Overview

The Student Life Department has continued to utilize an outside consultant (Russ Rogers, Ph.D., DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois) and regular staff retreats (June, 2004; October 6-7, 2004; October 27, 2004; May, 2005; October, 2005; December 2005) to focus on program review. These times have been very productive. The directors bring creativity and enthusiasm to each of our meetings. They have owned the process of program review.

The highlights of our progress during this time period are as follows:

1. Committed to an ongoing schedule of external reviews by colleagues from other campuses
2. Identified three primary mission-driven sought outcomes for our division.
3. Identified behavioral indicators of the sought outcomes and the linkages to the college’s learning standards.
4. Collaboratively created a new organizational structure to align departments, functions, and staffing to better meet the established mission-driven sought outcomes.
5. Established on ongoing commitment to share and critique assessment strategies and ways to use the results of these efforts

External Reviews

Student Life initiated the cycle of external reviews in the spring semester of 1996. Generally, 2-3 respected colleagues from other colleges are brought in to do an audit of one department. Materials, policies, services, programs, and all other aspects of the department are scrutinized. Focus groups also provide helpful feedback. Six external reviews have been conducted in the last 10 years.

Upcoming departmental reviews are as follows:

1. Intercultural Programs, 2006-2007
Mission-driven Sought Outcomes and related Behavioral Indicators

An Irvine Grant funded a retreat in June, 2000, that helped Student Life launch the ambitious effort to reshape our vision while examining departmental contributions to the six newly adopted learning standards. Student Life invited higher education consultant Dr. Russ Rogers to act as a facilitator over the last 5 years to continue the work of crafting a mission statement and identifying specific sought outcomes.

Our work with Russ during 2004-2005 produced the overarching sought outcomes for the Student Life Department as a whole, along with an effort to identify behavioral indicators for each outcome. Student Life, perhaps more than any other department being assessed on campus, has the role of assessing the less tangible and measurable aspects of what we hope for in our students: outcomes that involve spiritual and character development. Though these phenomena are difficult to measure, they are at the heart of what makes Westmont a distinctive college. We are pleased that our directors have asked to meet again with Russ Rogers during the summer of 2005 to continue our momentum.

Sought Outcome #1: ability and willingness to Embrace and Navigate Change

What BEHAVIORS would one need to see to infer/conclude that someone was able and willing to Embrace and Navigate Change?

1. activates and maintains commitment.
2. develops support.
3. manages and adjusts expectations.
4. maintains composure across varying circumstances and interactions.
5. prioritizes goals.
6. recognizes and challenges assumptions, biases and stereotypes—both individual and organizational.
7. demonstrates an ever-increasing repertoire of responses to life situations and people.

Sought Outcome #2: ability and willingness to take initiative to Add Value as a Leader

What BEHAVIORS would one need to see to infer/conclude that someone was able and willing to take initiative to Add Value as a Leader?

1. recognizes and utilizes current momentum.
2. takes initiative to ‘make better’.
3. makes decisions on the basis of reasoned values.
4. follows-through; delivers on commitments.
5. takes reasonable and appropriate risks.
6. engages patience while encouraging progress.
7. tolerates frustration.
8. monitors own performance/contribution to ensure that it is adding value.
9. builds skills (in self and/or others) to improve contributions.

Sought Outcome #3: ability and willingness to co-create a Redemptive Community

What BEHAVIORS would one need to see to infer/conclude that someone was able and willing to co-create a Redemptive community?

1. interacts openly, honestly and in a way that promotes dialogue and open communication.
2. treats others fairly and with respect.
3. seeks to understand the views and perspectives of others—particularly those who differ and/or are different from self.
4. demonstrates consistency between words and actions across varied situations.
5. accepts responsibility for consequences of actions (even unintended consequences).
6. avoids trading in rumors.
7. includes and affirms others (even others who differ or are different from self).
8. engages constructive conflict resolution.

From Mission to New Organizational Structure (May 25-26, 2005)

Another significant result of our program review process this past year has been the new organizational structure for the Student Life Division that became effective fall semester, 2005 (compare the attached Fall ’04 and Fall ’05 Student Life Organization charts).

The directors worked collaboratively, with a great deal of mutual trust, and little territoriality, to align our departments in ways that make the best use of our resources to achieve the sought outcomes.

One aspect of the restructure relates to our commitment to diversity as we seek to create a Redemptive Community. In part, as a response to the increased enrollment of students of color, the increased interest among students to join ethnic clubs, and an awareness of a growing complexity related to multicultural issues, Elena Yee (Director of Intercultural Programs) was given additional time to focus on these changes. In the previous departmental organizational structure, Elena was responsible for the cross cultural service-related organizations (Potter’s Clay, Spring Break in the City, and Emmaus Road). In the new structure, these organizations are now supported through our newly named Center for Leadership and Learning. The new structure has given Elena more time to examine ways to impact the entire campus. One example is her collaborative work with Stu Cleek, Associate Dean for Residence Life, on the upcoming Summit for Justice (Feb 3-4, 2006). The Summit for Justice will gather
students, staff, and faculty for the purpose of creating dialogue, ownership, and practical action regarding the challenges and opportunities of racial difference, white privilege, and redemptive community at Westmont.

Assessment Strategies and Use of Data

October and December retreats provided times for each director to share the assessment tools that are being used this year. The instruments were summarized using a template that emphasized the need to: 1) name the sought outcome, 2) describe the assessment tool, 3) define the benchmark or criteria for improvement, 4) document results, 5) interpret results, and 6) utilize results. Feedback was given to strengthen the instruments. The challenge is to hone these tools so we are more confident that they point toward the behavioral indicators that were developed from our work at the May retreat in Ventura. We expect to have gathered very helpful data to help guide our programming, policies, and services in the coming months that we will share in our five-year report.

Examples of improved or new assessment tools:
1. Resident Assistant Training
2. Survey on Perspectives and Orientation
3. Counseling Center Satisfaction Questionnaire
4. Health Services Satisfaction Questionnaire
5. Office of Life Planning Questionnaire
6. Leadership 1 Evaluation