

## Organization Assessment of the Division of Student Services Student Services Leadership Team Response

In this chapter, issues developed and discussed in prior chapters are summarized and are followed by recommendations for consideration by the College and Division. The issues and recommendations were framed from the standpoint of how to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and communication for Student Services. The issues and recommendations are presented in four interrelated sections:

- Structure and Organization.
- Staffing.
- Communication/Delivery of Services.
- Technology.

### 5.1 STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION

The reorganization of student services functions created collegewide responsibilities for each of the campus deans in order to promote a consistent student experience across the college. While this change was acknowledged as being appropriate, it has had a major impact on the campus dean position.

#### ISSUE :

The deans and their teams expressed that the campus dean now spends a significant amount of time in, or traveling to, meetings (e.g., 69 hours of standing meetings per month), leaving less time for campus-based matters. Direct, one-to-one meetings with students and staff on the campus now are minimal, resulting in a loss of the mentoring role of the job. The demands of the dean's collegewide role require a focus on meetings, program design/implementation, and processes and limit an active role on the campus. It also was expressed that the reorganization has promoted collegewide coordination of an office area (i.e., Access, Engagement, Success), but awareness and appreciation of each campus' individual issues and culture have been diminished.

Time required to obtain signatures to authorize work is said to have increased due to deans being absent from campuses for meetings, resulting in diminished efficiency and effectiveness of campus operations. Staff indicate that meetings have not been held for cross-office staff on a campus, resulting in a loss of collaboration, campus identity, and awareness of overall student services operations. Staff expressed confusion about where they fit into the overall operations of Student Services. It was expressed that striving for a one campus view should not negate the importance of each campus having a unique personality and identity to which student relate and feel valued.

Peer colleges with similar organizational structures to the Division of Student Services at Montgomery College sometimes address this issue by emphasizing the program and procedure design aspects of the collegewide position, with operational responsibilities resting with another campus based position, such as a campus dean. However, since Montgomery College is currently in a period of implementing significant change in both programs and operating procedures, limiting the dean's role at the college level to program design may inhibit continued progress in achieving the desired "one college experience." For Montgomery College, to most effectively implement the new collegewide model in the short term, day to day operational responsibilities on each campus might be best coordinated by the Associate Dean. In addition, the Associate Dean would be responsible for establishing regular meeting schedules to foster campus cross-office communications, thereby alleviating some of the operational issues arising for the recent changes to the Dean position. As the collegewide focus of the Deans' positions to develop and implement new programs and procedures matures, the Deans' operating responsibilities should be reassessed after some relevant time period, perhaps 12 months, and adjusted as appropriate.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5.1 :

Focus the campus deans' collegewide student services responsibilities primarily on the program and procedure design aspects and supervision of functional operations assigned to each. Then, to ameliorate the campus operating difficulties identified above, delegate direct supervision and coordination of staff on each campus to the Associate Dean. Campus meetings should be routinely scheduled to encourage cross-office communication. More frequent and effective use of communication technologies should be encouraged for communication across College campuses.

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.1:

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs with this recommendation and will continue to utilize our Associate Deans as second in command for day to day operations on our campuses.

#### ISSUE :

Prior to the reorganization, Student Services reported to the Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Services, forming a natural link between the two areas. The reorganization separated student services from academic affairs, in part, to focus resources directly on Student Success. While the reorganization is perceived as successful, it is not apparent that new linkages to Academic Affairs have been formed. We learned from the peer colleges that great emphasis is placed on communication between Student Services and Academic Affairs at the vice president levels as well as on campuses. Student success will be further enhanced through strong communication between Student Services and Academic Affairs.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5.2 :

To maintain strong connections with the Academic Affairs function, the Senior Vice President for Student Services should meet regularly with the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.

This will ensure collegewide coordination. Further, the campus deans should meet regularly with their respective campus provosts to ensure common purpose and focus.

**Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.2:**

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs with this recommendation and will continue to ensure these relationships remain strong.

**IS S UE :**

Student Services staff recognized that the reorganization has placed additional focus on assisting students in successfully navigating the enrollment process and in preparing academic plans and pathways to achieving goals. Both the Early Alert (still in implementation) and Starfish initiative were positively perceived by the Success team, and are areas that offer additional growth potential. These initiatives were seen as opportunities for counselors and faculty to work together to support student success.

**R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 3 :**

Maintain focus on both the Early Alert and Starfish initiatives to ensure that as growth potential is identified, changes are initiated to facilitate effective student services.

**Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.3:**

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs with this recommendation and supports continuing to ensure these initiatives are effective.

**IS S UE :**

Child Care Services was reassigned from Auxiliary Services to Student Services with its Director reporting to the Senior Vice President for Student Services. Reassigning Child Care Services increased the visibility of and discussion about the child care centers, especially as they relate to persistence. While directly reporting to the Senior Vice President for Student Services has contributed to the heightened visibility, access to leadership is somewhat limited due to the Senior Vice President's responsibility for programs and communication.

**R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 4 :**

Change the reporting relationship of the Director of Child Care Services from the Senior Vice President for Student Services to the Dean for Student Success (or, with needed reclassification of the position, to the Student Services Operations Director).

**Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.4:**

The Student Services Leadership Team understands and supports the recommendation. In light of the fiscal challenges that the early learning center program is currently facing, it will remain under the direct supervision of senior leadership until all fiscal concerns are minimized.

#### IS S UE :

When Child Care Services was reassigned from Auxiliary Services to Student Services, support services for maintaining the Website and for administering Federal grants were lost. As a result, the Director of Child Care Services filled the void, resulting in her having less time for pursuing additional grant funds, supervising teachers, and providing child care services. While this issue was discussed during interviews related to Child Care Services, it describes a general need to centralize Website development and grants administration for all Student Service to ensure consistent and accurate communication and reporting.

#### R E CO M M E N D A T I O N 5. 5 :

Centralize maintenance of Student Services Websites and administration of grants in the office of the Senior Vice President for Student Services. Staff with appropriate skill sets for these responsibilities should be assigned/reassigned to the Senior Vice President for Student Services.

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.5:

The Student Services Leadership Team understands the impact of maintaining website pages and administrating grants as a part of departmental responsibilities. Currently due to limited resources, Montgomery College's practice is to require offices to maintain their own web pages and administer grant opportunities. As College and Division resources increase, we support analyzing this recommendation for viability.

#### IS S UE :

The collegewide dean for student success has had oversight responsibility for the Counseling Faculty area (i.e., program, procedures), but supervision of individuals has been the responsibility of the campus deans. The collegewide dean for student success has coordinated the area by working directly with the three Counseling Faculty chairs. In interviews, continued reporting of Counseling Faculty to the campus dean was viewed as positive, especially in light of a reorganization process for Academic Affairs being in process. The role of the Counseling Faculty and operation of the service are organized in a number of ways at other colleges. Recommendations related to the organizational restructuring of Academic Affairs recently have been submitted and influence the Counseling Faculty area. Based on the recommendations, the College reports that it will be better served if faculty in both Academic Affairs and Student Services Divisions report to a single collegewide dean. In the case of counseling, the collegewide administrator would be the dean of student success.

#### R E CO M M E N D A T I O N 5. 6 :

Counseling Faculty should report to the Collegewide Dean for Student Success in order to be consistent with the reorganization of Academic Affairs. In addition, a formalized communication link needs to be established with campus student services leadership to coordinate efforts to best serve students on each campus.

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.6:

The Student Services Leadership Team understands this is the new Montgomery College department model and will analyze and implement the most effective reporting structure that will ensure day to day counseling and advising operations are managed effectively.

#### IS S UE :

During interviews, questions arose about changes implemented during the reorganization of Student Services related to the Assessment Center. The consultant team believes that initial changes to the Assessment Center, as well as all other areas of Student Services, should be reviewed periodically to explore whether refinements are needed. The goals for the reorganization remain a high priority for the College and will be well served through continued discussion and refinement, as needed over time.

#### R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 7 :

The Division should convene an ad hoc committee to explore the advantages and disadvantages of placement of services and design of programs/procedures, including those of the Assessment Center, in the current organizational structure. The exploration of this issue should focus on determining the most effective and efficient way to serve students and the related college instructor and support staff community.

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.7:

The Student Services Leadership Team supports this recommendation and understands the need to analyze current assessment processes for ensuring student access and success. A task group will be formed to study and make recommendations for ensuring Montgomery College's assessment processes are supporting student access and success and the placement of the Assessment Center in the Student Services reorganization.

## 5. 2 S T A F F I N G

During our analysis of interview findings, a number of areas were identified as needing additional staff resources. For many of these areas, the consultant team assumes that staffing needs may be addressed through reassignments, reclassification of positions, or cross training. In some cases, required skill sets may not be available within existing staff and selective new hires may be appropriate.

#### IS S UE :

Due to the sensitive and essential nature of the work done through the Assessment Centers, the Access team expressed the need for a manager over all three centers to provide greater active supervision and to facilitate the identification and resolution of issues in a timely manner. The Assessment Centers are critical to providing a consistent experience to students across the college both in terms of their initial assessment as well as ongoing academic success regardless of where the students attend classes.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5.8 :

Reclassify one of the Assessment Center staff positions to provide coordination of program and procedure implementation related to assessment. This position would support the policy development role of the collegewide Dean for Access.

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.8:

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs with this recommendation and is currently working with HR personnel to implement.

#### ISSUE :

Supervision of college recruiters who are assigned to all three campuses has been the responsibility of the Director of Student Access, who also has responsibility for the Welcome Centers and Response Center. Given the labor intensive nature of the supervision and coordination of these areas, the director's span of control appears to be too broad. As such, the Division has initiated a reclassification of one of the recruiter positions into a manager to lessen the director's role in supervision of the recruiters. This appears to be a necessary change to support effective supervision and operation of these areas.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5.9 :

Implement the reclassification of one of the recruiter staff positions to provide coordination of program and procedure implementation related to recruitment. This position would support the program and procedure development role of the Director of Access and Collegewide Dean for Access.

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.9:

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs with this recommendation and is currently working with HR personnel to implement.

#### ISSUE :

In the BIT/Judicial Affairs area, Student Services staff stated that additional resource support is needed on the Tacoma Park/Silver Spring campus for behavior intervention and judicial affairs. Unlike the Rockville campus which has had a full-time judicial affairs officer, Tacoma Park/Silver Spring's student conduct issues have been handled by the campus dean. Resolving behavior issues in a timely manner is important to changing inappropriate conduct of individuals and to maintaining an environment conducive to learning for all students, staff, and faculty. Due to limitations of his time on campus since the reorganization, conduct issues have not been handled as efficiently as needed.

#### RECOMMENDATION 5.10 :

Ensure that all campuses have adequate BIT/Judicial Affairs staff resources to promote an environment that is conducive to learning.

**Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.10:**

The Student Services Leadership Team supports fairness and equity amongst campuses and will analyze this issue for resolve.

**IS S UE :**

The Adult, Parent, and Family Services area does not have a staff person on each campus (only one staff for adult services and one for parent/family services for the college). While the Collegewide Dean for Student Engagement has attempted to identify staff on each campus with the interest and skill set to supplement this service, it has been difficult to provide adequately for these student populations. These student groups comprise a significant portion of the student body, and their needs require staffing resources beyond what is currently provided.

**R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 11 :**

Combine these interrelated services and ensure that there is one staff person on each campus who is responsible for programming and referral services.

**Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.11:**

The Student Services Leadership Team supports this recommendation and will continue to ensure these services are phased in by 2020 as planned.

**IS S UE :**

In the area of Orientation Services, staff reported that changes are anticipated for new student orientation, now managed by student life staff. Participation in new student orientation has been voluntary, but the college has explored making it mandatory for incoming students year-round. Development of an online orientation program has potential to somewhat ease the expected workload. Once implemented, however, additional student life staffing resources may be needed to address the larger number of participants and to keep the online program current.

Overall, the goal of moving to a mandatory orientation (online or face-to-face) is a very positive step in supporting student services.

**R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 12 :**

Ensure that there are adequate staff resources available to design the online orientation program, keep the online program current, coordinate communication and collaboration between orientation components (i.e., Student Services, Academic Affairs, Administrative and Fiscal Services), and to provide and/or coordinate appropriate supplemental in-person orientation services.

**Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.12:**

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs with this recommendation and will work to ensure adequate staffing resources be utilized for the design of an online orientation program.



#### IS S UE :

In the areas of Veteran's Programs, Disability Services, and International Services, there is not a staff member on each campus for a number of programs and/or services.

#### R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 13 :

Ensure that adequate staffing exists on each campus for all services (e.g., Veteran's Programs, Disability Services, and International Service). Implement communication via technology to assist with the delivery of service, where appropriate.

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.13:

The Student Services Leadership Team supports this recommendation and will continue to advocate that these services are staffed appropriately in a phased approach by 2020 as planned.

#### IS S UE :

Staff reported that Transfer and Graduation Evaluators have heavy workloads, especially during peak periods. Additional staff have been pulled from the front line service desk to assist, potentially slowing direct services to students. This issue is related to Recommendation 5.20 in which the College should increase the use of online access to services, resulting in staff responsibilities for face-to-face service delivery and data entry being reduced. With greater automation of student service, data, and records, the level of review provided by transfer and graduation evaluators also may be lessened, and staff providing face-to-face services may have greater flexibility to assist in areas of need.

#### R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 14 :

The Chief Enrollment Services and Financial Aid Officer, in conjunction with the Deans for Access, Engagement, and Success, should explore ways to support the workload of transfer and graduation evaluators to minimize any negative impact on delivery of services to students. (This issue may be resolved, at least in part, with greater automation of data and records.)

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.14:

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs with this recommendation and will continue to ensure these areas work as partners and collaborators.

### 5. 3 C O M M U N I C A T I O N / D E L I V E R Y O F S E R V I C E S

The reorganization has successfully strengthened communication among the Student Services Division leadership group. Through the leadership and communication of the Senior Vice President for Student Services and the Collegewide Deans for Access, Engagement, and Success, great strides toward the One College concept have been achieved. Additional attention, however, is needed with the middle management level and staff. Communication issues have been identified both across the college as well as within the campus units. Recommendations offered in the Structure and Organization section of this chapter address



many of the communication issues. Additional issues identified in this section focus on service delivery, communication between units, and providing greater clarity for roles and responsibilities.

#### IS S UE :

The Welcome Centers are positioned to serve incoming students by using cross-trained staff to instruct students on how to obtain services via online resources and to resolve the majority of student enrollment-related issues. Staff expressed interest in more cross-training and information sharing.

#### R E CO M M E N D A T I O N 5. 15 :

Consider expanding the role of the Welcome Centers to returning students. The Welcome Centers should become the “go-to” point for all students for learning how to access services online to promote self-resolution with future needs, obtaining assistance with most issues (that need attention beyond online services), and lessening traffic in other functional areas. Expand the preparation and use of cross trained staff to address most issues and refer to functional specialist for more challenging issues.

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.15:

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs with this recommendation and will continue to allow any student to use the Welcome Center services.

#### IS S UE :

As part of the reorganization, recruitment staff were reassigned to the Access area from Enrollment Services and Financial Aid (i.e., from Admissions). This change contributed to confusion over roles and responsibilities, and traditional approaches to recruitment efforts dissolved. For example, interviewees asked who is responsible for Honors Program recruitment, and how can recruiters respond to financial aid questions during recruitment without financial aid staff present. In addition, tension in the relationship between Student Access and Enrollment Services and Financial Aid was expressed by both groups, impeding communication and service. Several individuals noted that staff in Enrollment Services and Financial Aid resented not being eligible for the higher pay grade positions in the Welcome Centers due to not meeting the requirement of an associate degree.

#### R E CO M M E N D A T I O N 5. 16 :

The Collegewide Dean for Access and the Chief Enrollment Services and Financial Aid Officer should communicate frequently to ensure that staff from both areas are communicating, collaborating, and supporting each others' roles (e.g., having Financial Aid specialists assist Recruiters as appropriate).

The Chief Enrollment Services and Financial Aid Officer should encourage pursuit and completion of the associate degree by staff in Enrollment Services and Financial Aid in order to be eligible for future promotional opportunities.

**Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.16:**

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs with this recommendation and will continue to ensure this is occurring.

**IS S UE :**

Delivery of some services and programs has been inconsistent among campuses or lacking clarity, especially for those services that do not have a dedicated staff person on each campus, such as the examples identified in Recommendations 5.10 through 5.13 (e.g., BIT/Judicial Affairs, International Programs, Adult, Parent, and Family Programs and Services, and Disability Services). In addition, to the programs and services previously identified, staff suggested a review of Career Development and Career Counseling for potential improvement of service to students (i.e., greater clarity, communication, coordination, efficiency, and outcome effectiveness). Interviewees suggested that the College explore these services and develop a model(s) to ensure effective, efficient, and consistent delivery across the College.

**R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 17 :**

Convene an ad hoc group(s) with leadership provided by the appropriate Dean for Access, Engagement, or Success to review and determine the type and level of services and programs that best will meet student needs for Career Development, Career Counseling, BIT/Judicial Affairs, International Programs, Adult, Parent, and Family Programs and Services, and Disability Services. After the type and level of services and programs are determined, the Division should determine how the services and programs will be delivered consistently across the College in order to be effective and efficient.

**Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.17:**

The Student Services Leadership Team supports this recommendation and will continue to ensure the current practice of inclusion occurs for phasing services.

**IS S UE :**

A perception exists that more review is needed to plan, integrate, and implement change (e.g., ID card and graduation requirement changes). The perception was expressed that decision making has been delayed, then implementation rushed. In addition, changes have not been communicated in writing or distributed to all staff.

**R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 18 :**

The College/Division should communicate all program and procedure changes in writing to all staff. (See Issue and Recommendation 5.22 concerning soliciting input from staff and exploring issues related to program/procedure change).

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.18:

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs and believes the internal and external communication issues will be resolved through the work of the newly constituted Division Leadership Team that is tackling these types of issues. We also believe the Division must be agile in a changing College environment. The issues noted of concern are ones that required immediate decision making imposed by legal ramifications and an external customer's disposition. As the Division transitions, informed messages verbal and/or written will be disseminated as planned by the Division Leadership Team. Division members will be expected to take responsibility for receiving the disseminated messages and act upon them appropriately.

#### IS S UE :

General confusion about who to approach for authorization or action on an issue or even for general information exists across College staff. It was reported that a directory was being developed to clarify roles and responsibilities.

#### R E CO M M E N D A T I O N 5. 19 :

Continue to develop the College directory that identifies appropriate staff for needed information, authorization, and/or action related to all student services. Include in the development a process to keep the directory information current.

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.19:

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs with this recommendation and will have the currently planned Division Directory completed and distributed by May 2014.

## 5. 4 T E C H N O L O G Y

The use of technology is essential for efficient and effective program and procedure design and operation of large, multi-campus institutions of higher education. Obtaining, storing, analyzing, communicating, and applying information and data to decision making through technology tools is faster, more powerful, and less labor intense than traditional methods. For example, Montgomery College has implemented Starfish Retention Services for automating student tracking, early alert, online appointment scheduling, and assessment in order to allow for personal impact with students, measurable outcomes, and efficient operations. In this section, the consultant team identifies areas, interrelated with communication, where greater efficiency and effectiveness may be realized through the use of technology tools.

#### IS S UE :

Data are being collected either via printed or online forms, especially forms related to enrollment services and financial aid. The data are then manually entered in appropriate databases. This process is time consuming and contributes to the potential to introduce errors. In addition, using printed forms to collect data requires students to stand in lines to receive and return information

to staff. An alternative to this approach of data and information collecting is programming online forms for completion and automatic population of appropriate and related databases. Access to online services allows and encourages students to resolve the majority of needs without standing in line to see a staff person. It also allows staff located anywhere in the College to access information needed to assist students, other staff, and faculty.

#### R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 20 :

The College/Division should transition to online completion of forms and access to services, especially for enrollment services and financial aid. Data from students or other users should be linked to appropriate databases to avoid manual entry. Information in databases should be accessible to appropriate College personnel to provide needed assistance.

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.20:

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs with this recommendation and will support implementation.

#### I S S U E :

The practice of collegewide face-to-face staff meetings has resulted in a great deal of time/staff resources being spent driving between campuses, causing a loss of time serving students. In addition, access to campus leadership by staff and supervision has been reduced, especially for deans being absent from campuses for meetings. The recommendation in the Structure and Organization section of this chapter should lessen the need for some travel between campuses, however, a need for communication across the College will remain for coordination and program/procedure review.

#### R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 21 :

Work with the College IT area to enhance communication technology for meetings (e.g., tools similar to GoToMeeting, Skype, and LYNC – a Microsoft two-way video phone conferencing platform). Acquire and utilize the best available and affordable technology tools to meet identified communication needs.

#### Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.21:

The Student Services Leadership Team concurs with this recommendation and will continue to appropriately use technology effectively for communication purposes.

#### I S S U E :

It is perceived that decisions regarding program and/or procedural changes (whether resulting from College action or from external forces) have not sufficiently involved input from affected groups, and therefore are not planned adequately for effective or efficient implementation, e.g., short notice for ID card changes and graduation requirement changes. Student Services staff expressed that under the new organization there is a tendency to take action (program/procedure changes) without sufficient research, exploration, and planning of an issue, especially without input from a full array of staff. It was expressed that it appears that decision makers have not been soliciting/listening to feedback, causing a decline in morale. During

interviews with peer colleges, the consultant team learned that technology tools such as SharePoint are used to share ideas about an issue, solicit input to program/procedure decisions, and gather information pertinent to action prior to, or instead of, meeting face-to-face.

**R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 22 :**

In conjunction with College IT staff, identify, obtain, and implement communication technology for discussing issues and program and procedure development across affected employee groups/offices (e.g., SharePoint).

**Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.22:**

The Student Services Leadership Team believes the issue is one of being agile in a changing environment and communicating messages effectively. The issues noted of concern are ones that required immediate decision making imposed by legal ramifications and an external customer's disposition. As the Division transitions, informed messages verbal and/or written will be disseminated throughout the Division to alleviate this concern. Division members will be expected to take responsibility for receiving the disseminated messages and act upon them appropriately.

**I S S U E :**

Student Services staff expressed that the college Website is too dense and wordy, with confusing pathways. For example, it was stated that the Home Page has 120 links, making pathways to information hard to find. It was expressed that navigating the Website is not intuitive to staff, students, or prospective students.

**R E C O M M E N D A T I O N 5. 23 :**

The Senior Vice President for Student Services should communicate to College leadership and the Office of Institutional Advancement the need for identifying and implementing improvements to the Website to enhance pathways to needed information (i.e., to ensure that navigation is intuitive). An on-going process should be established under the leadership of the Office of Institutional Advancement that involves an appropriate array of College stakeholders, including representatives from Student Services.

**Student Services Leadership Team Response to 5.23:**

The Student Services Leadership Team understands the issue and will continue to advocate for a more student friendly website.