I. Departmental Mission and Role Within the College

A. Mission of the Program

The role of the Academic Advising and Disability Services (AA/DS) office within the college is to provide guidance to the overall advising process and to support the academic life of all Westmont students, including those with disabilities. Though there is some natural overlap between the conversations and functions within these roles, they do have distinct differences. In recognition of this, they each have a separate mission.

The mission of the disability services area is: to support, encourage and sustain the academic and personal development of students with disabilities and work towards greater recognition of differently-abled minds and bodies as aspects of the diversity in God’s kingdom.

The mission for the academic advising area is one of the goals to be pursued in the next assessment cycle.

B. Contribution to the College’s Larger Mission

The AA/DS program at Westmont has many connections within the broader mission of the college. As its overall goal, the AA/DS office is responsible for helping students of all intellectual capacities to fully integrate into and utilize the academic opportunities present within their college experience.

Within their academic program, students are encouraged to choose classes towards both their general education program and their major that will provide to them the personal development and intellectual competence we hope for our graduates. Since our advisors are faculty members in each department, every student has the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with their advisors that will aid in this process, as well as provide professional guidance and preparation for life after Westmont.

For those students with disabilities the AA/DS office assists them in taking full advantage of the educational opportunities present at Westmont. This is done through the modification of non-essential course requirements so that the students can fully learn and demonstrate their learning with minimal impact from their disability. Students with disabilities can be students in any class, so continual conversations with their faculty are essential. It is our goal that upon graduation these students will demonstrate a deeper understanding of how God created them, and be able to successfully navigate the new demands of life outside of Westmont.

C. Contribution to Student Life’s Goals

The AA/DS program at Westmont contributes to the Student Life office’s goals in a variety of ways.
An essential focus of the AA/DS office is to help students embrace and navigate change, especially within the area of academic advising. Once they arrive at Westmont, students are asked to take control of their education opportunities, and oftentimes students feel uncomfortable doing so. We work closely with the director of Orientation to make sure they have exposure to the general education program and their new advisor during their initial days on campus. We also work closely with the professors through our training of advisors so that they can be sensitive to their students needs, and with the resident directors to determine if there are students who are struggling with their academic adjustments. During the semester we continually work with the Office of Life Planning as an additional resource for students to determine who they are at this phase of their life, and where they would like to go in the future.

Our students with disabilities are also asked to navigate the change to a new method of accessing their educational accommodations, and to take charge in communicating those accommodations to their faculty. We work closely with the resident directors in this areas as well to determine if there are students with disabilities who seem to be struggling.

Another focus of the Student Life area is to help students develop a redemptive community. The director of the AA/DS program has been working closely with the Intercultural Programs director to coordinate programming activities for students on the topic of disabilities. Most recently, these activities have been times in which students can interact with the topic of disabilities as an aspect of the diversity of God’s kingdom. The goal is to allow students to gain empathy as well as skills to effectively engage with those who are disabled. The director of the AA/DS program is also a member of the Diversity Committee, and regularly meets with the committee to discuss issues and areas of diversity concerns.

D. Recent History
In the fall of 2004 the First Year Programs and Disability Services department was reorganized. In this reorganization the programs designed for our First Year students were integrated into existing departments within the Student Life department. The Academic Advising and Disability Services areas continued to be joined together, with direction given by the Provost’s office. It is these later two areas that are the focus of assessment and this six year report. The program goals designed for the First Year Programs area have been assumed by the Student Life department.

This report details the progress that has been made in the AA/DS area towards its program goals stated in the January 2004 proposal. Since the individual who originated the program goals is no longer with the college, and the original program goals were written prior to the departmental reorganization, they were modified slightly in the 2004-2005 annual report to reflect the new area of focus and based on the suggestions made by the Program Review Committee.

II. Program Information
A. Current Faculty Profile

The department has one faculty member, who is the director of the program, Michelle Hardley. She has a ¾ time 10 month contract. She was hired in July 2004 on an interim basis, and was made a permanent member of the department in November of 2004. She is a Caucasian female who holds a voice-no vote non-tenure faculty position. She teaches one 0 credit course on study skills (Successful Scholars Seminar – APP 002) each semester and has between 60 and 80 advisees during the year. She sits on the Diversity Committee and the Academic Retention Committee. In addition to her role as the director, she has also served as an adjunct faculty member in the Psychology department since the fall of 2002, teaching 1-2 classes each semester.

Please see appendix A for a copy of her updated Curriculum Vitae.

B. Current Support Staff Profile

Our current staff member is Beth Lemons, who was hired in the fall 2006 in a part time 12 month position. She also serves in a part time 11 month position as the secretary with the Theater Arts department. She is a Caucasian female.

C. Current Students Served

Because there are two different areas within our department, there are two main groups of students that we serve. See Appendix B for our annual distribution of Disability Service graduates and Appendix C for a distribution of the individual advisor assignment loads with reference to the distribution of the incoming advisees.

III. Programs

A. Student Learning Outcomes

Focus 1: Begin working with First Year and Returning students on taking ownership of their disability and the rights and responsibilities included therein. Students will be able to make appointments with the director at the beginning of the semester, they will deliver their accommodation letters to their professors and they will be able to follow the appropriate procedures for receiving accommodations (notetakers, proctored exams, books on tape/scanned books).

This goal is designed to address specific program needs so that students will be able to utilize the accommodations they are legally entitled to in an efficient and responsible manner for both themselves and the Disability Service office staff.

This goal is also designed to contribute to two institutional learning standards: Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement Standard for the sub area of Responsibility and the Diversity Standard for the sub areas of self-reflection, formation of knowledge and cross cultural communication skills. If students followed these steps 80% of the time, this goal will be met.

Focus 2: Continue working with students on academic probation to help them gain skills to succeed academically and take responsibility for their learning. Students on probation
will understand the process of being on probation, will know the policies governing when they can retake classes, will come to understand why they are on probation and make appropriate steps to remove themselves from probation.

This goal is designed to address specific program needs as well as to contribute to the institutional learning standard for Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement Standard in the sub area of Responsibility. If 70% of the probationary students were off probation during the following semester, and 75% of those students remained off probation for the following two semesters this goal will be met.

Focus 3: Students will begin to think of their major choice and class choices in light of their Christian calling. Students will have opportunities within their advising sessions to think about their major choice as being reflective of their Christian calling and the talents God has given them. Students will use this understanding to guide major decisions and career decisions.

This goal is designed to address the institutional learning standard of Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement for the sub areas of Interpersonal Competence and Christian Vocation. One measure of achievement was to see how receptive students and faculty were to exploring the idea of a “calling” within their advising sessions. Another measure of achievement was to determine how many students began making class and major choices based on their “calling” or “God given talents”. If the majority of our professors expressed using these concepts within their advising sessions, and a majority of the students used this information to guide their course or major choices, this goal will be met.

B. Assessment of the Outcomes

Focus 1: Begin working with First Year and Returning students on taking ownership of their disability and the rights and responsibilities included therein.

Introduction

Over the course of the assessment cycle, we have collected information on each of the students using our services and evaluated that data based on the number of years they had used our services. Most of our students will begin using services in their very first semester, but there are a handful of returning students each year that use our services for the first time. The data was more meaningfully analyzed by grouping students based on the number of years they have been with the Disability Services office versus the number of years they have been at Westmont.

Evidence

1. When the students met with the director of Disability Services. This data was gathered over the Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 semesters. The data is located in the student’s confidential Disability Services folders.
2. If they gave their letters to their professors regarding their accommodations. This data was gathered over the Fall 2005 and Spring
Focus 2: Continue working with students on academic probation to help them gain skills to succeed academically and take responsibility for their learning.

Introduction

Over the course of the assessment cycle data for the students on probation were continually collected. For each semester the students who were on probation (those having an overall GPA below a 2.0), and those that were suspended but later reinstated due to an appeal were given the option of meeting one-on-one with the director of Academic Advising and Disability Services throughout the course of the semester. During these meetings the students were asked to reflect on what parts of the previous semester were successful and unsuccessful, the reasons that they were on probation, and what things they would need to change to help them succeed academically. Also reviewed with them was the academic policy allowing students to repeat courses in which they received a grade of D+ or below. At the end of the first meeting they developed a realistic “game plan” as to how they would go about the current semester with some of these changes in place. The students were also informed of the GPA they would need to receive in the current semester in order to be removed from probation.

There was an additional follow up meeting during the midpoint in the semester for those students who received a midterm grade report to see if additional meetings or resources were needed.

Evidence

1. Academic transcripts from the students who were on probation. Because the goal was worded to track students over their probationary semester and the semester following, data was gathered and analyzed for the students on probation during the Spring 2005, Fall 2005, Spring 2006, Fall 2006, and the Spring 2007 semesters. The data is located in a file folder in the AA/DS office marked “Program Review”.

2. Contact record sheets from each student who was on probation and chose to meet with the director during the Spring 2005, Fall 2005, Spring 2006, Fall 2006, and Spring 2007 semesters. The data is located in a file folder in the AA/DS office marked “Program Review”.

3. If they followed the proper procedures for proctored exams and notetakers. This data was gathered over the Fall 2005 and Spring 2006 semesters. The data is located in a file folder in the AA/DS office marked “Program Review”.

4. If they followed the proper procedures for requesting books on tape/scanned books. This data was gathered over the Fall 2005, Spring 2006, Fall 2006 and Spring 2007 semesters. The data is located in a file folder in the AA/DS office marked “Program Review”.

Evidence
Focus 3: Students will begin to think of their major choice and class choices in light of their Christian calling.

Introduction
Information from the new faculty advisors for the fall 2007 semester was gathered via individual discussions to see if they are using the concept of God’s calling within their lives, and if students were making decisions on their classes and majors in light of their God given talents and gifts. Additional information from the new faculty advisors for the fall 2008 semester was also gathered.

Evidence
E-mails from the individual professors were collected during the fall 2008 semester. These e-mails came from the faculty who began advising in the fall of 2007. Additional e-mails were also received from the faculty who began advising in the fall of 2008. In these e-mails the professors were asked to respond to three questions:
1. Is the idea of God’s calling for them, or their God given talents something that you make a point to bring up in moments when it can be helpful?
2. Have students organically mentioned it when you have met with them?
3. Within the context of your meetings with advisees, did your advisees show any evidence of incorporating God's calling into their major or class choices?

This data is located in a file folder in the AA/DS office marked “Program Review”.

Evidence of Conversations
Conversations between the AA/DS assistant and the AA/DS director regarding the progress of each individual student and overall patterns for accessing services occur almost daily. The assistant and the director have met at the end of each year to break down the changes and needs that are seen, and to discuss the data collected for each year. The interpretation of these results comes from those conversations.

Annual updates to the program review process have happened on schedule and were submitted to our assessment coordinators/director of assessment as requested. In person conversations with the assessment coordinators/director of assessment happened on the following dates: 2/22/07, 5/17/07, 1/23/08, 7/28/08, 9/11/08. E-mails regarding the program review process occurred throughout the six year assessment cycle with Cheri Larsen Hoeckley (English), Laura Montgomery (Sociology) and Marianne Robins (History).

Program’s analysis, reflection and responses
Focus 1: Begin working with First Year and Returning students on taking ownership of their disability and the rights and responsibilities included therein.
Over the years, based on the data and conversations that were had with the students it was clear that one of the issues preventing them from following the procedures was that the office had an oral history, not a written one. There was no place for them to go to determine what the procedures were except to ask the office staff. One crucial need that was determined was to put things in writing, both for the current students we served and for any prospective students. With the projected increase in students with disabilities seeking higher education, this was seen as a proactive measure to ensure they were informed about our services.

The disability packets that were produced in the 2005-2006 year provided them with basic information on our program and the procedures they needed to follow when accessing services. They also provided standards for the documentation that was received into our office, allowing the director to properly determine accommodations with the students. They continue to be an excellent tool for prospective students and their parents, allowing them to review these materials prior to making their college decision. All of these materials are now also available on our Disability Services website.

Based on the data, the students began taking ownership of their disability in a variety of ways. See tables 1-7 for the breakdown per semester.

They made sure to respond to the invitation of the director to meet and discuss their needs early in the semester. There were some students who sought services mid year, but the majority of the requests came within the first two weeks of any term.

Students also continued to provide the accommodation letters to their faculty, and felt comfortable doing so. Most of the students we worked with over the last year developed more confidence in approaching their faculty with these letters as they continued taking courses at Westmont. For those who were not, we role-played what the encounter might look like. This is work that is continued with new students as they enter the program.

Students also continued to follow the proper procedures for requesting an exam to be proctored by our office. When there were problems, they tended to reside with a single student, and oftentimes their disability was one of the factors that hindered their ability to follow the necessary steps. Many of our students in recent years are choosing to add all of their exams to our schedule at the beginning of the semester, rather than updating us on a weekly basis. Either method is appropriate, but the latter method certainly helps with long term planning.
The students who needed their materials scanned into an audio format were found to be following the needed procedures to receive those materials. Over the course of this 4 year period the data collected and the conversations with the students were used to modify the requesting procedures. Specifically, the scanning request form was introduced, so that students could leave their materials in our office to be scanned without having a staff member present (since many students would come by after hours or when we were meeting with other students). Additional student workers were also hired to keep up with the demand for scanned materials. The return rate for the materials was changed from 3-4 business days to 1-2 business days to be more realistic with students need to have their copy of their text book.

The department did make progress towards this goal, and it was evident at all levels that students were becoming more familiar with the departmental policies and were able to follow them. These procedures were presented during the March 27, 2008 faculty forum for faculty comment and review.

Focus 2: Continue working with students on academic probation to help them gain skills to succeed academically and take responsibility for their learning.

During this review cycle, the meetings with the students on probation during the first semester of data collection had a slightly different focus than the following semesters. For the students who were on probation during the spring 2005 semester they were contacted at the beginning of the semester to see if they wanted to meet with the director to develop an academic plan for success. During this meeting the student reflected on what their struggles were during the previous semester and the director pointed out resources they could use to help minimize the impact of those struggles during the current semester. There was an additional follow up meeting during the midpoint in the semester for those students who received a midterm grade report to see if additional meetings or resources were needed.

During the fall 2005, spring 2006, fall 2006 and spring 2007 a targeted effort towards the students on probation began. These students were offered the opportunity to meet with the director to develop a plan for academic success. The content of the meetings varied from those that were conducted during the spring of 2005. During these meetings the students were asked to reflect on what things were successful and unsuccessful during the previous semester, the reasons that they were on probation, and what things they would need to change to help them succeed academically. At the end of the first meeting the students were also informed of the GPA they would need to receive in the current semester in order to be removed from probation and they developed a realistic “game plan” as to how they would go about the current semester with some of these changes in place.
For the students who were on probation during the spring 2005 semester, 69.6% were removed from probation, and of those students 73% remained off probation for the following two semesters.

For the students who were on probation during the fall 2005 semester, 73.3% were off of probation during the following semester. Of those students 69.2% were off of probation for the following two semesters.

For the students who were on probation during the spring 2006 semester, 63.9% were off of probation during the following semester. Of those students, 85.1% were off of probation for the following two semesters.

For the students who were on probation during the fall 2006 semester, 64.7% were off of probation during the following semester. Of those students, 100% were off of probation for the following two semesters.

For the students who were on probation during the spring 2007 semester, 57.9% were off of probation during the following semester. Three students who were removed from probation did not return for the Fall 2007 semester, and three of the students who were suspended were readmitted. Of the students who did return, 100% were off of probation for the following two semesters.

The data indicate a mixed result for this program review goal. In some semesters, the students were removed from, and remained off of probation according to the target goals. In other semesters they were close to it, but still below the target. In the last year, students were not initially removed from probation according to the numbers that we would like to see, but the retention of those who were removed from probation was excellent. An important point to note was a comment by the director of assessment that the overall target goals might have been a little too high for this goal, making them difficult to achieve.

In reviewing a similar program at San Diego Christian College, when at risk students were paired with a faculty mentor for regularly scheduled meetings, between 42% and 79% of the students had a semester GPA above a 2.0. In terms of retention of these students across the next semester, between 47% and 88% of the students were retained over the next semester. This may provide some evidence that the goals set above for our program are appropriate, but also provides encouragement that in most cases we are at or above this comparison sample.

In revisiting the data, it does appear that there were a number of things that worked well. Having regular meetings with the director was seen as a benefit by many students, and allowed for conversations of the different
methods that a student might use to get off probation. But it appeared that these conversations were not frequent enough to allow for student progress to be tracked. At most, students were asked to meet with the director two times, once at the beginning of the semester and once if they had midterm grade reports. Additional meetings occurred at the request and initiation of the individual students.

It was also not clear that the conversations yielded enough information for students to use during the semester. They knew the grades they needed to achieve and that they could retake courses, but they may not have had the skills to reach those goals.

During the spring 2008 semester the requirements for students on probation changed. The students were now required to attend the Successful Scholars Seminar (APP 002), a non-credit 6 week course that was designed to teach all students the skills necessary to achieve academic success. This is a course available to any student, not just those on probation. The course will now be taught in both the fall and the spring semesters. The students are also required to meet with the director for four one-on-one sessions (one each month) to discuss their individual academic progress. The hope is, with these additional resources, our student retention will consistently reach the goal levels set.

Focus 3: Students will begin to think of their major choice and class choices in light of their Christian calling.

Question 1: Is the idea of God’s calling for them, or their God Given talents something that you make a point to bring up in moments when it can be helpful?

Faculty 2007 – There were five new advisors during the fall of 2007. One advisor does not make a point to mention topics of faith and calling, but is open to it. Another does not make a point but has heard these topics from a few students. The third who responded said that his advisees “lamented” the absence of this in their advising sessions, and he has sought to intentionally incorporate it.

Faculty 2008 – There were six new advisors during the fall of 2008. One advisor has brought it up with his advisees, especially in the context of the common context courses and any electives they are considering. Another advisor has mentioned the topic with all four new advisees, and they were receptive to the idea. The third advisor says that she does bring it up on occasion, but in her experience students are not ready to handle questions of “calling” as first year students. In her observation there is some anxiety experienced when a new student does not know their “calling” but thinks that they should have everything planned out already.
Question 2: Have students organically mentioned it when you have met with them?

**Faculty 2007** – One advisor has an advisee that mentions this occasionally. Another advisor has had a few students mention these topics before in advising meetings. The third advisor said that students are very receptive and eager to talk about these issues. It is interesting for this faculty member to note that students brought up the issue and he has changed his advising to include this.

**Faculty 2008** – One advisor has many of his advisees that are interested in medical missions and they bring up the issues of school and faith often. Another advisor says students in the major often times have a heart for the poor, and all of his advisees mentioned topics of faith within their advising and their choice of a major. The final advisor indicates that students will mention preferences and desires, but not use the terminology of being “called” towards something.

Question 3: Within the context of your meetings with advisees, did your advisees show any evidence of incorporating God's calling into their major or class choices?

**Faculty 2007** – One advisor does not have evidence here yet, but the data collection process was a good reminder to him to include these issues in his advising sessions. Another advisor has had a number of students mention that they were praying about which off campus program to attend, and that they considered their talents and interests when choosing a major. This data collection reminds him that this is something he should include more regularly. The third advisor states that he believes students are using the fruits of these conversations to inform their class and major choices.

**Faculty 2008** – Because there is only 4 weeks worth of advising for these faculty and their students, it is hard to pinpoint any specific changes students have made in light of these kinds of choices. One advisor has had many advisees at least show a consideration of how they will meet the GE requirements in an intentional way in light of their calling from God. Another faculty member indicated that for many of their advisees their choice of Westmont as well as their choice of the major was made in light of their feeling for God’s calling for their lives. The final advisor indicated that students do make choices in light of this, but often it is based on the things they are not gifted in, so they move away from those areas.

**Next steps**

Focus 1: Begin working with First Year and Returning students on taking ownership of their disability and the rights and responsibilities included therein.

Based on the results of the assessment during this last assessment cycle, it is apparent that our students are able to incorporate themselves into the
program and begin advocating for their own needs. Based on these results, this program improvement goal is considered complete.

Focus 2: Continue working with students on academic probation to help them gain skills to succeed academically and take responsibility for their learning. Based on the results of the assessment, and the new modifications to the support services and instruction that are given to the students on probation, this program improvement goal will also be considered complete. Informal assessment will be continued to determine if the new procedures are effective, but this will not be part of the formal review process.

Focus 3: Students will begin to think of their major choice and class choices in light of their Christian calling.

Based on the results that were found with the 2nd year advisors, and the preliminary results that were found with the 1st year advisors, we can see that students have some tendency to think of the decisions they make as being in line with their faith and their talents even though they may not use the words of “God’s calling” or their “God given talents”. The data collected provide a good baseline for additional data to be collected in this area. In the next six year cycle there will be an increased focus on the academic advising program, and though this goal will not be an official one for data collection, it will be incorporated into a revised advising evaluation form to be used within the promotion and tenure review process.

C. Conclusion

Overall our students have great strengths in adapting to the changing rules and procedures that were introduced during this assessment cycle. They are, at different times and for different reasons, able to be deeply introspective about their talents, abilities, and weaknesses. They are also able, with and without guidance, to find adaptive strategies to their problems and weaknesses as they pursue their academics. It is interesting to note that the characteristics above relate to students with and without disabilities.

The majority of this assessment cycle was related to students with disabilities and those students on academic probation. Though these areas are important, and we gleaned strong data that helped improve this portion of the overall program and its effectiveness, the academic advising area was not given equal emphasis. Our third focus for this assessment cycle served to highlight the work that is still to be done within our academic advising program to ensure that it is yielding the kinds of outcomes we want for our students.

IV. Student Life and Academic Programs

Over the years a number of conversations have happened between the AA/DS department and the Student Life department. For the last two years, at the beginning of each academic year, the director of the AA/DS program and the VP for Student Life have had a meeting to discuss ways in which the AA/DS program can help to support the work that those in Student Life are doing.
These conversations have yielded some additional programming elements that will begin in the fall 2008 semester. Specifically, mention was made that there needs to be additional points of contact with students outside of the advising relationship in which they receive academic support. These could include some of the following:

- Study sessions for some of the key courses first year students are taking (which Michele Mollkoy began in the 2007-2008 school year),
- Additional funding for large group tutoring sessions for courses that first year students struggle with (which was reiterated to the professors of those classes in fall 2008),
- Small group presentations or talks on academic areas of concern (began in the spring 2008, may be expanded and a regular feature during the 2008-2009 year)
- The presence of the director in the dining commons during the registration times to field general questions that students are concerned about.

These are just some of the topics that were explored in this meeting. The hope is, with these additional points of contact, students will learn more about their general education program, how to choose classes towards their calling in life, and how to be successful in the courses they choose to take.

In addition to the meetings with the VP for Student life, the director also met over the course of these years with Michele Mollkoy, the director of First Year Experience and Special Programs as well as Angela D’Amour the director of Campus Life. Through these discussions, we learned that other students were concerned about the nature and content of their advising relationships, and wanted to do something to change the culture of advising on campus. During the 2007-2008 year these students joined together and lead focus groups with some of their peers to discuss their perceptions of the advising program. Interesting data was gathered that will allow us to focus our efforts on improving the advising culture here on campus during the next assessment cycle. The abbreviated results were shared with the faculty during the March 28, 2008 faculty meeting.

V. Resources

Please see Appendix D-I for the budget from the last 3 years.

Due to the Datatel implementation and the use of Vendorlink for fiscal management, we do not have data for our accounts beyond 2006. Any data prior to the 2004-2005 school year would be invalid, as the account numbers and budgets were reorganized with the creation of the new Academic Advising and Disability Services office.

A few things to note on the appendices:

- On Appendix D there is a $1,500 charge for the summer telephone advisor that does not show up on my view of the budget. It still comes out of the budget, but in the faculty/staff wage line item.
- On Appendices F and I there is no budget listed there. Due to the conversion from the AS400 system to the Datatel system, the 2005-2006 year was spent
working off of both systems. The budget amounts were in the AS400 system and the actual charges were viewed from the Datatel system. During the 2006-2007 year all of the data was then accessible via Vendorlink. Historically we have had small increases to our budget each year, between $400 and $600. We can estimate for Appendix F that our annual budget was around $7,100 and our annual budget for Appendix I was $7,500. The year represented by Appendix I was the only year we have been over our budget due to purchasing upgraded hardware for our students using books on tape as an accommodation. New players were needed, at the cost of around $1,000 each. Since we had students using this accommodation, we had no choice but to purchase them at that time.

- On Appendix G there is a credit applied to our area for Business Travel that should have been given to the Baseball program in Athletics. It was a data entry error that has not been corrected.

I don’t believe that we need any additional budget resources beyond the small increases we receive each year. It is important to us, especially in these financial times, to live within our means. Based on our spending over the last three years, we are able to do so without sacrificing the services that we provide to our students.

If anything, our office needs more by way of staffing so that we can expand our reach further across campus. With the current staffing levels, we are able to take care of the immediate needs of our students, but long term programming has been, and will continue to be an issue. It is difficult to balance the immediate needs of students across the semester, and still have the time to plan connections with Student Life, Residence Life, the goals we set for ourselves with WASC and maintaining a supportive network for the faculty. Continuing education for the director and her assistant would also be valuable, but is not possible given the workload demands. Most conferences are held during the school year, and since there is no additional staff to help pick up the day to day needs of the office, there is no good time to break away and dialogue with colleagues. This is an issue that the director of the program and the Interim Academic Dean are continuing to discuss.

VI. Conclusion and Long Term Vision

Over the last six years we have made great strides, especially within our program to serve students with disabilities and those who are academically struggling. A few of our major accomplishments are:

- Establishing a disability services website that all new and prospective students can visit to know about our program and our documentation requirements. Students and their parents have used the site and commented on its effectiveness.
- Establishing a disability services packet for all incoming students, which provides additional information about our program, the documentation requirements for each type of disability and intake forms which allow us to have current information on each student and their disabling condition for their files. Since the 2005-2006 school year students have been completing these documents, which greatly aids in the determination of what accommodations are “reasonable”.

• Establishing documentation requirements so that each student will provide the needed information and support for their disability. Since the 2005-2006 year this information has been online and in our disability services packet for students to use. Parents have commented on the ease of use, as they simply hand the sheet to the person evaluating the disability instead of having to memorize a list of tests to be conducted.

• Setting procedures for educational accommodations that work within the students needs and abilities and the office’s ability to provide them. This has greatly increased the efficiency within the department and made the process of receiving proctored exams and scanned materials much easier for the students.

• Continuing to work with our students on probation to identify why they are on probation and also give them the information and skills they need to be successful in their courses. Those students who took advantage of these additional resources have been engaged participants within the process and showed knowledge of some of the lesser known academic policies.

• A two year training program for incoming group of faculty on the topics of academic advising. First year faculty now spend 6 hours during the spring semester of their first year in a series of meetings learning about the conceptual, informational and relational aspects of advising prior to having any advisees assigned to them. Second year faculty spend an additional 4.5 hours in the spring of their second year learning about issues that their junior and senior advisees will encounter as well as hearing from the off campus programs department on how to advise students for a semester abroad. Faculty members have reported that the training has helped increase their knowledge of the general education program, the expectations of their advising role and has improved their ability to be effective advisors.

• Because of the results of this last assessment cycle, we now have a renewed determination to bring about improvements in the academic advising program during the next six year assessment cycle.

In another six years we would like to focus our assessment attention to the academic advising program. Specifically, we would like to take the perspective of a student and begin assessing the different points of contact that they have with our academic program, from admissions through graduation.

• Program Improvement Goal: Develop a mission statement for the Academic Advising program. This statement will give a focus to the department and help guide our vision through the assessment process.
  o Methods of assessment – Discussions with faculty members during and after the development to see if the mission statement is compatible with their vision of academic advising.
  o Student Learning Outcome – This goal could, as a side benefit, impact the Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement learning standard, for the responsibility sub goal.
Individual Contributions – Key faculty members with a heart for advising and administrators at the college will be an integral part of the development of the mission statement.

- Program Improvement Goal: Develop a robust Academic Advising webpage that students can use as a 24/7 resource. This website will include some of the common academic advising questions, as developed through interviewing current students across the educational levels at Westmont.
  - Methods of assessment – Small group discussions with students at the end of the web page development and throughout the year to see if the topics covered the present concerns of our students. Also keeping track of the number of times each web page is accessed in a given academic year.
  - Student Learning Outcome – This goal is designed to target the Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement learning standard, with the sub areas of Interpersonal Competence and Responsibility
  - Individual Contributions – Involvement with the IT department will be crucial here.

- Program Improvement Goal: Develop a robust Academic Advising webpage that faculty can use as a 24/7 resource for some of the common issues they will come across in advising students. This website will also include information on how to advise undecided students, as well as the development of an Academic Advising syllabus for all 4 years of a student's education. The topics chosen to be covered will be ones generated through discussion with our new and returning academic advisors.
  - Methods of assessment – Small group discussions with faculty at the end of the web page development and throughout the year to see if the topics covered the present concerns of our students. Also keeping track of the number of times each web page is accessed in a given academic year.
  - Student Learning Outcome – this goal is not attached to a student learning outcome, but has the benefit of ensuring that our faculty have the resources necessary to stimulate their development as advisors.
  - Individual Contributions – The involvement of the IT department will continue to be crucial here.

- Program Improvement Goal: Evaluate the process by which we inform students about our educational program. This goal will be to look at the way that we present academic life at Westmont to prospective students, and to plan redundancies into the progression so that students have multiple points of contact with consistent messages about our program.
  - Methods of assessment – With members of the admissions office, evaluating the written materials that are sent to prospective and confirmed students for consistency and areas where we can build in redundancies. Also evaluate the typical questions that are received from the admissions staff to see what their oral communication is regarding our academic programs and whether formal advising training is needed.
  - Student Learning Outcome – This goal will target the Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement learning standard, with the sub areas of Interpersonal Competence and Responsibility
• Individual Contributions – The directors of Admissions and AA/DS will be necessary, as well as the individual academic counselors in the delivery and data collection for this area.

- Program Improvement Goal: Examine the effectiveness of our advisor assignment methods. Is this the most accurate way to assign advisees, or is there a better method? Do our students stay with the advisor they are assigned? How many change to a major in another department? How well are we aiding our undecided students in making major decisions in light of God’s calling for their lives?
  o Methods of assessment – Looking at the ways other schools assign incoming advisees, examining student persistence with their initial assigned advisor, small group work with our undecideds to see if there are improvements that need to be made/additional training for the faculty that needs to occur, examining how many faculty currently speak of the major choice in light of the talents God has given their advisees, or making major decisions in light of God’s calling.
  o Student Learning Outcome – This goal will influence the Christian Orientation standard, with the subarea of practices, the Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking standard, with the sub area of collaborating, and the Diversity standard, with the subarea of process of making choices.
  o Individual Contributions – This goal will require contributions from other colleges to determine alternate advisor assignment methods, the records office for data gathering on advisor assignments, as well as individual conversations with faculty to determine if a sense of “God’s calling” is used effectively within their advising sessions.

- Program Improvement Goal: Revision of the tool for the assessment of advisor effectiveness. Because it is used within promotion and tenure review, and has alternative uses within the assessment process for the department, it is essential that our assessment method for advisor effectiveness yield accurate, valid information on the students perceptions of our advisors.
  o Methods of assessment – Small group work with students to determine if the new form allows them the freedom to express the information they want to share on their advising session. Examining how many students complete a revised form versus how many completed the individual form. Analyzing if the revised form yields additional details or richness from the students.
  o Student Learning Outcome – This goal will influence the Christian Orientation standard for the virtues sub area, the Critical-Interdisciplinary Thinking standard for the appropriate attitudes sub area, and the Active Societal and Intellectual Engagement standard for the effective participants sub area.
  o Individual Contributions – This goal will require contributions from other colleges for samples of their advisor assessment instruments, as well as potential involvement from the Campus Life office to help in the coordination of small focus groups of students.