

Higher Learning Commission
Self-Study Questionnaire/Report for Non-Instructional Units

Non-Instructional Unit: Project ASSIST

Individual(s) Completing the Questionnaire/Report: Nancy Amacher

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Describe in a paragraph or two what your unit does (i.e., the services it provides).
Project ASSIST is a fee for service program that provides support and resources to students with learning disabilities and ADD/ADHD attending the university. The services provided by the program include a summer transition program for incoming freshman, one to one tutoring based on learning strategies, time management, organization and study skills, drop-in tutoring, computers with assistive technology, study areas, workshops and study groups and academic advising. Services are provided by certified learning disability specialists and peer tutors.
2. Who is/are the constituency/ies you serve, and approximately how many of each constituency do you serve annually? (e.g., students, academic departments, classified staff, etc.)
 - Approximately 240 students are eligible for services and 75- 85 students use the services of the program each semester.
 - Outreach efforts through transition nights/college fairs and campus visits with approximately 175 high school students and parents
3. Overview and evaluate the adequacy of the human, physical, and fiscal resources your department deploys to serve students and meet other programmatic needs by answering the questions below:

Human Resources

Evaluate the general adequacy of the human resources (i.e., the # of employees (including student help) and their skills) relative to the unit's ability to serve the constituencies identified above and achieve other programmatic goals. Do this by assigning a number between "1" (completely inadequate) to "9" (completely satisfies needs).

7 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you've assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

The program currently has a part-time director and full-time assistant director, who are learning disability specialists. In addition, each semester the program hires 35 - 45 students in regular pay positions as peer tutors. The staff provides services on an individual basis, except for workshops or study groups. This individual assistance creates an environment that fosters learning and independence. The tutors participate in a training based on a learning strategies model and many continue with the program until they graduate.

Because the program director is part-time (33% in College of Education currently), it limits the time that could be spent on further program development, grant writing, research etc. The program assistant is an LTE position which results in turnover and decrease in support for the staff.

Physical Resources

Evaluate the general adequacy of the physical resources (e.g., office and storage space, supporting technology, other equipment) allocated to the unit relative to the unit's ability to serve the constituencies identified above and achieve other programmatic goals. Do this by assigning a number between "1" (completely inadequate) to "9" (completely satisfies needs).

8 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you've assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

The office space has been updated systematically over the past several years including new computers, tables, chairs, desks, new paint, carpeting and office space for the assistant director. This has resulted in a space that is inviting for the students to meet with staff, tutors and study.

As with most spaces, there could always be additional room for students to utilize during peak periods of operation.

Fiscal Resources

While recognizing that every unit would benefit from a larger budget, evaluate the general adequacy of fiscal resources allocated to the unit to serve its constituencies and achieve other programmatic goals by assigning a number between "1" (completely inadequate) to "9" (completely satisfies needs).

7 1-9

In a paragraph or two, discuss why you've assigned the score you have. Include, in particular, a discussion of unique strengths as well as important needs not being met or opportunities not being explored because of limitations.

The program budget has had consistent carryover balance. The majority of the funding for the program comes through the program fee paid by students using the services of the program each semester. While the number of students buying the services remains fairly consistent during the year, it can be impacted by such things as amount of new students admitted to the university, rising costs of college etc. This does not allow for any growth of the program or staff, but generating revenue to maintain current levels.

4. In a paragraph or two, overview significant changes made in your unit since 1996 (i.e., the last North Central Association Accreditation Visit). (e.g., re-organized, key staff changes, change in purposes, etc.)
The program has been under three different areas in that time period. It was administratively under the College of Education, then in 1999 it changed to Continuing Education and Graduate Studies and then in 2002 to the Division of Student Affairs.

In another paragraph or two, describe why these changes occurred.

The changes occurred because of university efforts to have one area supervise services for students with disabilities.

MISSION & PLANNING

5. In a paragraph or two, describing any significant projects/initiatives that your unit is planning or currently has underway, but has not yet completed.
Currently, there is discussion and planning regarding the merger of the program with the Center for Students with Disabilities office on campus.

Provide financial stability to the program by monitoring revenue and expenses on a monthly basis, reviewing fee structures, and assessing billing processes at the end of the academic year.

Project ASSIST professional staff will attend one conference and engage in three other professional activities throughout the fiscal year.

Increase the number of minority students participating in program services by 10%. Increase the number of students involved in community service by 50%.

Incorporate the core values into the tutor training and program information for new and continuing students.

Create an awareness of campus facilities, resources and sources of support for program students during the Summer Transition Program and throughout the academic year.

10. What outcome measures (i.e., data, information) provide evidence that your unit's objectives are being met?

Data is collected on program students such as number of students using services, GPA's and status of students, numbers of staff attending professional development activities etc.

11. Related to question #10, does the unit regularly collect data/information to evaluate how effectively it serves its constituency(ies)? (This might include surveys of constituencies.)

Yes No

If "yes," please list specific data/information sets that the UW-W Self-Study Committees, and/or the Higher Learning Commission's Visiting Accreditation Team can access to review/consult.

- Consumer satisfaction surveys completed by students using the program and tutors each semester.
- Retention and graduation data on program students

12. In a paragraph or two, describe specific changes to the unit's operation or planning, if any, have resulted from the collection and use of the data/information identified in the preceding questions. Please be specific.

Expanded the study area/space for students and tutors to meet by installing new dividers, tables and chairs. Moved computer location into several areas within office facility, not just one room and updated computers. Started drop-in tutoring for additional assistance.

13. Please provide a list of services, if any, that your unit provides for constituencies that are external to the university.

- College nights/transitions fairs sponsored by regional groups of high schools in Wisconsin and Illinois for students with disabilities and their families, school and agency staff.

14. Please list any partnerships your unit has developed with the community (external to the campus, at the local, national, or global-level).

STUDENT LEARNING (COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONLY IF YOUR UNIT HAS AS PART OF ITS MISSION OR PURPOSES THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS)

15. If your unit serves students as its primary constituency, does the unit have learning or development-related objectives relevant to its work with students? That is, does your unit expect that students will acquire certain knowledge or skill sets as a direct result of working with your unit or its programming?

Yes No X

If "yes," please list these outcomes/objectives.

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16. Does the unit use data/information to evaluate the extent to which these learning or development-related objectives are, or are not being met?

Yes No X

If "yes," please list specific data/information sets that the UW-W Self-Study Committees, and/or the Higher Learning Commission's Visiting Accreditation Team can access to review/consult.

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17. What specific changes to the unit's operation or planning, if any, have resulted from the collection and use of the data/information identified in question #15? Please be specific.

SELF-EVALUATION

Strengths

18. List and prioritize no more than three primary strengths that have emerged in your unit's efforts to meet its mission, goals, or objectives. To identify these strengths, you may wish to consider: What does your unit do very well? What good things do people say about your unit? How has your unit aided the campus in meeting its mission? In what ways has your unit "gone beyond the call of duty?"

After identifying each strength, specify supporting evidence that suggests that the statement is true. This may include data/information gathered relevant to unit performance, trend data, information gathered from audits or external agencies visit, etc.

1. Specific Strength: [Providing comprehensive one to one services to students with learning disabilities.](#)
 - Supporting Evidence: [Grade point averages, retention and graduation rates of students who utilized program services.](#)
2. Specific Strength: [Providing a positive environment that promotes learning.](#)
 - Supporting Evidence: [Over the past six years, the facilities has been completely updated including new furniture such as tables and chairs, new computers with updated software, painting and new carpeting.](#)
3. Specific Strength:

- Supporting Evidence:

Concerns

19. List and prioritize no more than three primary concerns that have emerged in your unit's efforts to meet its mission, goals, or objectives. To identify these concerns, you may wish to consider: What could be improved? What is done poorly? What do we, as a unit, avoid doing, even though we know it's important?

After identifying each concern, specify supporting evidence that suggests that the statement is true. This may include data/information gathered relevant to unit performance, trend data, information gathered from audits or external agencies visit, etc.

Finally, identify one or more recommended actions to address the area of concern. This may include actions that your unit has already begun, actions being planned, or preliminary thinking about how to address the area of concern.

1. Specific Concern: Part-time status of program director and program assistant being LTE status.
 - Supporting Evidence: Program director's time is split between two different areas: Student Affairs and College of Education. The two positions are not related to each other causing difficulty balancing the demands of both positions. Program assistant position as LTE causes turnover and lack of continuity and support.
 - Recommended Actions: Discussions are being held regarding the director position being full-time in one area and with possible merger of program with other disabilities services the status of program assistant may change.
2. Specific Concern:
 - Supporting Evidence:
 - Recommended Actions:
3. Specific Concern:
 - Supporting Evidence:
 - Recommended Actions: