Student Services Strategic Plan 2018-2021

last updated September 2017
# Table of Contents

**Executive Summary** ........................................................................................................................................... 3

I. Our Mission .......................................................................................................................................................... 3

II. Our Vision ......................................................................................................................................................... 3

III. Our Values ....................................................................................................................................................... 3

IV. Our Organization ............................................................................................................................................ 4

**Strategic Planning Process Overview** ............................................................................................................ 4

I. Principles for Decision-Making .......................................................................................................................... 5

II. Emerging issues for consideration .................................................................................................................. 5

III. Student Services SWOT Analysis ................................................................................................................ 6

**Themes, Goals, & Strategic Actions** ............................................................................................................... 8

I. Introduction of Themes ....................................................................................................................................... 8

II. Themes, in detail ................................................................................................................................................ 9

   Theme 1: We enhance the student experience. ................................................................................................. 9

      Goal 1-a: Deepen students’ sense of belonging as valued members of the SFU community. ......................... 9

      Goal 1-b: Expand and enhance student learning experiences. ..................................................................... 9

      Goal 1-c: Cultivate a culture of health, safety, and wellbeing among students. ......................................... 10

      Goal 1-d: Identify and enroll students likely to be successful at SFU and whose expectations of the institution are a good match for the experience that is delivered. ................................................................................................................................. 11

   Theme 2: We demonstrate a culture of partnerships, accountability and engagement. ....................................... 12

      Goal 2-a: Exemplary staff performance is expected, recognized, and appreciated. .................................... 12

      Goal 2-b: Staff understand how their work, and the work of their unit, contribute to Student Services’ goals and to the University’s Strategic Vision. ................................................................................................................................. 13

      Goal 2-c: The knowledge and skills of staff are current, responsive to change, anticipatory of new directions, and reflect the strategic needs of the service and our key stakeholders. ......................................................... 13

   Theme 3: We strive for service excellence. ......................................................................................................... 14

      Goal 3-a: Ensure key stakeholders (students, staff, faculty) understand our programs, services and areas of expertise. ......................................................................................................................................................... 14

      Goal 3-b: Ensure Student Services anticipates, and responds to, changing stakeholder needs through effective use of research, assessment, and evaluation processes ........................................................................................................ 14

      Goal 3-c: Effectively leverage and steward structures, systems, and resources to provide service excellence. .............................................................................................................................................. 15

**Next Steps** .......................................................................................................................................................... 16
Executive Summary

Student Services’ ongoing strategy is to maintain and strengthen commitments to the overall student experience at SFU. This updated strategic plan reaffirms these commitments to SFU students and articulates strategies in support of SFU’s three primary goals, as per the SFU Strategic Vision:

1. To equip students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences to prepare them for life in an ever-changing and challenging world.
2. To be a world leader in knowledge mobilization building on a strong foundation of fundamental research.
3. To be Canada’s most community-engaged research university.

A major restructuring of the Student Services portfolio took place in 2003-2004, resulting in the first service-wide strategic plan and a new divisional structure designed to meet the goals articulated in the new plan. Every three years, that plan was refreshed and annual operational plans were developed at the unit level. At the ten-year mark, Student Services undertook a more significant service-wide critical review which resulted in this 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. This plan looks to the future, drawing on input from higher education research and literature, good practice, and a thorough self-study and review process. It considers the VPA’s academic plan, the University’s Big Ideas initiative, and the forthcoming Student Experience project. Below are the refreshed versions of the Student Services Mission, Vision and Values; information on our planning process, including a service-level SWOT analysis; and the 2018-2021 major themes, goals, strategic actions, and key performance measures.

I. Our Mission

We foster transformative student experiences by collaboratively anticipating, facilitating, and providing services, programs, and environments that support learning and success for our diverse student body at Simon Fraser University.

II. Our Vision

Student Services at SFU, characterized by boldness, collaboration, and innovation, is an international leader in the provision of evidence-based services and programs.

III. Our Values

We value and are committed to:

1. Student-centricity: We support the mission of the University, with specific emphasis on the academic mission, by holding students’ needs and goals at the heart of our decision making.
2. Inclusion and diversity: Our actions demonstrate commitment to building and engaging accessible, diverse, inclusive, and healthy campus communities.
3. Collaboration and coordination: We seek out ways to partner within the service, across campuses, and with community stakeholders to deliver and support relevant and high-quality student learning experiences.
4. **Professionalism**: Integrity, accountability, transparency, and respect are reflected in all aspects of our professional interactions. We responsibly steward resources.

5. **Evidence-based decisions**: We actively pursue research, professional development, and evaluation and assessment, to ensure data-informed, continuous improvement.

6. **Continuous learning & development**: Our staff contribute to, and benefit from, professional growth opportunities within the University and with external professional organizations.

Support for the SFU Vision: In all that we do, we support the Underlying Principles of SFU, as articulated in the University’s Strategic Vision: Academic and Intellectual Freedom, Diversity, Internationalization, Respect for Aboriginal Peoples and Cultures, Supportive and Healthy Work Environment, & Sustainability.

**IV. Our Organization**

Student Services at SFU is led by the Vice Provost, Students & International and organized into four divisions: Athletics and Recreation, Student Affairs, Student Enrollment, and Student Success and Strategic Support.

**Strategic Planning Process Overview**

Led by the Student Services Senior Management team, phase one of this process began in September 2016. This first, information gathering phase began with extensive staff participation across the Service through unit-level SWOT workshops. This self-study exercise created opportunities for staff to reflect on their unit’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Notes from these workshops were shared with each unit director in order to be used for future unit-level planning. From here, the 21 unit-level SWOTs were rolled up into their respective divisional SWOT. Subsequently, these four divisional documents were amalgamated into the overall Student Services SWOT, found below.

The process then moved into the review phase; a panel of respected and experienced student services professionals from across Canada visited campus for three days at the end of November 2016. During their time at SFU, this committee met with a number of stakeholders, including student services staff, faculty and other campus partners, SFSS and GSS students. Using the unit-level and divisional SWOT documents and the data from their interviews to inform their thinking, this group created a report and recommendations for the VPSI. The VPSI, in turn, responded to the committee’s findings in writing. These documents can be found on the VPSI website.

The final phase of the planning cycle was kicked off with a Senior Management retreat; held on campus, the group used this day to review the aforementioned inputs, along with the literature, student data, and forecasts for the future of student services as a lens through which they reviewed the existing mission, vision, and values of Student Services and developed the list of themes, goals, and strategic actions listed below.
Communication to Student Services staff at various levels was of critical importance throughout this process. At each phase of the process, unit Directors were consulted and their feedback was incorporated into the next phase of work. Similarly, Student Service-wide town halls were held to provide a forum for Senior Management to provide information on progress to date and to respond to staff questions. Staff were also invited to provide feedback on the process via email, and through town hall surveys. Directors were asked to help the Senior Management team probe their respective units for more information around issues related to culture; feedback received from Directors and their staff was incorporated into this document.

I. Principles for Decision-Making

In addition to grounding our decisions in Student Services’ shared values (above), the following principles were agreed upon, and adhered to, by the Senior Management team:

- Any proposal (be it for the status quo or for change) requires a clear and strong rationale.
- To the extent possible, we will partner with Faculties and other units (both internal and external to SFU) to ensure quality, relevant, and coordinated service and program design and delivery.
- Transparency: We will be transparent in our processes & decision-making and will include stakeholders in this process, whenever appropriate.
- We do what is best for students; students come first.
- When more information is required to make an evidence-based decision, we delay our decision.
- We will be informed but bold in our approaches to enhancing our programs and services, as appropriate.

II. Emerging issues for consideration

Student Services’ work is not done in isolation; on the contrary, social, economic, and political factors can shape and influence the student experience and how Student Services’ approaches its work. As part of this planning exercise, the contextual issues listed below were considered, along with potential implications for our work.

External influences:

- *British Columbia K-12 system*: Curriculum and graduation requirements are changing; declining demographics.
- *British Columbia Post-secondary landscape*: New universities have been and may be created changing the competitive environment; potential to build new pathways with BC colleges.
- *Greater connections with International pathways*.
- *Housing availability and cost*: Metro Vancouver housing prices continue to climb, as do rents.
- *Technology*: Technology is changing at exponential speed.
- *Transportation to/from SFU*: Skytrain has recently expanded into Coquitlam and a fixed aerial link or ‘skybus’ to Burnaby is a future possibility.
Evolving student population:

- **New pathways leading to greater student diversity**: Our students will come in increasing number from different pathways leading to even greater student body diversity and requiring specific transitional supports to ensure their success. SFU can anticipate serving more new Canadians, more first-generation Canadians, more refugees, more indigenous learners, more students with disabilities, more non-traditional students (e.g. NOW, CODE), more students who identify as LGBTQIA+, more student athletes and international students.

- **Student expectations**: Student expectations are shifting. For example, they are seeking more opportunities to connect in more flexible ways.

- **Student wellness**: There are growing numbers of more complex cases of students managing mental health concerns.

SFU factors:

- **Campus growth**: Both Surrey and Vancouver campuses are set to expand in the future; UniverCity continues to grow at Burnaby.

- **New physical spaces**: Current and planned construction projects include the Student Union Building, the Stadium project, and Residence & Housing’s Master Plan to double the number of beds available on campus.

- **Student Services staff demographics**: We must consider upcoming staff retirements and the need for succession planning.

- **SFU Strategic Plan**: A new planning cycle is underway.

- **Student Experience project**: Upcoming project on the Student Experience, led by the VPA & Provost will have implications for our work.

- **Growth and strategic direction of FIC**: We must consider the specific needs of those students, and serve them well.

III. Student Services SWOT Analysis

As previously mentioned, the below analysis is the result of a comprehensive roll-up process, beginning with unit-level SWOT work, to divisional SWOTs, ending with this Student Services-wide evaluation.

**Strengths**:

Our contributions to the student experience & our stakeholders are vast. Most Student Services staff are enthusiastic about their work. They are dedicated to the SFU student experience and believe their work contributes to student learning. Moreover, they see each other as knowledgeable, with a broad and deep understanding of respective subject matter. There is an acute interest in augmenting communication across Student Services; staff articulate that they are keen to learn more about the work done in other units and divisions. Finally, staff are interested in learning more in order to improve the student experience; they hope to see additional professional development offerings.
Weaknesses:
Student Services staff share a number of concerns. One common worry heard across the Service is, “our unit has to do more work, with the same resources and therefore we cannot keep up with student demand. There is just not enough people, money, space, or time.” Facilities, particularly those used by Athletics & Recreation, are aging and outdated. Some staff across the service feel a lack of connection and belonging to the “Student Services team”; this is characterized by a general absence of knowledge about what other units do and lack of clarity of Student Services’ vision and goals. These aforementioned issues have contributed to pockets of staff burnout and/or low morale within certain units.

Staff raised a number of concerns related to communications. Our communications methods for students are seen to be outdated and lacking strategy. Similarly, staff felt that communications within and across Student Services and to colleagues across the three SFU campuses could be improved through updated strategies. Staff are concerned that the campus is unaware of our work’s contribution to student learning. Connected to communications, staff would like Student Services leadership to share more regularly about Service-level priorities. Similar critiques regarding understanding what Student Services does and a desire for enhanced communications came from the Faculties.

Opportunities:
Student Services has an opportunity to not only build awareness about our respective roles, responsibilities, and priorities across Student Services and the university, but to better share Student Services’ expertise with respect to the SFU student experience. In support of this, Student Services can invest in staff professional development, particularly in identified priority areas, including: leadership and management competence, and inclusion, diversity and intercultural competence. Given fixed resourcing, there is an opportunity to think about how we accomplish our goals in new and different ways; using research, assessment and evaluation to ground decision-making, we may need to start or stop doing some work. Student Services can continue to build and foster relationships with academic departments, student governments, community organizations and colleges to improve the student experience.

Threats:
There is a boosted competition for well-qualified students across BC post-secondary institutions, requiring SFU to find ways to standout from other schools in the delivery of the overall student experience. Students who choose to attend SFU are increasingly diverse and many are arriving at SFU with more complicated concerns (E.g. mental health, immigration, etc.) and thus, are increasingly drawing on Student Services resources. Students’ expectations of Student Services are evolving almost as quickly as technology’s exponential growth. We need to keep up with both. The multi-campus governance structure is operationally awkward and limits our ability to be fully invested at the Surrey and Vancouver campuses; as a result, we are often seen as being “Burnaby-centric”.

Themes, Goals, & Strategic Actions

Through the aforementioned process, three broad themes emerged as areas of focus for Student Services over the next three years: 1. To enhance the student experience, 2. To demonstrate a culture of partnerships, accountability and engagement, and 3. To strive for service excellence.

I. Introduction of Themes

Theme 1: We enhance the student experience.
SFU’s Strategic Vision calls on us all to engage students. More specifically, it challenges us, “to equip students with the knowledge, skills and experiences to prepare them for a life in an ever-changing and challenging world.” Student Services’ mission, vision, and values are centered on the student experience; we are in the business of helping students build a sense of community and affiliation with SFU, of encouraging student development and learning, of ensuring that students are safe, healthy, and well, and we do this all through the strategic enrollment management lens. Research shows that students who feel a sense of belonging subsequently are engaged learners, persist to graduation at higher rates, and develop important knowledge, skills, and attitudes for their future careers, often building affinity towards their university long after their time as a student.

Theme 2: We demonstrate a culture of partnerships, accountability and engagement.
Student Services staff are deeply committed to their work and to SFU students. That said, this planning process highlighted the need to address the culture of Student Services and, taken one step further, to set a new ethos for how we will, together, do our work. This revitalized culture is one that ensures all staff are motivated, understand their role, that they understand what is expected of them, and how their work contributes to Student Services’ goals. This culture prioritizes and encourages exemplary staff performance and promotes professional development opportunities for all staff so that, collectively, our knowledge and skills are current, responsive to change, and reflect the needs of our students. We want all Student Services to feel inspired by their work and the collective work of Student Services.

Theme 3: We strive for service excellence.
The many units within Student Services are providing high quality programming and services to students. However, through this process, it is clear that there is a need to increase awareness of Student Services’ roles and responsibilities both within the service and across units, but also with our stakeholder groups including the Faculties, other administrative units, the student societies, and, students in general. Additionally, as the needs of students change, Student Services must ensure that our work remains relevant and that this is supported through research, assessment and evaluation. From here, Student Services must anticipate future student needs and effectively and responsibly steward our structures, systems, processes and resources accordingly.

These three themes are highly integrated and, as such, success (or failure) in one area will consequently impact the others. For example, a positive staff culture, one that holds staff to high standards, encourages
their professional development and challenges them in their daily work will undoubtedly positively impact our level of service and thus, the student experience.

II. Themes, in detail

Theme 1: We enhance the student experience.

Goal 1-a: Deepen students’ sense of belonging as valued members of the SFU community.
A student’s introduction and transition to the University environment are critical to establishing that student’s sense of belonging. Moreover, research shows that a student’s sense of belonging is tightly correlated to subsequent engagement and retention of that student. Further, a student’s sense of belonging to the SFU community extends past their orientation and into their overall experience as a student, often building affinity to the University long after their time as a student.

Strategic Actions: (How we achieve the above goal)
1. With campus partners, enhance orientation and transition programming on all three campuses.
2. Re-imagine academic advising to enhance transition support for new students.
3. Ignite school spirit and connection to enrich and develop a sense of belonging for all students.

Key Performance Measures: (How we measure success of strategic actions, above)
1. Grow the percentage of new students participating in orientation programming through increased capacity and access to transition resources.
2. Increase the proportion of incoming students who engage with academic advising resources during their transition process through new initiatives and technologies.
3. Increase student participation in on campus activities and events, such as varsity athletics, recreation programming, student peer groups, and other co-curricular engagement programming.
4. Measure students’ sense of belonging and transition success through relevant student surveys and analysis of students’ academic standing and declaration rates.

Goal 1-b: Expand and enhance student learning experiences.
Students who engage in meaningful learning experiences facilitated by their university community benefit from a host of positive outcomes, including higher rates of completion, enhanced critical-thinking, problem solving, communication skills, and increased confidence. Student Services supports the concept that an engaged student is a successful student; accordingly, our energy is directed at creating conditions that deepen student learning.

Strategic Actions: (How we achieve the above goal)
1. Communicate the value of engagement and the existing opportunities for all students, with additional, intentional focus on student populations with identified risk.
2. Continue to partner with academic units & student societies to coordinate, strengthen, and grow programs of mutual interest.
3. Grow, and where possible co-ordinate, experiential learning opportunities.
4. Develop equity, diversity and inclusion competence of students.

Key Performance Measures: *(How we measure success of strategic actions, above)*
1. Demonstrate improved student awareness of the value of engagement and knowledge of existing opportunities, through student surveys and participation rates in available programs, particularly in identified student subpopulations.
2. Regularly evaluate and improve collaborative programming practices by collecting feedback from participating departments and units.
3. Growth and better co-ordination of experiential learning opportunities through new or enhanced relationships with faculty champions and external partners.
4. Develop, adopt & assess a diversity and inclusion plan.

Goal 1-c: Cultivate a culture of health, safety, and wellbeing among students.
Student health, safety and wellbeing are foundational to student success. When students are able to take care of themselves, they are more likely to do well academically. Students arrive at SFU with more complex needs at greater numbers than before. Given our fixed budget, Student Services will need to explore new and different models of both serving students’ mental health needs as well as proactively educating students about their health, safety, and wellbeing. In addition, our policies and practices should be similarly based on the key principles of student success.

Strategic Actions: *(How we achieve the above goal)*
1. Within the Healthy Campus Community framework, conduct a review of policies and practices that we oversee or influence to determine how they can better support student health, safety, and wellbeing.
2. Develop and deliver a comprehensive student-facing sexual violence education and prevention program, with consideration paid to the diversity of SFU students.
3. Expand and enhance students’ awareness, knowledge, skills, and behaviours regarding health, safety, wellbeing and good conduct.
4. Explore the possibility of implementing an early alert intervention model for various levels of students in distress (academic and non-academic), which includes building faculty and staff competence in supporting students in distress, IT systems, and implementation planning.

Key Performance Measures: *(How we measure success of strategic actions, above)*
1. Assess, revise and adopt improved policies and regulations to better support student health, safety and wellbeing. (Policies and regulations currently under review include scheduling, withdrawals, academic forgiveness, academic integrity and student conduct, qualifying admissions, course access and the admissions model review.)
2. Assess student’s awareness of, and behaviour change as it relates to, sexual violence, health, safety, and wellbeing.

3. Assess comprehensive university-wide communication plan for student-facing sexual violence education and prevention program.

4. Increase the number of students who participate in programming to reduce effects of or eliminate increasing mental health concerns. (eg. physical activity, puppy therapy, yoga, meditation).

5. Increase the number of students who participate in experiential learning opportunities, including student leadership, peer programs and co-op, to support above initiatives.

6. Evaluate feasibility of implementing an early alert intervention system for students in distress, including examining the suitability of incoming CRM technology to support the process.

7. Create an annual report that summarizes number and nature of cases involving students of concern.

Goal 1-d: Identify and enroll students likely to be successful at SFU and whose expectations of the institution are a good match for the experience that is delivered.

A critical aspect of improving the student experience is ensuring that our incoming students' expectations of SFU are matched closely to the actual experiences they will have at the institution. At SFU, we commit to recruiting and enrolling 'best-fit' students who should have the potential to complete their academic goals successfully, and we commit to supporting those students through their academic experience at the institution.

Strategic Actions: (How we achieve the above goal)

1. Continue to collaborate with academic units to foster shared recruitment and retention efforts.

2. Develop and implement a new admissions model to assist in identifying the students most likely to experience academic success at SFU.

3. Update, develop, and integrate the domestic, international, indigenous, and athletics recruitment and admissions strategic plan(s).

4. Champion access and successful outcomes for strategically-identified student communities, as per SEMC.

5. Implement customizable communication technologies and strategies, including a CRM, that will facilitate a better understanding of our students’ individual goals, capacities and challenges, and that will allow us to educate those students about SFU’s academic programs, student life and culture.

6. In partnership with SEMC, lead the development of a strategic enrollment management plan, including assessment of this plan.

Key Performance Measures: (How we measure success of strategic actions, above)

1. Meet the enrollment plan targets for all academic programs, as per SEMC.

2. Make admissions offers in a timely fashion.

3. Increase ability to identify and segment potential applicant pool through CRM.

4. Improve academic retention rates in all academic programs.
5. Improve applicant satisfaction rates in comparison to previous surveys.

**Theme 2: We demonstrate a culture of partnerships, accountability and engagement.**

Goal 2-a: Exemplary staff performance is expected, recognized, and appreciated.
We want our staff to feel inspired to work for Student Services and to strive to do their best work every day. To help build and foster this culture of enthusiasm, greater attention will be paid not only to staff appreciation, but also to supporting staff performance management and development. All Student Services staff will be supported and challenged by their supervisor to develop the knowledge, skills, values, and behaviours to do their job exceptionally well. Student Services management staff (i.e. staff with direct reports) are encouraged to develop their leadership and management knowledge and skills.

**Strategic Actions: (How we achieve the above goal)**

1. Enhance existing staff performance management and development process.
2. Build management staff competence in leadership skills, including: performance management, strategic planning, institutional knowledge and understanding, post-secondary acumen, and assessment.
3. Build staff competence in goal-setting (personal and professional), self-management, and delivering and receiving feedback.
4. Develop a succession plan at the director and senior management level in Student Services, including strategies for addressing the challenges of recruiting, both internally and externally.
5. Identify high performing staff and recognize their performance through further development opportunities as well as through nominations to the SS and SFU staff recognition awards.
6. Develop a competency-based professional development framework for adoption within Student Services that is linked to the annual performance development plan (building off CACUSS Competencies.)

**Key Performance Measures (How we measure success of strategic actions, above)**

1. Baseline data is captured regarding management staff self-reported confidence in their leadership related skills.
2. Baseline data is captured regarding all staff self-reported confidence in goal-setting, self-management and delivering/receiving feedback.
3. All staff co-develop an annual professional development plan and agree upon action steps with their supervisor.
4. A talent pipeline plan is developed at the service and unit-levels.
5. Identified high performing staff are retained.
6. All staff are encouraged to seek out opportunities that support their learning in identified areas within the context of annual PD plans, which could include: participation in relevant professional organizations and/or communities of practice, attendance at related conferences, review of relevant literature, or the pursuit of formal programs of study.
7. All staff are invited to participate in training on relevant and important topics, as identified by the professional development framework. High priority topics include: evidence-based decision making and equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Goal 2-b: Staff understand how their work, and the work of their unit, contribute to Student Services’ goals and to the University’s Strategic Vision.

If Student Services is to be truly student and university-centered in our approach, then it is imperative that all staff have a basic understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all Student Services units, beginning with their own role and the role of their unit and how they relate to the academic enterprise.

Strategic Actions: *(How we achieve the above goal)*

1. Build a culture of collaboration where staff are encouraged to seek out opportunities for collaboration across units and divisions (e.g. short-term job exchanges across units, cross-functional projects, etc.)
2. Student Services leadership (Senior Management and Unit Directors) to communicate about their work with all Student Services staff.
3. Leverage multiple platforms to better tell the Student Services story to internal and external to Student Services audiences.
4. Develop and launch a comprehensive, consistent onboarding program for all new Student Services staff.
5. Refresh all unit-level strategic plans and develop unit-level operational plans, annually.

Key Performance Measures: *(How we measure success of strategic actions, above)*

1. An increased number of cross-unit teams have delivered collaborative programming.
2. Staff report an increased understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all Student Services units and priority work across Student Services.
3. SFU community members report an increased understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Student Services.
4. A Student Services narrative is publicly available that clearly articulates our role, services, programs and value proposition to key stakeholders.
5. All Student Services staff have participated in the new onboarding program.

Goal 2-c: The knowledge and skills of staff are current, anticipatory of new directions, and reflect the strategic needs of the service and our key stakeholders.

In order to provide students, the university, and the community with relevant programs and services, Student Services staff are encouraged to continually look forward towards the future, to take informed risks, and to learn from failure.

Strategic Actions: *(How we achieve the above goal)*

1. Regularly assess and act on our stakeholder needs (including: students, faculties, other service units, three-campus model, business and government, recruitment pathways).
2. Student Services staff are encouraged to take on an innovative, forward-thinking approach to their work.

**Key Performance Measures (How we measure success of strategic actions, above)**

1. Develop and use a mapping of Student Services stakeholder relationships and internal and external partnerships that showcases the breadth and depth of our reach and impact.
2. We have up to date environmental scans of our key stakeholders (see above).
3. Staff share openly about their lessons learned through failure.
4. Staff are able to articulate their beliefs on the future of their work.

**Theme 3: We strive for service excellence.**

**Goal 3-a:** Ensure key stakeholders (students, staff, faculty) understand our programs, services and areas of expertise.

Through the review process, we learned that a great deal of confusion exists with respect to the roles and responsibilities of Student Services units, by staff within, and external to, Student Services. The role of Student Services must be clarified to our colleagues and, moreover, Student Services must be positioned as a knowledge hub regarding the student experience. Additionally, improved, student-centered methods of communication with SFU students must be identified and adopted.

**Strategic Actions: (How we achieve the above goal)**

1. Provide consistent, effective, timely information about Student Services’ work to the SFU community.
2. Continue to build relationships and collaborate with Faculties, administrative units, student governments, and across three campuses in order to improve student outcomes.
3. Increase our ability to proactively communicate to students in ways that make sense for the students.

**Key Performance Measures: (How we measure success of strategic actions, above)**

- Implement a CRM system that will allow us to segment and target our communications effectively to constituents across the institution.
- Increase in collaborative projects executed in partnership with faculties and with student societies.
- Maintain accurate Student Services organization charts and staff lists that are accessible to colleagues and external partners.

**Goal 3-b:** Ensure Student Services anticipates, and responds to, changing stakeholder needs through effective use of research, assessment, and evaluation processes.

Student Services staff must be able to support their work and decision-making with evidence; given limited resources and changing student needs, it is imperative that all programming and services are shown with data to support our efforts. Furthermore, Student Services staff must develop the ability to
anticipate what’s to come in our work and use this foresight to continually evolve programs to meet future stakeholder needs.

**Strategic Actions: (How we achieve the above goal)**

1. Develop staff capacity in research, assessment, and evaluation to inform practice.
2. Formalize structure(s) to support unit, divisional and service-level research, assessment, and evaluation work.
3. Support Student Services units to systemically evaluate performance of programs and services.
4. Develop a Student Services-wide plan for assessing the impact and efficiency of key programs and services.

**Key Performance Measures: (How we measure success of strategic actions, above)**

1. Establishment of a Student Services Assessment Committee; this committee, with representation from each SS unit, will champion and lead assessment work across the Service.
2. All Student Services units publish research, assessment, and evaluation data as part of an annual reporting cycle.
3. Assessment is identified as a key competency area in the professional development plan.

**Goal 3-c: Effectively leverage and steward structures, systems, and resources to provide service excellence.**

Student Services must optimize existing resources, seek opportunities for additional and/or different resources and develop the necessary capacity to meet student and other stakeholder needs; this requires responsible planning, management and assessment of organizational structures, IT systems, human resources, budgets and space.

**Strategic Actions: (How we achieve the above goal)**

1. Promote good stewardship of university resources through increased cross-campus communication, collaboration, and through the identification and reduction of redundancies.
2. Develop and implement an effective operating plan for the management of existing human, fiscal, technological and facility resources in support of Student Services’ goals and the University’s Strategic Vision; annually, review, revise, and report out on the plan.
3. Conduct annual strategic review exercises at the unit, divisional, and service level, which includes reviewing and revising existing plans based on outcomes and changing needs and resources; use this process to inform budget and other resource allocation/reallocation for the upcoming fiscal year (decisions based on assessment data.)
4. In conjunction with ITS, and within the existing IT stewardship structure, develop a student systems strategy and roadmap to ensure the institution is not only current, but also becomes competitive, in its student systems.
5. Leverage IT systems and systems-thinking to improve service and assessment.
6. Address identified organizational issues:
   a. Strengthen collaboration between Recruitment & Admissions units.
b. Review roles and reporting of student conduct and sexual violence work, in light of Sexual Violence & Misconduct policy.

c. Develop the Business Analysis and Assessment unit.

d. Review roles and reporting of Senior Management administrative staff.

e. Balance divisional responsibilities.

f. Explore possibilities of Student Services fundraising/sponsorship officer.

Key Performance Measures: *(How we measure success of strategic actions, above)*

1. Develop and implement annual operating plan for the management of Student Services resources (human, fiscal, technological, and space/facilities).

2. Operationalize annual strategic planning exercise at unit, divisional, and service level.

3. Ensure Student Services provides leadership and support to key IT projects, such as CRM.

4. Maintain strong relationships with our ITS partners.

5. Review organizational changes post-implementation to determine effectiveness.

6. Review outcomes of organizational changes as per the related intentions.

**Next Steps**

This strategic plan will reinforce work already underway in various Student Services units to ensure that we are working towards our vision; this plan will remain in place for three years and will be reviewed and updated as needed or as circumstances dictate. The plan provides a structure within which units should be able to launch their respective strategic plans. Unit-level strategic plan alignment will be reviewed on a regular basis by Student Services Senior Management and overall will be shared on an annual basis with the Provost. Goals and actions will next be prioritized and a one year operational plan will be developed and implemented.