Student Affairs and/or other campus maintenance services support the work of your unit? What will your area require in order to keep pace with the future needs and expectations of students and/or other clientele? What strategies will you use to institute these changes?

2) How has technology been integrated into the program, service, and operating functions of your unit? How successful have these efforts been? How have you kept pace with the development of hardware, software, maintenance, and
training support? What are your projected technology needs for the future? What strategies will you use to address these needs?

Category 10. Outreach and Engagement

1) What strategies does your unit use to establish, maintain, and promote positive/collaborative relations with relevant campus and external individuals and agencies? How do these initiatives benefit the surrounding community?

2) What short and long-term goals has your unit set for itself in strengthening these types of relationships?

Category 11. Legal and Ethical Responsibility

1) How do you ensure non-discriminatory, fair, and equitable treatment of staff and constituents your unit serves?

2) What is your unit’s policy/strategy for managing student/other clientele and staff member confidentiality issues? How are students/other clientele and staff members informed of these practices?

3) How is staff trained to ensure that they are knowledgeable about the laws and regulations and professional ethics that apply to their respective job responsibilities?

4) What processes are in place for managing risks (regulatory, safety, legal) associated with your programs, services, and operations?

5) What program and service changes have occurred in your unit as a result of new laws/legal mandates? What cost/staffing/technology/facility implications have they imposed? How have these changes affected how your unit operates?
MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on this self-assessment, provide a summary of your major findings. Include in this write-up a candid evaluation of your unit's current performance, future directions, and a description of what you believe your unit needs to do to improve and be innovative in its thinking and actions. Based on this analysis, make recommendations on how your unit can best accomplish desired results.

Summary

Major Strengths:

Major Issues:

Recommendations:

Plan for improvement:

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Appendix A

Suggested List of Supporting Documents for Inclusion in a Unit Self-Study Report

- Mission, Vision, and Values Document
- Organization Chart
- Strategic Plan
- Previous Annual Reports (past 3 years)
- Previous Annual Budget Reports (past 3 years)
- Cost/revenue data (past 3 years)
- Assessment results/reports including:
  - Customer service surveys
  - Benchmark data
  - Data that measures progress of performance goals
  - Student learning outcomes data
  - Business/service outcomes data
- Professional staff resumes
- Summary of staff contributions to the College’s academic enterprise and their respective professions
- Addendum: External Consultant’s Report
Final Report Outline

The Program Review Team prepares the final Unit Program Review Report using information from the Unit Self-Study Report, and the External Consultant’s findings. The Unit Program Review Report provides an assessment of the unit under review and recommendations regarding future improvements.

The Unit Program Review Report will include the following elements:

- Evaluation of Mission and Key Goals: Briefly assess the degree to which the unit’s mission statement and key goals support the College’s Strategic Plan and Student Affairs goals and strategic initiatives. Evaluate the unit’s success in achieving its mission and key goals.

- Student Perception of Unit: Summarize student feedback regarding services provided and the quality of these services as obtained through student surveys, interviews, and/or focus groups. Discuss additional services students would like to receive from this unit, as well as any services that students believe could be discontinued. Provide the unit’s perspective on students’ perceptions.

- Use of Successful Organizational Practices: Assess the effectiveness of the unit’s processes and capacity for building and sustaining performance excellence.

- Evaluation of Resource Usage: Provide commentary on the appropriateness of resource allocations and use given the unit’s mission and role in fulfilling the College’s Strategic Plan and Student Affairs goals and strategic initiatives. Consider financial, human, space and equipment, and technology support in this commentary.
• Measuring of Performance Results: Address how successful the unit is in determining intended student learning and development outcomes and/or specific business and service outcomes, user satisfaction, financial performance, and other noteworthy performance results related to organizational effectiveness. Discuss the relevance of key performance measures the unit uses to track results.

• Recommendations: Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the unit. Discuss the key program/service, operational, resource, and campus environment challenges the unit faces. Provide concrete suggestions for improvement including ways to build upon current strengths, overcome weaknesses, and increase effectiveness and efficiency. Offer specific strategies for addressing the key challenges affecting the unit. Recommend budget adjustments, providing the appropriate rationale.