AVP Students & International – 3 year Plan (2010-2013)

Revised: Oct 25, 2009
1. Executive Summary

The mission of Student Services is to foster transformative student experiences by collaboratively anticipating, facilitating, and providing services, programs and environments for student learning and success. The portfolio is comprised of four divisions (Athletics, Enrollment Services, Student Learning & Retention, & Student & Community Life). There are 21 departments that run hundreds of programs and services across SFU. SFU International reports directly to the AVPSI.

After a review of strategic influences and a self-assessment, it is clear that:

- Financial resources are inadequate for current programs, services, & structure
- Institutional policies and practices related to planning and revenue generation constrain effective long-term planning
- The role and place of Student Services need to be clarified to achieve University goals.

Broadly stated, key objectives for the portfolio are:

1. To foster student achievement through academic and personal support services and programs.
2. To contribute to and support non-classroom based elements of the student experience
3. To provide experiential learning opportunities that complement classroom based learning
4. To coordinate the development and implementation of the university recruitment & retention plan in support of strategic enrollment management

Student Services has been directed to reduce our base-budget by $805,000 a year for the next three years. Revenue generation activities will be used to mitigate the situation to the greatest extent possible. Revenue increases from planned and funded student growth for 2010-11 will thus require that the total size of the budget reduction is about $197K which will be achieved by reducing the size of several programs and services, utilizing efficiencies provided by automation to limit or reduce temporary staff required to serve a continuously increasing student population and by cutting non-salary operating costs such as travel, supplies and staff professional development. Despite efficiencies gained through automation, modified processes and procedures and increased work load, service levels and programs will decline. We are giving priority to what we believe to be critical programs that underpin enrolment management, especially student success.
2. Student Services Core Activities

Our Mission:
We foster transformative student experiences by collaboratively anticipating, facilitating, and providing services, programs and environments for student learning and success.

Our Vision:
Student Services at Simon Fraser University, characterized by boldness, collaboration and innovation, is an international leader in services and programs.

The portfolio of the AVP Students & International contains a broad range of divisions and departments which are listed below. Beside each department is an indication of either a permanent or traveling presence at each of SFU’s campuses.

### Associate VP Students & International

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<th>Division</th>
<th>Burnaby</th>
<th>Surrey</th>
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<td>Communication Services</td>
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<td>SFU International</td>
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<td>Student Central</td>
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### Division of Athletics

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<td>Athletics</td>
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### Division of Enrollment Services

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<td>Admissions</td>
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<td>Enrollment Services</td>
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<td>Financial Assistance &amp; Awards</td>
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<td>Information, Records, &amp; Registration</td>
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<td>Recruitment</td>
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<td>Senate &amp; Academic Services</td>
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<td>Student Financials</td>
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### Division of Student Learning & Retention

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<th>Department</th>
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<td>Academic Advising &amp; Student Success</td>
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<td>Centre for Students with Disabilities</td>
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<td>Work Integrated Learning (Coop &amp; Career Services)</td>
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3. Planning Assumptions

The portfolio of the Associate Vice-President Students & International implemented a planning process in 2005 which is no used by all units. Resulting plans are living documents that include goals, strategies, and measurable outcomes. This document represents a broad overview of all the plans in the portfolio and does not provide in-depth unit level detail. Unit plans are available for inspection.

The planning process over the past 12 or so months has used the following assumptions.

- There will be a cut of 10% in base-budget over the next three fiscal years (3.3% for 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13).
- Plans are based on the current, Senate approved, enrollment plan. There is planned and fully funded growth in undergraduate enrollment for 2010-11 but none for subsequent years, modest growth in graduate enrollment, and international student enrollment is targeted by Senate approval for 10% of the total domestic undergraduate FTE.
- Budget envelopes are fixed and targets must be met through cuts or increased revenue to provide a balanced budget.
- Position elimination is possible and any “buy outs” may be funded either through one-time monies or borrowing future funding against the position. Without one of these mechanisms in place no buy outs are possible.
- The impact of the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) due to be implemented in June of 2010 will be revenue neutral.

4. Strategic Influences

Student Services engaged in an extensive process to develop a new vision, policy framework and organizational structure in 2005. That process drew on extensive input from the campus
community and staff in the portfolio. The process and its outcomes revitalized enthusiasm of the employees in Student Services regarding the value it adds to the SFU community. While some of the key outcomes of the 2005 process continue to inform our practice, we also recognize there have been numerous changes to the SFU financial environment. In early October 2009, the senior leadership in the portfolio undertook a SWOT analysis. The comments in this section as well as in the section on self-assessment draw on the work done in 2005 and the more recent review.

4.1 Opportunities
The interest by SFU’s senior leadership in Student Services indicated in the 2005 report remains high from the Student Services’ perspective. In fact, there seems to be an increased confidence in management of Student Services by Vice-Presidents and Deans. We recognize there continues to be opportunities to share information, find new ways to collaborate, and integrate our activities with the strategic direction of the institution.

A key theme in our 2005 assessment was that Student Services had to improve communication internally and throughout the SFU campus community. While we have made significant strides to promote a better understanding of Student Services to our immediate and wider communities, there remain significant opportunities for improvement. For example, Student Services has engaged with key stakeholders in Strategic Enrollment Management (SEM). The opportunities for continued planning and implementation will directly support the academic and University plans.

We recognize the opportunity to fund programs and services through revenue generation. Though we have historically avoided partnerships that appear commercial in nature, we now recognize the need to work with local and national, commercial and community partners, to seek funding for the adequate provision of services to SFU students and other community members including faculty and staff.

Athletics moving to the NCAA improves our potential for recruiting international students from the US. We are also examining the potential value of combining the Office of First Nations with the First Nations Student Centre to create an opportunity to better serve First Nations students and contribute to broader understanding of First Nations programming and issues for the entire campus. Finally, we recognize the opportunity (along with the financial necessity) to restructure the portfolio in order to meet the current demands of our work in an environment of declining base-budget funding.

Several restructuring opportunities are being examined that will increase efficiency and reduce costs, particularly through reduced management by increasing the span of control of managers. For example, we are revisiting the division of Recreation from Athletics. We also see the merits of aligning our departmental structure with the University’s strategic enrollment management planning. And we believe that as a
result of the reorganizational changes made several years ago that less senior management is necessary to effectively operate the organization.

### 4.2 Threats

It should be no surprise that many of the threats outlined in 2005 remain today. Competition for students and resources is intense both internally as well as externally. Indeed, indirect student entry and the development of new universities in the region coupled with demographic shifts have intensified competition since 2005.

University policies, such as across the board cuts and the implementation of temporary hiring freezes have constrained planning and negatively impacted operations both through a reduced work force and by imposing managerial workloads directed towards managing frozen positions. Budget cuts since 2005 have undermined any gains made in service levels and reduced our ability to positively impact the student experience. Additionally, the creation of new Faculties has caused increases in certain service requirements that have been completely unfunded. During the 2005 restructuring some employees left Student Services resulting in opportunities to hire better prepared more enthusiastic employees. However, the continued budget cuts have diminished our ability to retain staff; we have lost some key staff members and we may lose more to other departments and institutions where funding conditions and workloads are more favorable.

The financial model used for fee-for-service and revenue based activities is problematic. Student Services has been challenged in maintaining clear revenue streams. For example a fee-for-service may one year be deposited to a department’s account and the following year be placed in GUR. However, the expenses of running the program remain in the department. Similarly, budget cuts for the past few years have also been applied to departmental revenues, which results in losing base-budget funding in a unit because they earn fee-for-service revenue. We will continue to explore revenue generation opportunities externally; however, policies regarding revenue sharing with the “house” need to be reviewed and discussions around the extent to which core student services can/should be externally funded need to occur otherwise there is a significant disincentive to seek external funding.

The final threat has to do with the student experience. For many years there have been reports pointing out students’ dissatisfaction with some student services, food services and student residences. Reports such as the Globe and Mail Report Card, the MacLean’s rankings, and the Canadian University Survey Consortium (and we suspect this will emerge in our NSSE results) repeatedly point to a need for SFU to focus on these areas from a student’s point of view. We recognize the shortcomings of the various methodologies used, but we also recognize the key themes that have been repeatedly identified and triangulate with our institutional data. If we do not address students’ expectations, we will erode our ability to attract students and in particular those from targeted groups (e.g., students from outside our historical catchments, high achieving students, etc.). Further, issues of the student experience
must be a part of managing our current work with third-part providers such as Chartwells or any future partnerships (e.g., private residence providers).

5. Self-Assessment
Given that Student Services engaged in a rigorous self-assessment in 2005, we refer to this framework below and have used it as a benchmark.

5.1 Strengths
Since 2005 we have improved service delivery to our multiple campuses by offering flexible services and innovative programs. There exists confidence in the “new” Student Services with its clear vision and focus to improve our policy framework. Our people remain diverse, enthusiastic and dedicated employees now directed by strong leaders. The expressed concern in 2005 about a lack of feeling part of a larger Student Services team has evolved into strong divisional relationships.

The 2005 weakness: “Student Services is characterized by poor, or limited, stakeholder communications and promotions both internally (amongst Student Services units) and externally (with SFSS, faculty senior administration, alumni, and external communities,)” has improved. We now have respected and/or known services both external and internal to our campus. Additionally we are, in many cases, working positively with Faculties and students to improve services to and for them.

5.2 Weaknesses
Some weaknesses from 2005 remain. The general lack of resources, (i.e., human, financial, space, and equipment & maintenance) all continue today. The financial improvements made in 2006 have subsequently been lost due to the annual budget cuts since that time. These cuts have led to a decline in service standards, a decline in professional development opportunities, a perceived decline in staff morale, problems retaining appropriate staffing levels, and have negatively impacted our ability to meet student and family expectations. The uncertainty of the planning environment and lack of funds to support the 2005 vision also has the potential to erode confidence in the leadership of Student Services. Our promise to deliver “plan driven budgets” is becoming hollow. This development prompts us to seek dramatic solutions.

Although great strides have been made in developing strong divisional relationships there is room for improvement. Some areas of Student Services still lack a shared understanding of our strategic direction and have demonstrated difficulty collaborating.

Since 2005 new issues have emerged related to our organizational structure. The current structure of the Senior Management team is no longer sustainable in the current fiscal context. Structures in Recreation & Athletics, Recruitment &
Retention, as well as placement of Interfaith and First Nations in Student Service need further examination and potential realignment.

Finally, this enterprise lacks the ability to be nimble, that is, it is unable to change quickly. Part of this is due to the inevitable resistance to change that exists in any organization, but there is also room to improve on the “whole team” dynamic.

6. Objectives
As previously stated, the portfolio of the AVPSI uses an in-depth planning framework for each of its units and services. Rather than collating the many objectives here, five broader service-wide objectives are provided.

1. To foster student achievement through academic and personal support services and programs
2. To provide non-classroom-based support of the student experience (transactional to transformational)
3. To support experiential including international learning opportunities that complement classroom-based learning
4. To coordinate development and implementation of the university recruitment & retention plans in support of strategic enrollment management
5. To maintain, where possible, current service and programming levels

7. Three Year Growth Scenarios
Maintenance of the status quo requires significant cost savings most likely gained through reduced management costs and program elimination. Growth or maintenance of Student Services will only be possible through new funding derived from fees. To that end, we will strive to:

- Implement a transcript fee (this fee is on the books, but has not been charged since the implementation of SIMS as it required a modification to the system)
- Provide targeted retention programming (e.g., Boost Camp, expanded Student Success Programming, “enrichment” programming for student leaders, on a cost recovery plus basis, etc.)
- Seek advertising and sponsorship opportunities for corporate and community partners
- Generate revenue through service provision to other units (e.g., offering staff training and workshops we offer to our students)
- Explore partnerships with other units to target new markets (e.g., language training, bridging programs, youth conferencing, etc.)
8. Worst Case Scenario for 2010/2011

Budget planning for 2010/2011 relies on new funded student growth and reduced operating costs in four of five divisions (Athletics is already “under water” and no budget cuts have been imposed on this division of Student Services). We estimate that anticipated revenues will mean that we must reduced expenditures by approximately $196,000 in 2010/2011. Other anticipated revenues include implementation of a new transcript fee along with other new fee-for-service programs and advertising in various publications.

9. Financial Plan

9.2 Worst Case Scenario (10% Cut over 3 Years (2010/11-2012/13)

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<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Redundancy</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$455K</td>
<td>$500</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Student Revenue</td>
<td>$564K</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New non-tuition Revenue</td>
<td>$54K</td>
<td>$30K</td>
<td>$20K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Cost Reduction</td>
<td>$196K</td>
<td>$329K</td>
<td>$294K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Change (10%)</td>
<td>$814K</td>
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<td>$814K</td>
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10. Communication

Our strategic planning process has included consultation within and among units in the portfolio of the AVPSI. In anticipation of a difficult budget year, the Senior Directors held a retreat with the unit Directors in March 2009. At that time, the unit Directors made it clear that they could no longer sustain an across the board cut and that they would abide by any strategic decisions made by the Senior Directors and the AVPSI. Accordingly, the communication challenge is not so much in terms of collecting information as it is about disseminating the decisions that have been and will be made. Since the base budget for the units is mostly salary costs, communication regarding position elimination must be planned in consultation with Human Resources. Other cost reductions will be controversial as well. There are limited ways of avoiding strong reactions from our campus community or the external community when we terminate programs and services that have been in place for years.