

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

Non-Instructional Unit: Registrar's Office

Individual(s) Completing the Questionnaire/Report: Dan Edlebeck

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Describe in a paragraph or two what your unit does (i.e., the services it provides).

As the "office of academic records" for students enrolling in courses and pursuing degrees at UW – Whitewater, and the only office authorized to issue official transcripts, certify enrollment, post grades and degrees, and conduct certain other matters pertaining to the academic record, the Registrar's Office plays an important role in supporting the University's select mission. To that end, the Office's primary responsibilities and services include:

- creating and maintaining the academic calendar;
  - establishing and managing accurate and timely curricular and student academic records;
  - verifying student enrollment and degrees;
  - certifying students for athletic competition and veterans' benefits;
  - graduation processing and posting of degrees to student records;
  - processing requests for official academic transcripts;
  - providing reports and reporting services
  - implementing and enforcing office, institution, UW System, state, and federal policies and regulations to safeguard the integrity and security of curricular and student academic records;
  - coordinating and implementing academic record-related procedures and processes associated with record retention, disaster recovery, and the physical safety of records;
  - managing the Student Records (SR) and Academic Advisement (AA) modules of the PeopleSoft Student Administration System (PSSA), serving as the primary PSSA security manager and liaison with the university's user communities, participating on the PSSA Steering Committee and Integration Team, and staying informed and (as appropriate) current with emerging technologies that benefit the constituencies served by the Registrar's Office;
  - developing, maintaining, and enhancing an office website that provides information and service to university constituencies;
  - various other miscellaneous services that include, but are not limited to, university and UW system committee and work group memberships, participation in campus activities and programs, implementation and maintenance of new academic record initiatives, campus training and outreach assistance associated with academic records, and PSSA maintenance and upgrades
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.)
    - Enrolled/eligible-to-enroll students – 27,000
    - Faculty/instructors – 500
    - Deans/deans offices - 16
    - Academic departments and/or program assistants - 34
    - Administrative officers/offices - 20
    - Academic advisors - 22
    - Former students – 5,000

- Professional colleagues/offices at other institutions – 25
- Non-UWW 3rd-party requests for student list information - 30
- Public – 500

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**

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 has the minimum necessary FTE/staff to address its responsibilities and does an excellent job of communicating with its constituencies and responding to their needs. It has reorganized two key positions to assume more responsibility for technology-related processes and to serve as information technology liaisons with the university's Office of Technology & Information Resources (T&IR). However, necessary university-wide checks-and-balances, and dependencies on other offices/units (e.g. T&IR), sometimes limit the ability of the office to implement innovative and improved processes. For example, modifications to the PSSA Student Records module must be performed by the T&IR application programmers who are few in number and are faced with increasing campus-wide demands for their services thereby limiting their ability to be as responsive to business units (e.g. Registrar's Office) as those units would like. Consequently, Registrar's Office modification requests that are not considered urgent or production problems may be delayed or not addressed.

### **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**).

**5**

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 Registrar's Office is located in the basement of a converted residence hall and the physical arrangement is not designed for good work flow. The allocated space (i.e., square-footage) is adequate. The location, however, is difficult to access for certain students/constituencies (e.g. students with disabilities). The lower level location makes the secure storage of critical permanent hard-copy records (e.g., academic transcripts prior to 1979) more prone to water, mold, or physical damage in the event of a fire or other natural disaster.

### **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**).

## 8

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 Registrar's Office has adequate fiscal resources due, in large part, to technology advances that have enabled the office to reduce its operating expenses (e.g., grade reports are available to students via web-based self-service applications thereby eliminating the need to mail them each term) and use those resources for other essential expenses (e.g., to replace necessary PC workstations) and to provide better services.

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.)
  1. The Registrar's Office reduced its administrative and management positions from three full-time FTE (Registrar, Associate Registrar, and Assistant Registrar) to two (Registrar and Assistant Registrar); the third position was transferred to the undergraduate Admissions Office. In addition, the office reclassified two key staff positions to IS-Business Automation Senior level to address existing and emerging technical and reporting service responsibilities. The reclassifications have enabled the office to reduce some dependencies on external units while providing critical centralized administrative services.
  2. In the late 1990's, the University began the process of replacing its legacy student information system with the PeopleSoft Student Administration System (PSSA) and its suite of web-based self-service applications for students, faculty, and staff. The PSSA Student Records module began processing of 2001 summer and fall term data in early 2001. The PSSA Academic Advisement (degree audit) module went into production in late 2001 (replacing the legacy system's PACE degree audit application) and has been progressively improved and enhanced since then. Students and advisors are able to access student education records in real-time via the internet. Faculty and instructors report early warning and final grades via secure internet applications. Academic departments have the ability to directly access, maintain, and update certain data without the inconvenience of delays that previously existed due to processing dependencies on the Registrar's Office.
  3. The office has acquired and implemented a document imaging system from Perceptive Software, Inc. to scan, index, and store hard-copy record documents in a safe and secure computerized network environment. The project to scan and store digitized document images began in late 2004. Authorized staff will be able to retrieve digitized documents through their desktop PCs.

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

1. The position reduction/reallocation was done to address a staffing need in the admissions unit and the decision was made by a director who had oversight responsibility for both undergraduate admissions and the Registrar's Office. The two position reclassifications were done as part of strategic planning efforts during the implementation and post-production periods of the PSSA product.
2. The acquisition and implementation of the PSSA product occurred as a result of institutional and UW system-wide common system planning activities for an integrated ERP solution (admissions, financial aid, student records, student financials, degree audit) that provided internet-based access to student educational records and services and included a maturing degree audit component to replace the aging PACE system.

- The document imaging system was acquired and implemented to fulfill a part of the office's strategic plan to improve record retention and disaster recovery practices that included a contemporary and effective medium for permanent electronic storage of hard-copy pre-database records and an effective and efficient means of recovering those records in the event of a disaster.

## MISSION & PLANNING

- In a paragraph or two, describe any significant projects/initiatives that your unit is planning or currently has underway, but has yet to complete.

The document imaging project, mentioned in #4 above, began in late 2004. Phase-I of that project - scanning and imaging hard-copy pre-database student education records - will take approximately two to three years. Planning is underway for Phases II and III.

Following the implementation of PSSA and the roll-out of internet-based access to records and processes, the Registrar's Office has started providing targeted outreach services to campus groups. The outreach includes regular meetings with academic departments and program assistants, and individualized and small group training, consulting, and troubleshooting about certain information that users can access and how best to work with it.

- Below are five "core values" the University identifies as central to its purposes and operation. Please evaluate the importance of each core value in terms of how each aligns with the purposes of your unit (i.e., take a hypothetical 100 points and distribute them among the five values, with those values that align more closely to the purposes of your unit receiving more points).

Core Value	Importance (100 points)
Commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and understanding	5
Development of the individual	15
Personal and professional integrity	40
Commitment to serve	30
Commitment to develop a sense of community, respect for diversity, and global perspectives	10
<b>Total=</b>	<b>100 points</b>

- Each and every academic and non-academic unit engages in planning for the future. Review the list of variables below and evaluate the extent to which each of the following influences decision-making behind the planning process for your unit (i.e., take a hypothetical 100 points and distribute them among the planning variables listed below, with those variables playing the larger role in your unit's planning efforts receiving more points)

Planning Variables	Importance (100 points)
The mission of the university or the unit	2
Academic assessment data/information relevant to student performance against learning outcomes	1
Other data/information gathered relevant to performance (e.g., Audit & Review feedback)	5
Societal/Cultural trends (e.g., changes in demographics, lifestyles, professions)	1
Campus trends (e.g., changes in university-initiated needs and demands)	1
Technology trends (e.g., technology developments that affect delivery of service)	25
Professional trends (e.g., changes evident at other universities/colleges)	10
Available human resources (e.g., # of employees, talents, etc.) within the unit	25
Available financial resources (e.g., budget, available and accessible \$)	25
Available physical resources (e.g., space existing technology, etc.)	5
Other:	
<b>Total=</b>	<b>100 points</b>

8. Does your unit have a mission statement?  
Yes No

If you answered "yes," please list the mission statement here.

"The primary mission of the Registrar's Office is to support the University's select mission by serving as the "office of academic records" for students, faculty, staff and the general public. The Office's major objectives include establishing and managing accurate and timely curricular and student academic records; providing efficient, effective, knowledgeable, and respectful delivery of services related to those records; and implementing and enforcing institutional, professional, and legal standards and regulations related to academic records in a fair, honest, and consistent manner."

Also, if your mission statement can be accessed on the web, please list the URL here.

<http://www.uww.edu/registrar/>

If you answered "yes," please describe how, if at all, this mission statement plays a role in your unit's planning and/or decision-making.

It is the basis for almost all office planning and decision-making. The office plays a critical role that supports the university's mission, and that role is made up of three important and intertwined responsibilities – maintain accurate records, provide essential services associated with those records, and enforce policies and standards that apply to the records.

## **OPERATION AND PERFORMANCE**

9. What are the major or measurable objectives of the unit?

The objectives are threefold:

- a) establish and manage accurate and timely curricular and student academic records;
- b) provide efficient, effective, knowledgeable, and respectful delivery of services related to those records; and
- c) implement and enforce institutional, professional, and legal standards and regulations related to academic records in a fair, honest, and consistent manner.

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

The best outcome measure the Registrar's Office uses to gauge if it is meeting its objectives is whether the university constituencies that are dependent on the services provided by the Registrar's Office are able to conduct their business on time and as expected. Work flow and survey evidence indicate that the office is meeting its objectives. For example, accurate student academic record information is available to advisors/advisees in real-time and/or when they need it. The Schedule of Classes is built in time for advising and priority registration. Students are able to register for classes in a fair, orderly and convenient manner. Instructors know when and where their classes meet and who is enrolled. The Financial Aid and Student Accounts offices have accurate enrollment information to disburse aid and bill students according to their business unit schedules. Student athletes are certified eligible to participate on time and as expected. Grading is conducted successfully and on time. Students are graduated as planned. Official transcripts are processed efficiently and effectively. Data are available for administrative and academic analyses. Policies and regulations are enforced in a responsible, consistent and impartial manner.

Feedback from students, colleges, academic departments, and administrative units is another primary measure used to determine if the office is meeting its objectives. Such feedback takes place through regular and routine interactions with students and faculty/staff, as well as through follow-up and evaluation activities. The overall sentiment is that the office is meeting its objectives. Two recent surveys support this conclusion. The first survey was conducted at the beginning of the 2003 fall term to assess the level of student satisfaction with WINS (Whitewater Information Network for Students – the internet-based self-service component of the PSSA). 1646 students responded (15.4% return rate) and, in general, are very satisfied with WINS. Some suggestions for improving WINS have been implemented (e.g., make searching for classes easier). The second survey was conducted in 2004 March (as part of an Office Planning and Review study) to gather information from deans, departments, advisors, and administrators about their levels of satisfaction with services offered by the Registrar's Office. 49% of those surveyed responded. The majority of the responses were favorable and the constituents seem satisfied with the services provided. Suggestions for improvement (e.g., better training of student employees) have been discussed at Registrar's Office staff meetings and steps are being taken to implement changes for the better.

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

The office has not regularly collected survey data but it intends to begin doing so. The data collection method will be similar to the surveys mentioned in the previous section, that is, a student WINS feedback and/or satisfaction survey and a separate instrument to gather information from deans, departments, advisors, and administrators about their levels of satisfaction with services offered by the Registrar's Office.

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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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.

WINS class search process has been improved and is less confusing.

WINS instructions, page/screen text, and links are better organized and simplified.

Academic Advisement Advising Reports (individualized student degree audit reports) are available in real-time mode via WINS.

Registrar's Office reception services have been consolidated into a one-stop shop.

Registrar's Office student employees are better trained and better supervised.

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

- Student enrollment and degree verifications
- Veterans benefits certification and processing
- Athletic certification for WIAC and NCAA
- National Student Clearinghouse data submissions
- UW System Administration data submissions
- Provide lists of students in compliance with FERPA, Solomon Amendment, and Wisconsin Open Records laws and regulations.
- Respond to questions and inquiries from the general public.

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

NA

**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

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

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 #13? 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 this 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: [Protect the privacy, security, and integrity of student academic records in compliance with FERPA requirements and American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers \(AACRAO\) guidelines.](#)
  - Supporting Evidence: [Feedback from Provost/Vice Chancellor's Office. Internal analysis of policies and procedures using AACRAO and WACRAO \(Wisconsin Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers\) standards. 2004 Office Planning and Review Self-Study.](#)
2. Specific Strength: [Provide responsive and reliable reporting services to assist the university administration, deans' offices, and academic departments.](#)
  - Supporting Evidence: [Constituent feedback.](#)
3. Specific Strength: [Enforce federal, state, UW System, and University policies and regulations that apply to student education records in a fair, honest, and consistent manner.](#)
  - Supporting Evidence: [Feedback from Provost/Vice Chancellor's Office. Internal analysis of policies and procedures using AACRAO and WACRAO standards. 2004 Office Planning and Review Self-Study.](#)

### 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: [There has been a need for a contemporary, computerized medium for electronic storage of hard-copy pre-database student records and an effective and efficient means of recovering those records in the event of a disaster.](#)

- **Supporting Evidence:** The hard-copy pre-database records are prone to damage in the event of a disaster and are, at present, backed-up on microfilm/fiche. The microfilm is an out-dated and difficult medium to use to locate and retrieve the record information.
  - **Recommended Actions:** A state-of-the-art document imaging system has been acquired and the process of scanning, digitizing, and electronically storing the hard-copy records has begun.
2. **Specific Concern:** There is a need for campus users to be able to independently process and retrieve pre-existing student record reports without depending on staff from the Registrar's Office to do this for them each time the reports are needed.
- **Supporting Evidence:** Feedback from campus users (e.g. deans offices, academic departments).
  - **Recommended Actions:** Create a data warehouse and library of pre-developed and approved reports that authorized users can access directly to request the reports on an as-needed basis. The data warehouse design is being finalized and tested, and the report library is in the test phase. The roll-out of the data warehouse to select campus users is anticipated in early-to-mid 2005.
3. **Specific Concern:** Registrar's Office staff are few in number and perform jobs that require highly specialized skills developed through time and experience. In the case of some individuals, there is not adequate employee back-up during their absences (i.e., vacations, illness) which results in work and/or services being placed on hold until the individuals return.
- **Supporting Evidence:** Feedback from other units and personal observations.
  - **Recommended Actions:** Identify staff who can assume back-up responsibility for highly specialized positions and begin training the staff to acquire the necessary skill sets to provide basic services during absences.