

SHERIDAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ADVANCED LEARNING

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT SERVICES
STRATEGIC READINESS,
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE,
SUPPORT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

A Report Prepared for

Maria Lucido Bezely, Dean of Students

By:

David McMurray, Vice President, Student Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University

Brian Fleming, Vice President, Student Affairs & Campus Life, Mount Royal University

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL

October 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| CONSULTING TEAM PROFILES | 1 |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY | 2 |
| INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND | 4 |
| PURPOSE | 6 |
| ASSESSMENT PROCESS DESCRIPTION & ACTIVITIES | 7 |
| FINDINGS | 8 |
| <i>Strategy</i> | 9 |
| <i>Structure</i> | 14 |
| <i>Processes</i> | 28 |
| <i>People</i> | 36 |
| <i>Accountability</i> | 37 |
| <i>Culture</i> | 40 |
| PARTING THOUGHTS | 43 |
| RECOMMENDATIONS | 47 |
| REFERENCES | 52 |
| APPENDIX 1. LIST OF REVIEWED INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS | 54 |
| APPENDIX 2. INTERVIEW LIST | 57 |
| APPENDIX 3. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS | 60 |
| APPENDIX 4. TRADITIONAL & INNOVATIVE STUDENT AFFAIRS MODELS | 62 |
| APPENDIX 5. ORGANIZATION CHART | 64 |
| APPENDIX 6. EMERGING TRENDS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS | 65 |
| APPENDIX 7. LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING EXAMPLES | 66 |

CONSULTING TEAM PROFILES

David McMurray – Vice President, Student Affairs at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, ON. An accomplished, award winning student affairs and services professional, David has successfully implemented strategies in a wide variety of student affairs and services venues achieving high standards of excellence, innovation and recognition. David pioneered the outcomes based Co-Curricular Record at Laurier which has now become ubiquitous in Canadian higher education.

David has served in the country's most senior capacities in the field of student affairs and services, particularly as president of the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services (CACUSS); president of the Student Affairs and Services Association (SASA) of CACUSS; and Chair of the Ontario Committee on Student Affairs (OCSA). He is the recipient of the CACUSS Award of Honour, CACUSS Award for Service, SASA Award of Recognition and the SASA Award for Service.

Nominated by the Association of Universities and Colleges Canada (AUCC), David received Her Majesty the Queen's golden jubilee medal for excellence in higher education, administration and Student Services. He has presented extensively at conferences, delivered keynotes, conducted strategic planning workshops and been engaged as a consultant for numerous student affairs and services external assessments and reviews.

Brian Fleming - Vice-President, Student Affairs and Campus Life at Mount Royal University in Calgary, AB. Brian Fleming supports the success and satisfaction of students as Vice-President of Student Affairs and Campus Life at Mount Royal University. He works to understand the changing needs of students and to apply this knowledge to Student Services within Mount Royal and to his profession.

Brian Fleming joined Mount Royal in 1985 and has held several management positions in Student Services areas, including Athletics, Recreation and Student Affairs & Campus Life. In 2005, he was appointed as the chief student affairs officer and currently holds the title of Vice-President of Student Affairs and Campus Life. During his time at the University, Mr. Fleming has been heavily involved in the expansion of the campus. He led the research and development of the Mount Royal University Recreation Centre and Wellness Centre that opened in 2002. He served on the project team for the student residence expansion completed in 2003 and presently sits on the Campus Expansion Committee. He was also the Chairperson for the expansion of the Flames Community Arenas that was completed in 2011.

Brian was recognized with the Mount Royal Thomas L Wood Award in 2005 and the Distinguished Administrator/Manager Award in 1999. Brian has a BA in Geography from Carleton University, a Diploma in Physical Education - Sports Administration from Mount Royal College and an MA in Leadership and Training from Royal Roads University. He has also completed several executive programs at the Harvard Graduate Schools.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An extensive process of preparation is underway towards Sheridan's goal of becoming an undergraduate, teaching University (Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, 2013). The strategic plan describes "teaching excellence and the best student experience" and collaboration with students as Sheridan's promise. The Strategic Plan also commits the institution to "reinvention of student services" to increase responsiveness. This will be achieved through "efficient, flexible and high quality services" mediated by technology where possible, without the loss of the "personal touch". The report helps inform the process of transformation required to ensure that Sheridan students receive integrated services at the time and place that will help them to achieve personal success.

Following extensive consultation with the community, and a review of key documents, 35 recommendations have been made for changes to the strategy, structure, processes, people and accountability to help shape shaping organizational behaviour towards a culture of delivering solutions to students' needs. Notable amongst those recommendations are the following:

- Develop a sustainable service philosophy that guides planning and decision-making
- Change the departmental identity of "Student Services" to "Student Affairs" to align it with the more recognized scope of the field and with institutional goals
- Adopt a three pillar model of Student Affairs, focused on learning, development, and career with students at the centre as a guiding framework for organizational design
- Continue to strengthen the holistic, comprehensive, and collaborative campus model of student advising by defining roles, commit to comprehensive training, advance retention programming, and student self service
- As an institution, investigate further opportunities to integrate high impact experiential and educationally meaningful engagement strategies across the institution
- Develop a learning and development transitional plan that focuses on the student lifecycle over the first twelve months, and beyond
- Enrich campus life beyond the classroom with a more rigorous, intentional effort designed to deliver selected experiential learning opportunities, engaging programs and activities to enhance the student experience.
- Develop a student marketing and communications strategy in conjunction with the Communications department.
- Establish a Student Services/Institutional Research planning and assessment function to build an evidence based culture for decision making and continuous improvement

- Continue to prioritize current and extended practices associated with career oriented work integrated learning.
- Support a growing and diverse international student population with distinctive support and programming for positive transition and student success.

Extensive planning has been completed by Student Services for the coming transformation; once approved, we are confident Student Services leadership will deliver and relentlessly pursue a change management plan that makes their proposal a reality. With ongoing continuous improvement, reinventing organizational design and delivery, furthering creativity, innovation and integration of efforts to support student success, Sheridan will be well poised in Canada and abroad as a leader in the provision of an exceptional student experience in post-secondary education.

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Sheridan has embarked on a journey, an evolutionary process, towards becoming an undergraduate, teaching University, significantly growing the number of undergraduate degree programs in disciplines of existing strength, and continuing to build on the strengths of its diploma, graduate certificate and apprenticeship programs resulting in multiple academic pathways for students. Under the direction and leadership of Sheridan's President, Jeff Zabudsky, a strategic plan has been created and an extensive process of preparation and transition is underway towards this goal (Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, 2013). The strategic plan describes "teaching excellence and the best student experience" as Sheridan's promise, and collaboration with students. The Strategic Plan also commits the institution to "reinvention of Student Services" to increase responsiveness. This will be achieved through "efficient, flexible and high quality services", mediated by technology where possible, without the loss of the "personal touch". Integration of service delivery will be achieved through coordination and collaboration of "campus colleagues" (p 7).

The Strategic Plan also commits the institution to "reinvention of student services" to increase responsiveness.

Maria Lucido Bezely, Dean of Students, is the officer currently responsible for the leadership of the Student Services Department and for the planning, developing and aligning Student Services as it transitions to Sheridan University. This review focuses solely on the programs and developmental support services within the Department of Student Services acknowledging that many services to students reside in other portfolios.

Student Services is committed to supporting Sheridan's Vision and Strategic Plan, and over the last year the Student Services Leadership Team embarked on an internal and external consultation process, visiting a number of western teaching universities that have evolved from College to University, as well as two Ontario universities recognized for delivering a strong undergraduate student experience. The Student Services Leadership Team also conducted an assessment of operational readiness through an internal operational review and self-study by departmental unit. Findings were consolidated and a

proposed evolution and future model for the Student Services of Sheridan University is in development for presentation to President's Council in the fall of 2014.

The expectations for an evolved model of Student Services include:

***The new model
of student
services will be
presented to the
President's
Council in the fall
of 2014***

- Alignment with Sheridan's Strategic Plan and Vision, and demonstration of the value, contribution and impact of Student Services at the highest level
- A readiness for AUCC review and accreditation
- A structure that is effective, and provides equitable support to 3 equal sized campuses
- A commitment to student success: student learning, student development, and student engagement practices and modes of delivery
- An understanding of who Sheridan students are and how the student population will change as we evolve to Sheridan University
- Demonstration of fiscal responsibility: optimal use of staff and financial resources, enhanced quality of support, purposeful and intentional programming, and responsiveness to growth in student demand and complexity with no increase in cost
- A commitment to continuous quality assurance, evidence based practice, evaluation and measurement of impact

PURPOSE

The purpose of the External Review is to provide an analysis and assessment of the readiness of the Sheridan's Student Services Department to serve Sheridan as it evolves to its desired state of Sheridan University.

More specifically, the external review assesses the current Student Services of Sheridan College as well as the proposed evolved Student Services model for Sheridan University, which Maria Lucido Bezely will present to President's Council in November 2014. The review identifies gaps, strengths, modifications and insights that will inform and enrich the final proposal to President's Council.

The External Review Panel's Assessment of Student Services examines strategic alignment, organizational alignment, and a cursory review of alignment at the unit level. The Assessment was framed using the following line of inquiry:

1. Strategic Alignment:

- a. *Does the proposed Student Services Model align to Sheridan's Strategic Plan and Academic Plan?*
- b. *If there is a legitimate rationale and contribution to the Sheridan Strategic Plan?*

2. Organizational Design, Divisional Structure and Priority Pillars:

- a. *Will the departmental structure allow us to effectively deliver on our mandate and priorities?*
- b. *Will the proposed plan fulfill the expectations as described above?*
- c. *Does it meet the hallmark of a contemporary Student Services operation?*
- d. *Are the Pillars in the proposed plan supported by contemporary literature and understanding of the domain? Does it make sense?*

3. At the Unit (Ground) level:

- a. *Are the support services and programs **comprehensive**, and do they demonstrate purposeful and intentional support based on student need?*
- b. *Are they **cohesive** (connected and integrated)?*
- c. *Are their roles **clear** (clear and understood roles and functions)?*
- d. *Do they have the **capacity** to respond to an evolving student population and evolving student need?*

ASSESSMENT PROCESS DESCRIPTION & ACTIVITIES

The External Review Panel provided evaluation and consultation services as identified by the Dean of Students. This Final Report, documenting the review process and consultant recommendations, constitutes the completion of the project. The following activities were completed during the Assessment process:

Institutional Document Review

- Institutional documents selected by the Dean of Students were reviewed (see Appendix 1 List of Reviewed Institutional Documents)

Individual & Group Meetings with Sheridan Stakeholders

- In-person and phone, individual and group interviews were conducted on June 17th, 18th, July 17th and October 9th 2014 with Sheridan stakeholders (see Appendix 2 for Interview List)
- Semi-structured interviews focused on the opinions of current senior management, Student Services Leadership Team members, staff and students about the programs and support services currently being delivered, and how well the ‘evolved draft model for Student Services’ responds and aligns with the proposed transition to a University model.

Analysis & Final Report

- The External Review Panel reviewed the current organizational management, financial and accountability structures of the Student Services Department, identifying the gaps, strengths, challenges and opportunities as Student Services evolves to align with the proposed Sheridan University model
- The Final Report summarizes the findings of the aforementioned reviews and assessments, and provides recommendations with respect to future issues, opportunities and challenges for Student Services as Sheridan transitions to a multi-campus University. In particular, it identifies gaps, strengths, modifications and insights that will inform and enrich the final proposal for “an evolved model of Student Services for Sheridan U” to be presented to the President’s Council in the late fall of 2014.

FINDINGS

“To be the top ranked teaching oriented undergraduate university in Canada dedicated to the student experience and committed to the preparation of job-ready graduates who will contribute to our cultural and socio-economic future and who will be eligible for graduate studies.”

Sheridan

Vision (2011)

It is important to recognize the advance work and knowledge that Student Services has acquired over the past few years while preparing strategically for change. The current Student Services team understands the need for a transition to a more contemporary identity that will meet the challenges and support a new university student culture. It will be important to be well organized and action oriented over a prescribed period of time for successful implementation. A healthy, well thought out, collaborative process that allows the group to dynamically respond to new challenges as they arise is critical.

The Final Report list of recommendations represents new options or reinforcement of the proposals previously considered by the Student Services team. This document represents a summation and recommendations based on the authors’ expertise and combined experience following a brief but intense orientation to Student Services challenges and opportunities as Sheridan prepares to transition from College to University.

The voices of a broad selection of stakeholders were heard during a lengthy, 4-day schedule of individual and group interviews with students, academic deans and associate deans, faculty advisors, administrative staff, senior administration, and Student Services staff. In addition, the findings presented here represent the professional experience of the external reviewers, related literature and best practices in the field, together with the learnings acquired during preliminary meetings with the Dean of Students and a review of institutional literature (see Appendix 1).

A number of themes were evident from the review of the documents supplied and from the meetings with stakeholders; some unanimously held, and others less so but nonetheless notable. Our findings are organized around those themes

These findings are categorized after Galbraith’s Star Model for customer-centric organizational design.

and in the process will respond to the questions that framed this review. Furthermore, we have loosely categorized these themes using Galbraith's (2002) Star Model for customer-centric organizational design. This model acknowledges the interconnectedness of Strategy (direction), Structure (power), Processes (information), People (skillsets) and Rewards in shaping organizational behaviour towards a culture of delivering solutions to customer needs (we substitute Accountability for Rewards to recognize a primary motivator in the public sector). The desire for an integrated solutions-based approach to student success and engagement in the “new” Sheridan was pervasively held and independent of professional or departmental affiliation.

All stakeholders were complimentary about the services and support by the department

It should also be noted that all stakeholders were complimentary about the services and support by the department. Students, in particular, commented on how helpful and professional the staff in Student Services were when responding to student needs. Similarly, they were very positive about the quality of teaching at Sheridan, based on the instructor’s experience in, and knowledge of, the workforce. Students believe that Academic Stakeholders view students as people, not numbers.

STRATEGY

Sheridan’s institutional Strategic Plan 2013-2020 presents a vision for ‘Sheridan University’ with a mission that focuses on the delivery of a “premier, purposeful educational experience in an environment renowned for creativity and innovation”. With stated values of academic excellence, creativity and innovation, and global citizenship, Sheridan’s strategic goals are to:

- Inspire creative, innovative teaching and learning
- Provide a premier learning environment
- Build our reputation as a leading employer

Student Services leadership are pleased with progress, but caution that their service plan must be, clear, concise and supported by all institutional stakeholders

As an organization Student Services was described as responsive, well intentioned, and proficient in developing and delivering programs by the Academic Stakeholders that were interviewed. Senior Student Affairs leadership is pleased with the progress of Student Services in the past two years and applauds the review and planning process to align Student Services with the Sheridan’s Strategic Plan. However, they emphasized that a Student Services

Strategic Plan will need to be clear and concise in order to get buy-in from the rest of the institution, especially at the Executive level.

Theme: A bold, sustainable, innovative and responsive service philosophy should guide Student Services' evolution

The changing demands of an increasingly diverse student population are also changing expectations of responsiveness and flexibility

The Strategic Plan clearly articulates that the shaping of the learning environment to support student success at the proposed Sheridan University involves reinvention of services to students. . While driven in part by the fiscal realities of zero-based budgets in the face of growing enrolment, the changing demands of an increasingly diverse student population are also changing expectations of responsiveness and flexibility (doing more with the same or less). The goal is to increase responsiveness to students through efficient, flexible and high quality services, transforming these services to students through the effective use of technology, while also maintaining an appropriate personal touch. Importantly, this reinvention stresses the need to enhance effective co-ordination and collaboration among campus colleagues.

Student Services staff and management are excited about preparing for the transition to a University. They have been fully involved in providing preliminary assessments on their unit's needs to transition. There is a strong sense of commitment about the purposeful planning and the benefits of integrating services to better serve students. Staff feels a strong alignment with the Student Services mission, and with Sheridan's Strategic Plan (2013-2020). Student Services emphasized that transactional services need to be handled in a distinctly different way from student development services. The distinction needs to be understood and proliferate across other student service functions.

To understand the evolution of expectations it may be helpful to briefly examine the history of Student Affairs in higher education. The evolution of Student Affairs has seen several historical eras that began with: managing behavior; to a stronger commitment to delivering effective and efficient services; to a more intentional approach based on student development theory; to an emphasis on student learning enriched through partnerships with student and academic affairs. Contemporary practice includes all of the aforementioned, complemented by a strategic approach to engage students in learning and

Students must be engaged in learning and development activities that facilitate their individual success

development opportunities towards the ultimate goal of facilitating student success.

The authors Leaders in Learning (2011) suggest that Student Affairs can be encapsulated into the following four functions that support student success (p10):

- Identify and address barriers or impediments to participation and success
- Facilitate active participation in the campus and wider community
- Support students in their pursuit of academic and personal growth and well-being; and
- Build an environment that facilitates learning, development and purpose.

Commentary in this report will reveal that some members of the Sheridan community perceive that Student Services' at times goes beyond their role and responsibility when supporting students. The concern is that students may not be assuming full responsibility for their own success. This not the intent or vision of the Student Services Leadership Team, and as such, Student Services needs a fulsome, cross-departmental discussion to establish a sustainable service philosophy that is informed by input from across the university (i.e. Administration, Finance, Institutional Planning etc.).

A formalized service philosophy should guide decisions making in areas such as program planning, technology investment, and hiring, and should be at the heart of a revamped and rigorous orientation and on-boarding process for new staff.

Recommendation 1: In addition to the structural and process changes being considered by Student Services, and from this review, initiate a cross-departmental discussion regarding a sustainable service philosophy in Student Services to guide planning and decision-making.

Recommendation 2: Review and improve orientation and onboarding practices for new staff.

A sustainable model of service to students will include a mix of self-serve and face-to-face delivery models

The activities of the current Student Services personnel clearly align with and perform these functions, however, they may not have leveraged new delivery models appropriately. Transactional services are often suited to self-serve approaches mediated by technology. While this may require up-front investment in technology, amortized over its life, web-based services often present significantly less investment than providing people-mediated transactional services.

Students Services has begun work in this area and an example would be the their development of online career planning tools such as the Idea Generator, which supports students in accessing timely career information that better prepares students to utilize time with career counsellors.

Continued work in this area would be beneficial. Any efficiency in resource utilization should be moved to support the increasing need for, and growth in, developmental services. Some staff particularly noted that technology investment will be required to support an exceptional student experience, especially in relation to students living with disabilities.

Recommendation3: Identify functions and services that are transactional versus developmental (i.e. advisory) in nature, and invest in more efficient delivery models.

Theme: Student Services encapsulates a very broad range of departments that serve a dynamic role in the holistic education and ultimate success of students at Sheridan.

There will always be effective and efficient services necessary to support student success. What has become more impactful in post-secondary education is the dynamic Student Affairs role in the delivery of holistic education that integrates learning and personal development, engages students, and actively contributes to their success. The identity of the Students Services department should reflect this dynamic and integrated approach.

Recommendation 4: Change the departmental identity of “Student Services” to “Student Affairs.” A more contemporary, holistic, and integrated approach to Student Affairs takes into account the delivery of services, as well as an intentional focus on student development, and an outcomes based approach to learning.

Student Services should consider a name change to Student Affairs to better represent their holistic role on campus

It is critical that the new vision for and approach to Student Services is shared with other campus stakeholders for their input, feedback and buy-in. Going forward, significant changes to student service delivery, learning and development should be carefully planned with input from all Student Services areas, then fully discussed with other areas of the campus, particularly Academic programs and Administrative functions, as well as student leaders.

Recommendation 5: Student Services planning must continue to be conducted in concert with all relevant campus stakeholders to improve implementation, avoid duplication, and ensure the optimal use of resources.

Ancillary Services work in partnership with administration/finance and Student Services. We want to emphasize the importance for Student Services continuing to work closely with Ancillary Services for the ultimate benefit to the student experience. A recent example of the importance of this relationship that worked particularly well was the building of new on-campus residences. Private public partnerships are currently in place to deliver services in Residence with Campus Living Centres, in Food Services with Chartwells, and in the Bookstore with Follet. These partnerships are well suited to university environments where students are engaged in advisory capacities and provide feedback on what is working well, and what needs attention.

Student Services professionals should contribute to the design and planning of the built environment to help achieve institutional goals of student success

Multi-campus responsibility for the ancillaries contributes to both the quality and equity of services, as well as enhancing efficiencies of service.

Recommendation 6: Monitor current private public partnerships to deliver on campus students services, and where appropriate, investigate opportunities to allow private experts to deliver non-strategic amenities.

Student Services staff expressed a desire to be involved in planning of facilities. They can make important contributions to the planning of appropriate spaces that support the development of community and improve their suitability for program delivery and opportunities for student interaction.

Recommendation 7: In the planning and/or re-design of campus facilities, Student Services staff should be engaged to contribute to the design of space as it relates to an environment that supports the development of community, suitability for programming and learning.

STRUCTURE

In *One Size Does Not Fit All*, Manning, Kinzie, & Schuh (2006) examined Student Affairs models in the context of the Documenting Effective Educational Practice (DEEP) project. DEEP was a study of 20 colleges and universities which had high student engagement scores and graduation rates as measured by NSSE. The project examined the educational practices in these institutions. The report outlines traditional and innovative models that describe approaches in how student affairs are carried out. The mission and values of a given institution along with its history, type of institution and student demographics will have an impact on its approach to Student Affairs, and thus the model or blend of models it emulates. A description of the models is included in Appendix 4.

Elements of the “Academic-Student Affairs collaboration” model are becoming more prevalent in Canada today. The reviewers endorse this model or variations of it. We see splendid opportunities for Sheridan to achieve its goals by emulating the Academic – Student Affairs collaboration model.

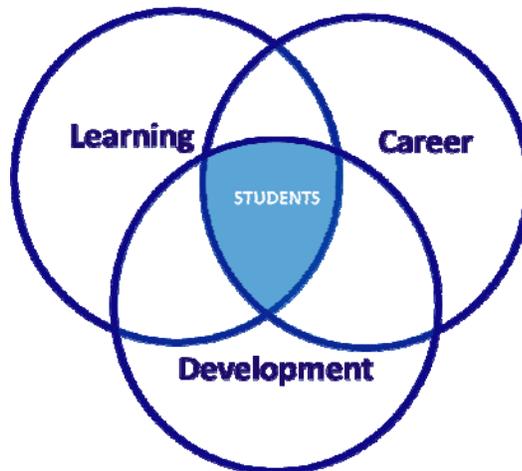
Sheridan has been engaged in excellent work across the institution in defining a model of Student Success at Sheridan as “...unique to each individual student” that encompasses five pillars. The visual model associated with this definition is impressive and attracts attention to even the casual observer. At the same time, a Student Services model has evolved with a view to the future where six functional pillars are thought to represent the right mix to reallocate resources, invest in partnerships, and to organize efforts to respond to trends occurring in

other teaching focused universities. It is proposed that the six functional pillars will enable Student Services to leverage economies of scale, define operational efficiencies, and enhance the resulting impact on students.

A three pillar service model may provide greater clarity when communicating purpose and functions

From the perspective of the reviewers, while both the Student Success at Sheridan model, and evolving Student Services model are very meaningful, we believe that because of the complexity of terms used to define student success, and the multiple pillars describing the evolving Student Services model, dynamism and flexibility may be lost. The ability to communicate the future role and impact of Student Affairs will be quite difficult to capture succinctly with overlapping terminology. We believe that a three pillar Student Affairs model will provide even more clarity (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Three Pillar Model of the Department of Student Affairs



Learning, Career and Development functions are at the heart of the Student Success and Engagement Division

A closer look at both the Student Success at Sheridan and Student Services' models points to three major themes emerging from the discourse, **Learning**, **Development** and **Career**. These three themes articulate a contemporary approach to Student Affairs, and are consistent with Sheridan's distinctive institutional strategic plan.

We explain this thinking further. Common to all students is **Learning** that emerges from three of the five student success model pillars: academic achievement; skills and competencies; and a passion for learning. **Development**, emerges from the pillar of a holistic view of the whole person. And, **Career**

points to personal discovery, goals, and future direction. Career and co-operative education could be aligned with the major function of **Learning**. However, in Sheridan's case we believe **Career** is so powerfully distinctive and key to all academic programs and student success that it should be recognized as a major function along with **Learning** and **Development**.

Further, since the Student Success at Sheridan model is said to reflect institutional values, and drives how Student Services is designed, delivered, prioritized and assessed, these three major themes can be adopted by the Department of Student Affairs, reconfiguring the six pillar Student Services model to be more comprehensive, clear, cohesive and dynamic.

We are not suggesting the six pillars be discarded, they will be reflected in the actual organizational design proposed below, but we are suggesting a simplified three pillar Department of Student Affairs model designed with three overlapping circles with STUDENTS as its central focus. This is in keeping with the student-centred service philosophy previously presented.

Recommendation 8: That a three pillar model for the Department of Student Affairs, focused on learning, career and development, with students at the centre, be adopted as a guiding framework for organizational design.

The current multi-campus organizational design of Sheridan Student Services is configured as an independent department supervised by the Vice President, Student Affairs and Enrolment Management, and led by the Dean of Students, two Associate Deans, and individual directors/managers assigned to multiple service units. Functional multi-campus leadership is assigned for oversight of all three Sheridan campuses. This traditional model with a Vice President reporting directly to the President is common amongst Ontario colleges, although all colleges do not serve in a multi-campus environment. Several Canadian universities endorse the full Vice Presidential model for Student Affairs (UBC, Mount Royal, Wilfrid Laurier, Mount Allison, Dalhousie) as do the majority of higher education private and public institutions in the United States. The majority of Canadian university Student Affairs units are organized under the leadership of the Provost/Vice President Academic with Vice Provosts, AVP's

and/or a Dean of Students providing direct student focused leadership.

There are, of course, advantages and disadvantages to both reporting structures. Some argue the Student Affairs unit that reports directly to the President results in a stronger level of advocacy and support for a focus on students and their development, while others argue an alignment with the senior academic officer promotes better integration of student and academic affairs. We suggest that these attributes are not a function of the reporting alignment, but of the values that the institution holds dear. In our own circumstances, as Vice Presidents, we report directly to our respective university President, while at the same time collaborate highly effective integrated and engaged learning and developmental practices through the close work with our chief academic officers, academic deans, academic and Student Affairs professional staff. Integrated and engaged learning is highly visible, both in and out of the classroom, while academic, support, and developmental services are constantly being streamlined within a culture of continuous improvement for what is believed to benefit students most, despite a resource environment that is lean.

Creating a culture of learning where academic and student affairs are full partners and collaborate as educators in the learning environment is a desirable outcome.

Although there is a strong commitment to cross departmental collaboration within Student Services and with their partners, the historical model that shapes Sheridan's current Student Services is positioned as silos where the organization is flat and composed of distinctive service units that by and large work independently from each other. This alignment while administratively strong within silos, does not easily promote collaboration with other campus colleagues, nor a seamless student centred approach.

To benefit from the administrative strength, but to combat the isolation of functional silos, many institutions have created service clusters of like-minded units. These service clusters often portray a complementary identity, can be more convenient and better service oriented. But, by clustering service based units, the opportunity for collaboration and integration between service clusters, or with development and learning focused units is lost.

Ideally then, our task may be to grasp the strengths of functional silos and service clusters, while aligning them more collaboratively with learning and development centred approaches. Breaking away from the reference of 'sides of

the house' and bringing student and academic affairs colleagues together with a mutual understanding of and commitment to student success, thinking in holistic learning and developmental terms that are integrated, complementary and collaborative, that is our challenge. Creating a culture of learning where academic and Student Affairs are full partners and collaborate as educators in the learning environment is a desirable outcome.

A suggested organizational structure is depicted in Appendix 5. Two senior professionals, the Associate Dean, Development (Student Advisement Centre, First Year Experience, Health & Wellness, Accessible Learning, and Residence Life), and the Associate Dean, Career and Learning (Career Education, Co-operative Education and Work Integrated Learning, Beyond the Classroom Experience, Co-Curricular Learning and Record, Peer Mentors, Community Employment Services) will report directly to the Dean of Students.

Also reporting directly to the Dean of Students would be Athletics and Recreation; Student Rights and Responsibilities; and a position to manage research and assessment (outlined in the Accountability section). Administrative and financial support to the Dean would remain as is. Finally, the Partnership and Faculty Support Initiative would be led by the Dean of Students.

Recommendation 9: Restructure the new Student Affairs department to support student success using the three pillars of Learning, Development, and Career.

Theme: The structure of the new Student Affairs department should support an integrated organizational focus on student success, and collaborate with academic faculties and administrative functions to maximize service and address any duplication or overlap

Providing a focused response to an enhanced student experience is a strategic necessity

The Student Advisement Centre (SAC) was first introduced as the Student Advisement and Success Centre (SASC) in 2005 following a significant investigation (Lucido-Bezely, Mohammed, McMillan, & Korstanje, 2005) of matters impacting student satisfaction and success. Articulated at that time,

providing a focused response to enhancing the student experience was not just a key strategic direction for Sheridan, but a strategic necessity. Being effectively resourced, encouraging collaboration amongst departments, and closely aligned with all existing services to students was critical. At that time both focus groups and the annual KPI results confirmed that the student experience was far from exceptional. Students were neither satisfied with the quality of services, nor were they confident that Sheridan demonstrated concern for their success.

The notion of a single centre hub of information exchange and advising was proposed in 2005 as the right approach to present a one stop comprehensive source for advising students on multiple matters including academic, personal, financial and career associated needs. Advising for prospective students and enhanced support programs for new and returning students like first year experience program, identifying students at risk, early intervention, and supports to assist students in planning for further education and career opportunities beyond Sheridan would be designed to reduce barriers to student success.

The three main functions assigned to the SASC were identified as Central Information Triage for immediate response; In-Centre Advisement for further more detailed advising and referral; and a comprehensive Student Success Program aimed at the delivery of appropriate strategies to assist with college transition and academic proficiency.

The four key outcomes resulting from the implementation of the centre were forecasted to be: enhanced student satisfaction; enhanced student retention; improvement in the recruitment cycle; improved use of human resources in both student and academic services.

Perhaps most important in 2005 in moving forward with the concept of the SASC was the need for collaboration amongst all sectors of the college whether administrative, service, or academically focused. "The Centre will be the hub of collaboration, connecting Academic Schools, Student Services and all other service to student functions. This will require the right environment, one that will require college wide dedication and commitment" (Lucido-Bezely et al., 2005). Also deemed critical was the need for clarification of roles in and associated with the SASC, with the result intended that cross departmental multi specialist teams coming together to meet the needs of students in a coordinated and comprehensive fashion.

In 2014, the “Student Advisement, First Year Orientation/Transition Programs and Student Success” (Henry, 2014) operational review was completed. The review presents a thorough articulation of the current Student Advisement Centre (SAC) including mission, purpose, function, and description of departmental programs and support services. Of note, particular reference is made to the continuing need for a comprehensive first point of contact for students to provide accurate information about college policies, procedures, resources and when necessary refer students for more specialized support.

Beyond the first point of contact, a holistic approach when working with students experiencing difficulty is imperative to counsel students on matters related to academic, career, financial, personal, wellness and other distinctive challenges students may be encountering. An action plan is designed between the advisor and the student to guide the student’s decision making process connecting them to the people and resources they may need to be successful.

The reviewers witnessed the SAC as a highly visible service providing students with a comprehensive first stop resource where Student Success Officers and Student Advisors are positioned to provide immediate solution based response and/or referral. We heard that the mandate of the SAC is intended to work collaboratively with all academic faculties and service areas to maintain information related to student success. And we were informed that the Registrar’s office responds to multiple program based questions and regulatory policy and processes. The faculties advise students on curricular matters directly related to academic programs.

Student Advisement believes that a stronger, more developmental focus on the first year experience for students is a top priority, particularly during orientation and student transition throughout the first year. Early alert programs are felt to be an essential advising practice for retention.

The SAC compiles rich data associated with the work of the advisement team, tracking a myriad of student cases which in the last three years have totaled 15,313 cases. Key performance indicators reveal that student satisfaction has increased and graduation rates rank highest in the GTA. NSSE scores however suggest the need to continue working to elevate the results students reflect on the conditions of a supportive campus environment.

Importantly, the 2014 operational review, based upon data collected suggests that “...there appears to be some movement towards working more closely with academic schools and service areas” (Henry, 2014). This was perhaps the most important area of focus conducted by the reviewers both during the initial on site review in June 2014, and again with specific attention on the SAC in October 2014.

During the initial round of on-site interviews in June 2014 with senior academic administrators, we heard comments that suggested the collaboration amongst advisors could be improved. These comments included possible duplication of advising services in the SAC, admission and registrar’s office, and in the academic faculties. Cost effectiveness was also raised as a concern. The reviewer’s initial impression was that a clearer understanding of who is responsible for advisement needs to be better understood.

As with other institutions across Canada there is discourse about whether Academic Advising should be centralized, or based within the faculties. Within this discussion there is often confusion related to the definitions of academic advisement versus other forms of advising that impact personal, financial, medical and/or career related issues. At Sheridan, Student Services staff and academic administration are in general agreement about the need to clarify roles amongst advisors in Student Services and the Office of the Registrar to resolve unnecessary duplication. This theme extended to the roles of advisors in faculties as well.

It is important to pay attention to the SAC advising data and focus of attention that ranges from academic program readmission, change, standing, course changes, and withdrawal, to study skills, transition to post-secondary rigor, to financial pressures, social adjustments, family and friends, legal issues, immigration, physical and mental health, and a wide range of career choices, uncertainty and direction. Clearly, a holistic collection of matters that are best served in a comprehensive, collaborative, efficient, and cost effective manner.

Upon returning for another full day in October, a deeper examination of the advising functioning culture revealed a much more engaged, collaborative and passionate commitment to advising students. Interviews were conducted with four key academic stakeholders including Associate Deans; Co-Chair Student

Success Advancement Team/Student Retention; professor/Academic Advisor; and Academic Program Coordinator. Three full time senior student advisor/coordinators and first year student transition professionals were also interviewed extensively.

Academic stakeholders close to the advising function express support for the need to be cognizant of the whole learner

Academic stakeholders close to the advising function express support for the need to be cognizant of the whole learner. This means some knowledge of student development theory, and an integrated, developmental approach to support students and the challenges they face beyond the transactional exchanges that sometimes mask real needs.

Collaboration amongst advisors on the whole was said to be healthy, although the desire to meet more often was expressed emphatically to discuss the kinds of cases and challenges students are encountering and topics of concern particularly those related to personal wellness and mental health. Advising colleagues also expressed the need to provide additional support for those students on academic probation with the goal for students to learn how to learn.

Meeting collectively more often is important to share information on new programs, or to review assessment data associated with student success and how this evidence can enhance operational decisions. As one incumbent noted “...collaboration is what we have to aspire to, to have genuine, formal and reciprocal communication...we have certainly made advancements in this way.” And a further emphatic declaration of commitment “...students learn here, we need to empower their learning.”

What consistently emerged from these conversations was that while collaboration is key, the distinction between advisors and their roles themselves is somewhat unclear. The current model does address the comprehensive front line need for student support, backed by professional and faculty advisors, but more clarity on who does what and why is essential. The incumbents interviewed suggested they could do a very good job of taking this particular task on themselves. As an advising team building exercise, and to articulate context from those who perform the actual jobs, they should be encouraged to do so!

Advising colleagues expressed a strong need for training amongst all advisors,

not simply for acquiring knowledge of relative information and resources, but focused on who the learners are, and the trends impacting student success. Dealing with students at risk and mental health are matters of concern for advisors who need the confidence to support and or advise students beyond the simplistic nature of many of the transactional relations that occur.

When asked whether the faculty and student service advisors were sometimes doing too much to support students, the response was explicit. “We hear about hand holding sometimes, but we don’t believe it. Students are not mature learners two months out of high school, so scaffolding that transition in and out of the classroom is important for their success.”

That being said, advisors all agree that students need to take responsibility for many of the transactional kinds of needs that could all be supported on-line if modern technology is in place to facilitate these tasks effectively. An exercise to examine what students should and can do themselves may allow advisors to focus more on their aspirational new programs, like intrusive advising retention oriented services to enhance student success.

While collaboration is key, there remains a strong need for training amongst all those connected to advising

As far as physical space and advising operational efficiency is concerned, interviewees noted that as long as the collaborative model and working relationship are intact, and a front line visible presence for students is in place, the work of professional staff advisors and faculty advisors can be both central in the SAC and distributed to the faculties. Faculty advisors, whether faculty members or academic staff professionals located in their faculties with meaningful connectivity to academic colleagues, can certainly work well in close association with the SAC professional advising team.

Recommendation 10: Continue to strengthen the holistic, comprehensive, and collaborative campus model of student advising by: explicitly defining advising roles amongst the stakeholders; enhancing the advising team identity and effectiveness through improved communications; gather to assess and interpret data; commit to rigorous on-going training in response to changing student demographics, research and assessment evidence; design on-line transactional self-services for

students to help themselves; integrate advanced advising skills and competencies content into the curriculum; and offer intrusive retention focused tactics beyond the classroom, all to enhance student success

Linking learning based practice with student leadership and engagement is meaningful for both short term learning benefits and longer term career impact.

There is a contemporary residence life program in place that is based on a peer-to-peer model. Residence has a strong collaborative relationship with Student Services. It is recognized that mental health support and threat assessment will need to be addressed with appropriate staff training. The need for parent programs is also recognized. The integration of Residence with the Student Services planning process seems to be a bit disconnected. The operations side of Residence is provided by a third party.

Recommendation 11: Investigate opportunities to connect the Residence Life Program more fully with Student Services planning.

There has been significant work at Sheridan to move to a restorative, development based model of civility and community standards practice. Student Rights and Responsibilities is a critical service/support unit in an increasingly complex world of student's issues and behavior. A continual challenge is communicating the behavioral expectations that Sheridan has for the student body *before* they deal with incidents. Staff have developed good working relationships with international, residence and academic stakeholders based on personal relationships. Academic stakeholders stated that this area is under resourced and it was reported that the HMC campus is underserved. Clarity is required on the administrative responsibilities for academic and non-academic misconduct. The staff seem to be extremely busy with immediate responses to conduct issues and emergencies on campus and by many accounts they may be under-resourced. On the other hand, the staff complement of five appears to be well-resourced compared to other universities to carry out the roles as we understand them to be.

Rights and Responsibilities is a critical service/support unit in an increasingly complex world of student's issues and behavior

Recommendation 12: Define administrative and institutional responsibilities for academic and non-academic misconduct and clarify the functions of the Student Rights and Responsibilities Office appropriate to its staffing level.

While the nexus of Accessible Learning Services resides in Student Services, this is an institutional responsibility and is best played out through engaged and informed staff and organizational structures that support this integrated institutional vision. Accessible Learning staff recognize the need to have good working relationships with academic stakeholders and to create a better understanding of the accommodations assessment and process, and to develop shared goals. Some recent progress has been made between Accessible Learning Services with the Centre of Teaching and Learning to collectively support faculty members to deliver accessible education.

Accessible learning and Academic Stakeholders need to work more closely on required accommodations so that learning accommodations and strategies are appropriate, actionable and warranted

Staff pointed out there is inequity in the technological and human resources available to support students between the 3 campuses. As the growth plans for each campus evolve there is an opportunity to address this issue. The absence of a consistent manager or leader in this area may have interfered with planning, but if left unfilled will hinder its future evolution and planned partnerships.

Integrating services amongst Faculties requires the development of a new organizing framework, and resources to support training and ongoing development. When done well, faculty accessibility teams can identify and respond appropriately to the need for accommodation. Academic accommodation was an issue with a few of the academic stakeholders who questioned the legitimacy of accommodations and the clarity of accommodation letters. Accessible Learning and Academic Stakeholders need to work more closely on required accommodations so that learning accommodations and strategies are appropriate, actionable and warranted.

Recommendation 13: Recruit a manager to lead Accessible Learning.

Recommendation 14: Investigate embedding accessible learning capacity into the Faculties. Consider the use of multi-disciplinary faculty dedicated teams to plan, implement, monitor and manage accessibility with the guidance of experts from Accessible Learning, and adequate training.

The provision of health and wellness services at Sheridan is of paramount importance. The current nurse-based walk-in and physician-by-appointment model may not be optimizing community resources to provide health care. Nursing encounters are, for the most part, not funded by the Ontario Health Insurance Plan unless ordered by a physician or nurse practitioner. Nurse practitioners are funded in community health centres and health service organizations but not in university health services that we are aware of. Physician encounters are funded for necessary medical care. Any nursing redundancy should be reassigned to ensuring the institutional support of all the social determinants of good health. Nurses and Peer Mentors are involved in various health promotion activities and programs (Leave the Pack Behind and MoveU). The department has managed to find ways to promote their services in several first year classes – an ideal opportunity. Staff do support the need for more physicians, psychiatrists and other health care providers to provide a more holistic health centre for students.

Recommendation 15: Optimize the use of external funding for health care by moving towards a shared revenue model with physicians billing OHIP.

Counselling has been operating without a dedicated manager for some time. The scope of service is short term, solution focused, with community partnerships in place to support the longer term personal counselling needs of students.

While many students arrive with mental health needs, there is an emphasis on one on one Counselling which vastly limits the department's capacity to provide preventative educationally based programs. Counselling Services responds to referrals from the faculties, health services and from student advisement. They have developed an effective case management procedure with Accessible Learning Services, and a solution based plan for students with depression, anxiety and those who may require a learning strategy, and adaptive assistive technology. The Student Leadership & Engagement unit Peer Mentors assist this team oriented case management approach by being closely connected with students in need and being knowledgeable about Counselling services.

***Investigate the
co-location of
counselling,
health and
wellness
services***

Top priorities for Counselling include, an institutional mental health strategy; dedicated space for group counselling services; a wellness education program; the opportunity to work with faculties to integrate wellness into the curriculum; and ultimately to integrate with health services into a more comprehensive and cohesive wellness centre.

Ontario is increasingly moving towards the creation of multi-disciplinary teams to deliver health care (i.e. HealthLinks, Family Health Teams).

Common intakes, co-location of services and case management ensure the coordination of care across the continuum of clients' needs.

Recommendation 16: Investigate the co-location of counselling, health and wellness services, and adoption of a circle of care case management model to ensure optimal access to appropriate care for all students.

As with all change process, there are a number of challenges that will require attention in the development and successful implementation of a new Student Services Strategic Plan. One is to settle on an appropriate service philosophy for Sheridan's Student Services. The philosophy will need to be well understood and rationalized to achieve buy-in within Student Affairs and Enrollment Management and throughout the academic faculties.

The Canadian Association of College and University Student Services states:

“The primary purpose of Student Services is to develop programs and provide services which support and promote student-centred education. Student Services professionals have expertise in assessing and identifying the factors that can enhance the development of students. Student Services personnel act as informed partners the shared tasks of shaping and maintain a campus community where students can learn inside and outside the classroom” (Canadian Association of College and University Services, 1989).

This broad statement still holds true. However, the complexity of students and society has evolved, and accordingly requires many more highly specialized Student Services personnel in response.

Give further consideration where possible to a more consolidated “one stop” shop approach to delivering services

Student Services staff are highly committed to serving students and working across units in Student Services to maximize the impact on students. There is a sense that each unit is stretched to its maximum capacity given the staff levels especially, spread across the three campuses.

Further consideration where possible could be given to a consolidated “one stop” shop approach to delivering services. In light of the recommended new model for Student Affairs, the continued development of the SAC and advising roles, and multiple campus sites, the need to centralize at least some service functions suggest that it warrants further investigation.

Recommendation 17: Investigate the concept of further consolidation of services positioned collaboratively amongst Student Affairs, Academic Faculties, and administrative services.

PROCESSES

Theme: Student success, potentiated by an exceptional learning experience and evident in outcomes, is dependent on purposely engaging students in learning both in and out of the classroom

There are statistically significant relationships between student engagement, with active and collaborative support for learners, and graduation rates

In *Student Success in College: Creating Conditions That Matter*, Kuh et al. (2005) broadly define student success as retention, graduation and education attainment. In order to achieve student success, the authors state that effective colleges and universities are “those that add value” and “channel students’ energies toward appropriate activities and engage them at a high level in these activities.” Chickering & Gamson (1987) outlined seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education that lay out the key concepts of student success and effective institutional practices. Both publications emphasize that student success should be the main priority in higher education.

Student success is unique to each individual student. But students and society is not a static commodity. Each generation of students presents new and unique challenges. Globalization, technology and shifting social norms add to the intricacies of addressing student needs. Student affairs professionals continually strive to understand students and address emerging issues. A list of emerging

trends identified in 2011 by the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services' "*Leaders in Learning*" (Fisher et al., 2011) is included in Appendix 6 . Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each student to find opportunities for a distinctive educational journey that involves establishing many career and personal goals that will contributed to achievement of personal success.

Sheridan generally, and Student Services specifically, support the development of skills and capacity to help students achieve that success through active teaching and learning pedagogy, work integrated learning and experiential education. Astin (1984;1993) supports this approach suggesting that students who are engaged with their school environment elevate their learning experience above those who do not. This work is supported by Kuh and associates (1991) in *Involving Colleges*, who found that since students spend so much of their time in activities beyond attending classes and studying, the educational environment is improved when colleges engage students in and out of the classroom in educationally purposeful ways. Moreover, Price & Tovar (2014) more recently found statistically significant relationships between student engagement, with active and collaborative support for learners and graduation rates.

Learning Services is currently structured within the Library and separate from the Centre for Teaching and Learning. There is strong interest in looking at how the instructional focus on innovative teaching could be integrated more intentionally with the learning focus on students, how they learn, active based and blended learning pedagogies, and creating an environment where assessment choices and practices align with academic integrity and student learning styles and strategies.

Through further collegial integration amongst those connected with the Library, Teaching and Learning, and Student Services, attention to how student development theory relates to student learning and success can be achieved. Sheridan values a greater holistic learning and developmental experience and this kind of departmental collaboration can be effective to this end.

Recommendation 18: The reporting relationship of the Library and Learning Services has moved out of Student Services. Due to the integrated nature of the work of Library and Learning Services and Student Services, Library leadership should continue attending Student Services Leadership Team meetings to continue the integration of development and learning.

Academic Stakeholders could benefit from a stronger understanding of student services professionals to understand more explicitly how they are more than just service and support focused, but focus on learning outcomes and student development

Student Services could benefit from a stronger appreciation for teaching and learning and how it is attached to their work. To be exceptional in the classroom takes a great deal of effort. Faculty need to commit to active teaching high impact practices and if Student Services were more directly connected there would be more support for the learning outcomes associated with student success.

Engaging students in purposeful learning and development experiences that have a direct relationship to their success academically and in career development achieves the strategic mission of an exceptional teaching and learning environment.

Recommendation 19: Student and academic affairs should partner in more high impact, integrated and engaged learning practices. Opportunities to work more closely together could be found: in Residence and Faculty based learning communities; community service learning; undergraduate research; global exchange programs; diversity awareness programming; capstone projects; team oriented case studies and problem solving; volunteerism; and student leadership development.

Academic Stakeholders could benefit from a stronger understanding of Student Services professionals to understand more explicitly how they are more than just service and support focused, but focus on learning outcomes and student development. Learning communities whether faculty or residential, as well as content associated with student skills and competencies could be integrated into the curriculum. These initiatives could represent excellent opportunities to align teaching, learning, student support and service.

Faculty and Accessible Learning professionals need to work closely together and some say being separated by organizational design doesn't inhibit them from working together, but there seems to be an "over there" sense that sometimes breaks down the focus of teaching and learning that is meant to be more synergistic. This raises the challenge of how teaching, learning and accessibility could be more functionally intentional with the organizational form more complementary.

**Academic staff
value the Co-
curricular
Record's role in
enhancing
students'
competitiveness
in related career
opportunities**

Recommendation 20: Student Services, in concert with the Centre of Teaching and Learning, Faculties, and other Student Affairs and Enrollment Management units, should investigate further opportunities to integrate high impact and educationally meaningful engagement strategies across the college.

Recommendation 21: Consider a closer association between Student Services and partners such as the Library and Learning Services and the Centre for Teaching and Learning to better align teaching, learning, student support and success.

Like students, academic staff are supportive of the Co-curricular Record as an important extension of the academic credential enhancing the students' competitiveness in related career opportunities. There was uniform agreement that more opportunities and increased awareness would be beneficial for students and ultimately graduates. Suggestions were made to expand the program off campus and encourage students to create/find their own experiences.

Recommendation 22: To enrich campus life beyond the classroom, a more rigorous, intentional effort should be designed to deliver selected experiential learning opportunities, engaging programs and activities to enhance the student experience. Many of these opportunities with accompanying learning and developmental outcomes could be recognized by the Co-Curricular Record.

Theme: Proactive and preventative programming has the greatest potential to optimize the use of resources and positively contribute to institutional and student success goals.

High impact, active teaching and learning are connected with enriching co-curricular experiences; and meaningful extra-curricular learning opportunities, such as student leadership, and promote a holistic deep learning student experience. This focus on the unity of the student and their experience, no matter where they encounter a teaching or learning moment, helps to raise their level of engagement and experience a campus life “bursting with big experiences” (Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, 2013, p11).

Recommendation 23: Starting in the first year, develop a learning and development transitional plan that focuses on the student lifecycle over the first twelve months, and beyond. Programming may be considered using three learning dimensions: curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular. (Examples are included in Appendix 7)

Orientation and the First Year Experience were seen as critically important services

Programming for the academic and social transitions into and out of university has the greatest potential to positively contribute to the institutional goals of student success. Orientation is viewed as effective and well managed. Student Services staff often reach out to Academic Stakeholders proactively to address issues of concern. Orientation and the First Year Experience were seen as critically important services that have made good progress in the past two years. Academic colleagues were complimentary of the on-boarding student focus in the first four weeks of the semester, however consistent with recommendations contained in Student Services operational reviews, were of the opinion that more needs to be done throughout the year continuing through to their transition out of the university.

Academic Stakeholders believe that alignment with academic programs has improved and underscored the need for academic and Student Services professionals to work in close partnership. Support for transitions should be the highest priority with emphasis placed on developing skills that support each

student's highest academic achievement. Academic Stakeholders commented on the value of proactive, not just reactive, programs and services to achieve future success.

Transition programming is not a substitute for access to resources and support throughout a student's life on campus. However, transitions perhaps represent the time of greatest risk for students as they work to fit in to situations which are both unfamiliar and of great import, and therefore have the greatest potential to prevent or mediate student stress and anxiety.

Staff and academic staff expressed concerns related to the complex and growing issue of student mental health that are disrupting academic delivery and the success of students. As in other colleges and universities, and as documented in Student Services operational reviews completed by the Student Services Leadership Team, responding to student mental health is a growing concern. There appear to be good resources on campus to help address the growing demands. The "Good to Talk" program presents another external referral/resource as well. Counselling, Students Rights & Responsibilities, and the Student at Risk Intervention Team (SARIT) are identified as the primary resources on campus to address mental health concerns. But there needs to be more or different resources on and/or off campus to attend to these issues.

An institutional student mental health strategy focussed on education and awareness is needed

Recommendation 24: Develop an institutional mental health strategy that focuses on education and awareness that de-stigmatizes mental health amongst student, faculty and staff. The strategy must also develop appropriate response mechanisms for students that are struggling and/or in need of professional support.

Theme: Technology has not been harnessed to optimize the flow of information, and deliver programs and services

Communication with students is a challenge and requires a new and bold communication strategy that harnesses the internet, social media and mobile technologies so the right information is available to students at the right place and the right time. Student's use of technology in every aspect of life is pervasive. Student Services staff relying on traditional forms of communication

A bold and comprehensive communications strategy is required to move information to students, Academic Stakeholders and staff

such as e-mail to inform, attract and engage students is not sufficient. Student leaders can be very effective at articulating messages and are often highly effective at engaging their peers using social media – including these leaders in the development and implementation of the communication plan will ensure it is relevant and appropriate for maximum effect.

Recommendation 25: Develop a student marketing and communications strategy in conjunction with the Communications department. The strategy should consider effective means of utilizing technology, social media and in particular involve student leaders.

The Athletics program has strong leadership, appears to be well managed, and the challenges of facilities and finances are well understood. Funding comes entirely from student athletic and recreation fees, thus heavy reliance on student enrollment. A scholarship fund has been generated in house, and will continue to be associated with the successful “Sky Blue” fund raising initiative.

Having a varsity program is a staple for campus life and has a distinct role in supporting Sheridan’s brand. The ‘Study-Compete-Graduate-Succeed’ motto is compelling and appropriate. The success (graduation rate) of student-athletes is thought to be higher than students` at large, but closer analysis is necessary. It is concerning that the first to second year retention rate of student athletes is estimated at 50% for males, and 75% for females.

Athletics has recently created a position to further improve our student athlete development program that helps to support academic success and career preparation. This role is the only one within the Ontario College system demonstrating Sheridan’s commitment to our athlete’s academic success.

Athletics and Recreation have also partnered with Counselling Services with the program “Smash Stress” to enhance general student participation, combat anxiety, and promote health and fitness and partnered in other healthy campuses initiatives such as the MoveU campaign.

Athletics brings a substantial number of high school students to the campus on a regular basis, primarily for games and sport camps. These could present marketing and recruitment opportunities for Sheridan with potential students right on campus. The Director is very interested in pursuing this initiative.

A more culturally diverse student population requires a new program mix to encourage student participation

The Recreation program and facilities at Trafalgar and Davis are fitting for a University. Access to the local Y for the Mississauga campus students should be deemed appropriate, especially with a relatively smaller population. The range of programs is also appropriate. With a very culturally diverse population, it will continue to be challenging to find the right program mix for more students to participate. Typical North American programs such as intramurals, fitness and dance classes may not be attractive to international students or other culturally diverse populations.

Recommendation 26: Athletics and recruitment should consider a co-marketing approach to align promotion of Sheridan's brand, and specifically take advantage of the substantial local high school population that attends campus for games, camps and events.

Recommendation 27: Recreation should strive to understand the recreational interests of its culturally diverse population, both domestic and international, and develop programs/services accordingly.

The Career Centre and Co-operative Education is a mission critical unit and should integrate both academic and student affairs expertise

The Career Centre and Co-operative Education functions provide support to achieving a mission critical result in post-secondary, which is the career and employment of graduates. It is aligned with high impact teaching and learning practices, and a work integrated experiential learning mandate that is supported by the Post-Secondary Quality Assurance Board.

It is felt that the Career Centre and Co-operative Education organizational alignment with Student Services on the one hand, and faculty within academic programs on the other, is the ideal model for integrated and engaged learning. Employers, CC&CE staff and student one-on-one exchanges are critical, however the need to enhance technology based support is apparent as programs and work integrated opportunities continue to grow. Career Centre staff are often invited by academic stakeholders to give class presentations and to be involved

Student services professionals are valued for their dedication, collegiality and enthusiasm

in the development of integrating essential employability skills into curriculum and programing. Staff participated in a teaching and learning based instructional skills workshop to enhance training collaboration.

In the near future, there will be pilots and projects done at Sheridan that will test and inform the viability of centralizing field placements and integrating working integrated learning in Student Services with close collaboration with academic colleagues.

Students believe that faculty and staff care about them as individuals and students

Challenges include: work placements for international students; resources required for students with disabilities for placement on-boarding; and other barriers to employment; an enhanced communications and marketing strategy and delivery methods; competition with other college and university co-op programs for work placements; focus on efficiency of securing placements followed by a job rather than on quality and an educational/developmental focus.

Recommendation 28: Sheridan should continue to prioritize current, and extended practices associated with career oriented work integrated learning

Recommendation 29: Faculty may need to be more engaged in the evaluation of credit based work integrated learning. Co-op should be centrally responsible organizationally and logistically for all work integrated learning given their expertise and job based inventory on hand.

PEOPLE

There is a perception amongst some academic and student services stakeholders that stronger academic and student affairs partnerships could be achieved

Academic representatives generally had very positive views of Student Services; appreciating the dedication of Student Services staff to partner with Academic Stakeholders to support students, and working with students directly to help them succeed. When asked what is working well academic stakeholders indicated that there exists a high level of collegiality and “great” people in Student Services.

Theme: Consistently, students described Sheridan College as a welcoming, inclusive and friendly environment.

They state that faculty and staff genuinely care about them as individuals and as students. Some academic administrators stated quite definitively that they had never seen such a group as keen or who care as much as those in Student Services.

Student interviewees and information gathered from Student Services operational review documents demonstrated general satisfaction with the current Student Services. A number of these students had attended other universities, or had friends that attended other institutions and said their experiences were not nearly as positive as what they had experienced at Sheridan. The students we spoke to reported positive experiences with administrative tasks such as transferring between programs at Sheridan. They felt supported in changing their career direction based on interactions with advisors, faculty and other staff. Similar support was voiced related to Health and Counselling Services, and Residence, and their impact on successful transition from high school.

While viewed positively, there is a perception amongst some academic and Student Affairs stakeholders that partnerships to support student success could be improved. This should be an ongoing priority to ensure that regardless of organizational design, academic and Student Affairs efforts are focused on the student.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In *Assessment Reconsidered* (Keeling, Underhile, Wall, & Dungy, 2008) the fundamental need for assessment in higher education today is attributed to two forces “...external demands for accountability and internal commitments to improvement.” More importantly, Keeling says, the use of assessment to improve the quality and effectiveness of higher education emerges from its stakeholders; Student Affairs professionals, students, academic stakeholders and administrators.

The premise is that Student Affairs should assess its programs and services for more than utilization, participation and satisfaction. It should assess learning, and in doing so, align its purpose with the educational mission of the institution. Assessment must fit with the institutional mission, purpose and values, including factors such as institutional type (for example, primarily undergraduate, geographic location, religious affiliation or secular orientation). Assessment must also account for the learners, community and region in which the campus is located. In the case of students it is critical that assessment processes recognize the full diversity of learners, especially marginalized groups (disabilities, racial/ethnic, sexual orientation (Keeling et al., 2008).

Dedicating proper resources to admissions and financial aid ensured that institutions continue to attract new students

In 2013, the Educational Advisory Board conducted research which demonstrates another practical application of assessment; prioritizing programs and resource appropriation (Masterman & Geraci, 2013).

The study examined student retention units in American and Canadian universities and colleges; the Student Affairs staff described institutional research as a key partner. Retention unit leaders collaborated with institutional research staff to generate customize reports on student persistence and conduct outcomes-based assessment of retention programs. The top ranked priorities for Student Affairs were student safety, retention and engagement. Student welfare was the primary concern of most Student Affairs departments. Leaders recommended that institutions prioritize understaffed student welfare offices (e.g. counseling center, health center, dean of students) over other offices because of their role in retaining students and ensuring campus safety. By quickly identifying at-risk students of concern and routing them to the appropriate support offices, students are less likely to withdraw from the institution.

Purposeful collection of data to support evidence-based decision making, planning and performance assessment must be a priority

New students were identified as the second top priority. Dedicating proper resources to admissions and financial aid ensured that institutions continue to attract new students. The report identified admissions and financial aid offices contributing to students' first impressions of universities, and key judgment points for prospective students. Properly trained staff in these offices may improve matriculation rates and promote a smooth transition for new students. The third priority was student engagement. If the offices associated with the previous two steps were properly staffed, senior Student Affairs officers

reported that they could then address improving the student experience. Priority was given to offices with high participation rates because they had the potential to influence the largest number of students. A thorough assessment system can support strategic decisions in regards to program and service improvements, planning and resource allocation.

Theme: An evidence-based approach to planning, and purposeful assessment would help to better align Student Services and institutional goals, better inform decision making, contribute to student success, and improve accountability

Student Services and the Office of Institutional Research have partnered together from time to time to conduct research on topics such as student demographics, retention, and factors that have a direct impact on student success. While there is useful documentation that relates to students, the collection of information for institutional decision making needs to be more deliberate and consistent. A Student Services/institutional research planning function that would provide data on who the students are, what they do, where they go, and what they prefer, would vastly improve all campus stakeholders' understanding of the learner at Sheridan. This is particularly important with the increasingly diverse and international student population now, and as Sheridan transitions to a university model.

Recommendation 30: A Student Services/Institutional Research planning and assessment function should be established within Student Services.

Students feel there should be a more rigorous and systematic approach to developing a culture of engagement

Students were particularly satisfied that they felt “listened to” by college administration, faculty and staff. They cited numerous opportunities to provide feedback to the college through program advisory committees, student evaluations of instruction, focus groups, surveys about services and conversations with staff. These highly engaged students were impressed that they saw changes enacted based on their feedback. A more rigorous culture of assessment could benefit the collection of valuable evidence based data to support strategic planning, action/task oriented efforts, enhanced communication and decision making.

Recommendation 31: Consideration should be given to developing a thorough assessment plan for Student Services to support the planning function described above.

CULTURE

There is an opportunity to purposively build an environment and culture that is welcoming to all

Student interviewees support Sheridan's goal to offer more degree programs and transform to a University educational model. However, they were insistent that this should not come at the expense of a supportive campus culture. They appreciate their in- and out-of-class experiences at Sheridan, and campus life is very important to them. However, while they enjoy what they've experienced they long for a more lively campus. This sentiment was mirrored by interviewees from student government who, while very complimentary of Student Services in general, also felt there could be a more rigorous and systematic approach to developing an engaging culture through activities and programs that enrich students' and campus life. There is strong interest from the Student Union in partnering with Student Services to work together to develop a culture focused on student engagement. The Student Union has suggested an extended volunteering program, supporting student wellness, expanded club opportunities, marketing Student Services, and encouraging meaningful student advocacy were suggested as good places to begin.

While not the focus of this review, the types of programs students that were interviewed would like to see to enliven the campus include:

- More non-alcoholic events at Welcome Week to capture broader student participation, and more welcome events throughout the year to provide multiple and ongoing opportunities for students to engage
- More choice of student clubs, particularly academic/career related clubs, and communication about existing clubs.
- In addition to recreation and sports activities, and the pub, students are looking for events such as guest speakers, social activists, artists. Students would like to contribute to the organizing such events.
- There was considerable discussion about increasing awareness of student activities on campus. Multiple Student Services Fairs, an improved website and social media were examples of potential improvements.

- For Residences, a convenience store on campus and more options/flexibility for meal plans.

Sheridan's internationalization strategy is not simply to recruit international students for enrollment purposes, but to welcome international students to an inclusive post-secondary setting, where they might contribute to the learning environment. This is a reciprocal approach where international cultures are embraced and not just tolerated. Furthermore, with an increasingly ethnically diverse student body, there is an opportunity to purposively build an environment and culture that is welcoming to all, and provides appropriate opportunities for engagement.

Recommendation 32: Support a growing, diverse, and increasingly international student population. Purposively engage the student body in determining how best to understand, educate and engage students on campus, but also to ensure they are prepared to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex external environment.

***Maximize
opportunities for
peer mentoring
at Sheridan***

The Peer Mentor program complements this culture of a caring campus environment by providing students with a direct touch point to the institution who can relate directly to their challenges and provide referrals quickly for advanced assistance when needed. Mentors work in various departments and academic programs throughout Sheridan and provide students with learning and developmental opportunities beyond the classroom contributing to their engagement on campus and ultimate student success. Academic Stakeholders were supportive of student peer programs that were seen to be highly aligned with the goal of creating a supportive and engaged community. Stakeholders would like to see the opportunities in each program grow. The department has made an effort to get more international student mentors involved and have increased their hiring of international peers, reflective of the student population. While a good training program is in place, additional work to recognize mental health concerns should be addressed. These programs are in a good position to distinguish Sheridan and are highly valued by all stakeholders.

Recommendation 33: As a function of Student Leadership and Engagement unit, and recognized by the Co-curricular Record, maximize opportunities for peer mentoring at Sheridan.

Recommendation 34: Continue to identify ways to include and recruit international students into peer mentoring roles to reflect the growing international student population.

Recommendation 35: Ensure Peer Mentors are trained to recognize and appropriately refer students with mental health concerns

PARTING THOUGHTS

The work that has been conducted previously by the Student Services Leadership Team has been both beneficial and comprehensive. Through the use of their analysis in conjuncture with the recommendations provided with in this report, the authors believe that Student Services at Sheridan is on a path towards success and achieving their goals. With ongoing continuous improvement, reinventing organizational design and delivery, furthering creativity, innovation and integration of efforts to support student success, Sheridan will be well poised in Canada and abroad as a leader in the provision of an exceptional student experience in post-secondary education.

Through extended consultation and internal reflection, the key messages from all this work are: the need for a stronger focus on the entire first year experience; co-curricular and extra-curricular engagement; Faculty support and partnerships; mental health and well-being; accommodations and accessible learning; student support, development and learning; advising and student empowerment; a multi-campus/multi-disciplinary approach; career development, co-operative/work integrated education and experiential learning; and meaningful outreach with the community.

The plan for change to be presented to the President in the fall of 2014 will need to respect the accomplishments to date, and preserve what has been working well. But the plan going forward must also step up to engage and support what Sheridan must become as it transitions to a university. What will Student Services role be in this transformation? How will it change? What will it look like to continue to support students, but also to evolve to become more active in the learning environment? The challenge going forward will be to strike a proper balance between the historical approach of close personalized student care and support, to a learning based ethos where there is certainly a visible level of support present, but where students begin to accept more responsibility for decision making, becoming more self-sufficient to handle the challenges of life, graduating with the know-how and wherewithal to be resilient, a good citizen, and to achieve independence and self-awareness.

***Preserve what is
done well, and
plan for new
value-added
services to
achieve
institutional
goals***

The Dean of Students must plan for new value-added services, preserve what is currently being done well, while demonstrating discipline to not simply add on, but to re-position innovatively to achieve the desired outcomes articulated by the institution. Two complementary components will support this re-positioning. First, a rigorous culture of assessment to track results and gather data to support evidence-based decision making and report results is being suggested by the addition of a dedicated research and reporting role. This is a commitment to the use of assessment data to affect change that will improve the student experience and advance the educational mission of the institution. Assessment is a tool through which institutions and organizations accomplish important purposes and goals (Banta, 2002). Second is the development of a robust revenue model to sustain the future plan and support progress. With less provincial funding on the horizon, and higher expectations of service quality and diversity, we must not just learn to do different things, but to do things differently.

Part of the solution will be to create a cohesive multi-campus Sheridan University DNA, to weave it together respecting the unique and distinctive characteristics of all campuses, while uniting them as one Sheridan. Student Services can play a very significant role in this exercise by contributing to a consistent, equitable and exceptional student experience regardless of geographical location.

Another significant component of the plan going forward will be to advance the learning experience for the ever increasing international student population and how they might contribute to a more global perspective of domestic students within the learning environment. Sheridan's international strategy is not simply to recruit international students for enrollment purposes, but to welcome international students to an inclusive, vibrant post-secondary setting where they might contribute to the learning environment. This is a reciprocal approach where international cultures become better understood, educating students to become more prepared to meet the challenges globally of an increasingly complex world.

As the institution embarks on its journey to become a university, it may be advantageous to articulate more publically the many facets of its integrative and transformative educational experience that combines academic excellence and experiential learning where students reside in and out of the classroom. An integrated and engaged education is a distinctive identity, cascading through the institution linking all academic disciplines, support services and functions in a common mission stretching beyond the classroom into the myriad of programs, activities and services that support the student learning and development experience.

A holistic educational view of learning and development encompasses three recognized learning and development dimensions: curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular. High impact, active teaching and learning curricular practices are connected with enriching co-curricular experiences, while meaningful extra-curricular learning opportunities, often associated with student leadership complement the holistic student experience promoting deep learning. And when focused on the whole student, the level of engagement is extraordinary, all contributing to student success. Key to the success of a holistic learning approach is the innovative and intentional integration of the academic/curricular agenda with the co-curricular and extra-curricular facets of student learning and development, all with a view to enhancing student engagement and success. It is important to capture the role of these three learning and development dimensions in shaping the student experience.

Holistic education begins immediately in the first year of study to establish the right habits that transform learning and development throughout the undergraduate experience. From learning how to learn, to students as scholars, students devote time to their student experience before, during and after class that enriches their engagement, enhances academic achievement, builds confidence, encourages further learning opportunities, and creates strong alumni.

A culture of assessment to enrich holistic education is a necessity. Curricular program degree level expectations support the cyclical review of all academic stakeholders based programs, while student learning outcomes should be aligned with co-curricular and extra-curricular endeavours. A wide assortment of quantitative and qualitative assessment vehicles can be used to provide

evidence based data to validate efforts, and to support resource allocation decision making.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: In addition to the structural and process changes being considered by Student Services, and from this review, initiate a cross-departmental discussion regarding a sustainable service philosophy in Student Services to guide planning and decision-making.

Recommendation 2: Review and improve orientation and onboarding practices for new staff.

Recommendation 3: Identify functions and services that are transactional versus developmental (i.e. advisory) in nature, and invest in more efficient delivery models.

Recommendation 4: Change the departmental identity of “Student Services” to “Student Affairs.” A more contemporary, holistic, and integrated approach to Student Affairs takes into account the delivery of services, as well as an intentional focus on student development, and an outcomes based approach to learning.

Recommendation 5: Student Services planning must continue to be conducted in concert with all relevant campus stakeholders to improve implementation, avoid duplication, and ensure the optimal use of resources.

Recommendation 6: Monitor current private public partnerships to deliver on campus students services, and where appropriate, investigate opportunities to allow private experts to deliver non-strategic amenities.

Recommendation 7: In the planning and/or re-design of campus facilities, Student Services staff should be engaged to contribute to the design of space as it relates to an environment that supports the development of community, suitability for programming and learning.

Recommendation 8: That a three pillar model for the Department of Student Affairs, focused on learning, career and development, with

students at the centre, be adopted as a guiding framework for organizational design.

Recommendation 9: Restructure the new Student Affairs department to support student success using the three pillars of Learning, Development, and Career.

Recommendation 10: Continue to strengthen the holistic, comprehensive, and collaborative campus model of student advising by: explicitly defining advising roles amongst the stakeholders; enhancing the advising team identity and effectiveness through improved communications; gather to assess and interpret data; commit to rigorous on-going training in response to changing student demographics, research and assessment evidence; design on-line transactional self-services for students to help themselves; integrate advanced advising skills and competencies content into the curriculum; and offer intrusive retention focused tactics beyond the classroom, all to enhance student success.

Recommendation 11: Investigate opportunities to connect the Residence Life Program more fully with Student Services planning.

Recommendation 12: Define administrative and institutional responsibilities for academic and non-academic misconduct and clarify the functions of the Student Rights and Responsibilities Office appropriate to its staffing level.

Recommendation 13: Recruit a manager to lead Accessible Learning.

Recommendation 14: Investigate embedding accessible learning capacity into the Faculties. Consider the use of multi-disciplinary faculty dedicated teams to plan, implement, monitor and manage accessibility with the guidance of experts from Accessible Learning, and adequate training.

Recommendation 15: Optimize the use of external funding for health

care by moving towards a shared revenue model with physicians billing OHIP.

Recommendation 16: Investigate the co-location of counselling, health and wellness services, and adoption of a circle of care case management model to ensure optimal access to appropriate care for all students.

Recommendation 17: Investigate the concept of further consolidation of services positioned collaboratively amongst Student Affairs, Academic Faculties, and administrative services.

Recommendation 18: The reporting relationship of the Library and Learning Services has moved out of Student Services. Due to the integrated nature of the work of Library and Learning Services and Student Services, Library leadership should continue attending Student Services Leadership Team meetings to continue the integration of development and learning.

Recommendation 19: Student and academic affairs should partner in more high impact, integrated and engaged learning practices. Opportunities to work more closely together could be found: in Residence and Faculty based learning communities; community service learning; undergraduate research; global exchange programs; diversity awareness programming; capstone projects; team oriented case studies and problem solving; volunteerism; and student leadership development.

Recommendation 20: Student Services, in concert with the Centre of Teaching and Learning, Faculties, and other Student Affairs and Enrollment Management units, should investigate further opportunities to integrate high impact and educationally meaningful engagement strategies across the college.

Recommendation 21: Consider a closer association between Student Services and partners such as the Library and Learning Services and the Centre for Teaching and Learning to better align teaching, learning, student support and success.

Recommendation 22: To enrich campus life beyond the classroom, a more rigorous, intentional effort should be designed to deliver selected experiential learning opportunities, engaging programs and activities to enhance the student experience. Many of these opportunities with accompanying learning and developmental outcomes could be recognized by the Co-Curricular Record.

Recommendation 23: Starting in the first year, develop a learning and development transitional plan that focuses on the student lifecycle over the first twelve months, and beyond. Programming may be considered using three learning dimensions: curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular. (Examples are included in Appendix 7)

Recommendation 24: Develop an institutional mental health strategy that focuses on education and awareness that de-stigmatizes mental health amongst student, academic stakeholders and staff. The strategy must also develop appropriate response mechanisms for students that are struggling and/or in need of professional support.

Recommendation 25: Develop a student marketing and communications strategy in conjunction with the Communications department. The strategy should consider effective means of utilizing technology, social media and in particular involve student leaders.

Recommendation 26: Athletics and recruitment should consider a co-marketing approach to align promotion of Sheridan's brand, and specifically take advantage of the substantial local high school population that attends campus for games, camps and events.

Recommendation 27: Recreation should strive to understand the recreational interests of its culturally diverse population, both domestic and international, and develop programs/services accordingly.

Recommendation 28: Sheridan should continue to prioritize current, and extended practices associated with career oriented work integrated

learning.

Recommendation 29: Faculty may need to be more engaged in the evaluation of credit based work integrated learning. Co-op should be centrally responsible organizationally and logistically for all work integrated learning given their expertise and job based inventory on hand.

Recommendation 30: A Student Services/Institutional Research planning and assessment function should be established within Student Services.

Recommendation 31: Consideration should be given to developing a thorough assessment plan for Student Services to support the planning function described above.

Recommendation 32: Support a growing, diverse, and increasingly international student population. Purposively engage the student body in determining how best to understand, educate and engage students on campus, but also to ensure they are prepared to meet the challenges of an increasingly complex external environment.

Recommendation 33: As a function of Student Leadership and Engagement unit, and recognized by the Co-curricular Record, maximize opportunities for peer mentoring at Sheridan.

Recommendation 34: Continue to identify ways to include and recruit international students into peer mentoring roles to reflect the growing international student population.

Recommendation 35: Ensure Peer Mentors are trained to recognize and appropriately refer students with mental health concerns.

REFERENCES

- Astin, A. (1993). *What matters in college? Four years revisited*. San Francisco: Joseey-Bass.
- Astin, A. W. (1984). Student involvement: a developmental theory for higher education. *Journal of College Student Personnel*, 25, 297–308.
- Banta, T. W. (2002). Characteristics of effective outcomes assessment: Foundations and examples. In T.W. Banta & Associates (Ed.), *Building a Scholarship of Assessment* (pp. 161–183). San Francisco, CA: Joseey-Bass.
- Canadian Association of College and University Services. (1989). The Mission of Student Services. Retrieved August 18, 2014, from http://www.cacuss.ca/publications_mission_student.htm
- Chickering, A. W., & Gamson, Z. F. (1987). Seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education. *AAHE Bulletin*, 39(7), 3–7.
- Fisher, D., Hannah, D., Cull, I., Patterson, P., Cummings, H., Vetere, H. L., & Robinson, N. (2011). *Leaders in learning: Student affairs in Canada in the 21st century, and implications for the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services. A paper prepared for the CACUSS Identity Project*.
- Galbraith, J. (2002). Organizing to deliver solutions. *Organizational Dynamics*, 31(2), 194–207. doi:10.1016/S0090-2616(02)00101-8
- Henry, J. (2014). *Student Advisement and First Year Orientation/Transition Programs Operational Review*.
- Keeling, R. P., Underhile, R., Wall, A. G., & Dungy, G. J. (2008). *Assessment Reconsidered: Institutional Effectiveness for Student Success*. Washington, D.C.: National Association of Student personnel Administrators, and Keeling & Associates.
- Kuh, G., Kinzie, J., Schuh, J., Whitt, E., & Associates. (2005). *Student success in college: Creating conditions that matter*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kuh, G., Schuh, J., Whitt, E., & Associates. (1991). *Involving colleges: Successful approaches to fostering student learning and development outside the classroom*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Lucido-Bezely, M., Mohammed, Z., McMillan, D., & Korstanje, N. (2005). *Student Advisement and Success Project - Business Proposal*.
- Manning, K., Kinzie, J., & Schuh, J. (2006). *One size does not fit all: Tradition and innovative models of student affairs practice*. New York, N.Y.: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.
- Masterman, D., & Geraci, L. (2013). *Staffing student affairs: Structure, resource allocation, and purpose. A custom research brief*. Washington, D.C.
- Price, D. V., & Tovar, E. (2014). Student engagement and institutional graduation rates: Identifying high-impact educational practices for community colleges. *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*, 38, 766–782.
- Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning. (2013). *Sheridan Strategic Plan 2013-2020*. Oakville, Canada. Retrieved from [https://www.sheridancollege.ca/~media/Files/Sheridan College/About/Strategic Plan.pdf](https://www.sheridancollege.ca/~media/Files/Sheridan%20College/About/Strategic%20Plan.pdf)

APPENDIX 1. LIST OF REVIEWED INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS

1. Student Services Operational Review Sections 1-5 (June, 2014)
2. A Vision for Sheridan (June, 2011)
3. Sheridan Strategic Plan 2013 – 2020 (2012)
4. Sheridan: The Creative Campus (September, 2010)
5. PSE Engagement Team: White Paper (n.d.)
6. Student Experience Vision Engagement Team: White Paper (June, 2012).
7. University Model Engagement Team: White Paper [Draft] (July, 2012)
8. Sheridan Organization Charts (January & February, 2014)
9. Organization Structure – Student Services (May, 2014)
10. Evolved Model of Student Services for Sheridan University (May, 2014)
11. 2020 Program Mix (August, 2013)
12. 2013 NSSE Results: Executive Summary, Sheridan College (n.d.)
13. Student Cohort Flow (n.d.)
14. Sheridan’s international students judge us as best in Canada (April, 2013)
15. Colleges Ontario. *Key Performance Indicators* (June, 2014)
16. Student Services Divisional Meeting: Reconnection and Information Sharing. Presentation (October, 2013)
17. Student Services Strategic Plan and Operational Strategy (May, 2011)
18. Student Success Advancement Team: Terms of Reference (October, 2013)
19. Student Advising (June, 2014)
20. Sheridan Insider. Fall Orientation Survey Results (January, 2014)
21. Training Topics for all Student Advisement Positions (n.d.)

22. 2011/12 Departmental Initiatives Brief, Sheridan (Oct, 2010)
23. Student Advisement and First Year Orientation/Transition Programs – Operational Review, Draft #1, (March, 2014)
24. Job Descriptions – First year Experience Coordinator, First Year Transition Specialist, Senior Student Advisor, Student Advisor, Student Success Officer
25. Program Quality Assurance Process Audit, Sheridan College, Final Draft Report (July, 2013)
26. Program Quality Assurance Process Audit – Self-Study Report, Sheridan College (2013)
27. Student Advisement and Success Project Business Proposal – The Strategic Necessity: Enhancing the Student Experience (April, 2005)
28. Student Advisement Presentation, Joanne Islip (n.d.)
29. CRM Business Process for Student Advisement (n.d.)
30. Student Advisement CRM Support User Guide Version 1.6 (n.d.)
31. Student Advisor Data - Facts (April, 2014)
32. Student Advising – Types of Student Advisor Cases (October, 2014)
33. Student Advisor Cases Data – Sept 2009 – Dec 2013 (n.d.)
34. Student Advisor Cases – Program Withdrawal – Sept 2012 – Aug 2013 (n.d.)
35. Student Advisor Cases – Visual and Creative Arts 2010, 2011 & Fall 2012 (n.d.)
36. College Contact Information (CCI) (n.d.)
37. College Contact Information – Student Services. A Guide to Student Services For Faculty/Staff (n.d.)
38. Current Student Part 1 & 2 (n.d.)
39. The Prospective Non-Applicant Ready Student (n.d.)
40. The Prospective Student (n.d.)

41. Forms: Student Advisement Action Plan – Academic Appeals and Consideration, Academic Probation, Add a Class, Drop a Class, May Not Continue, Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, Program Change, Program Withdrawal, Readmission

APPENDIX 2. INTERVIEW LIST

(In chronological order)

| Name | Position | Affiliation |
|---|--|---|
| Stephanie Dimech & Joan Condie | Associate Deans | Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) |
| Bernie Dwyer | Manager | Residence and member of the Student Services Leadership Team |
| Student Advisement Staff Team | | Student Advisement Centre |
| Ian Marley | Vice President | Student Affairs and Enrollment Management |
| Counselling Staff Team | | Counselling |
| Accessible Learning Staff Team | | Accessible Learning |
| Mark Chapman | Director | Institutional Research |
| Bill Holmes | Vice Provost | Academic |
| Peer Mentors | | |
| Mary Preece | Provost | Academic |
| Jeremy Staples, Greg Ball, Rob Giberson | Associated Deans | Faculty of Business |
| Mardy Frazer, Maher Ghalayini, Kathryn Cameron & Mary Louise Noce | Associated Deans | Faculty of Applied Health & Community Studies |
| Donna Braggins & Michael Rubinoff | Associated Deans | Faculty of Animation, Arts & Design |
| Joan Sweeney-Marsh | Director | Library & Learning Services |
| Danielle Palombi | Manager | Learning Centres |
| Marian Traynor | Manager | Library Services, Davis & HMC |
| Student Rights & Responsibilities Staff Team | | Student Rights & Responsibilities |
| Beth Connell | Director | Ancillary Services |
| Andre Plante | Associate VP | Corporate Planning |
| Sunand Sharma | Senior Rights & Responsibilities Officer, Acting Manager | Student Leadership & Engagement, and member of the Student Services Leadership Team |

| Name | Position | Affiliation |
|--|--|--|
| Mike Jones | Manager | Office of Rights & Responsibilities (SRRO), and member of Student Services Leadership Team |
| | Students | Peer Mentors & residence students |
| Athletics & Recreation Staff Team | | Athletics & Recreation |
| Jim Flack | Director | Athletics & Recreation, and member of the Student Services Leadership Team |
| Lori Elliott | Director | Career Education, and member of the Student Services Leadership Team |
| Health Services Staff Team | | Health Services |
| Career Centre & Cooperative Education Staff Team | | Career Centre & Cooperative Education |
| Anna Maocheia | Student Success Initiative Administrator | Student Advisement |
| Joe Henry | Associate Dean | Student Success |
| Matt Rempel | Associate Dean | Accessible and Co-Curricular Learning |
| Has Malik | Dean | Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences |
| Sean McNabey & Janet Shuh | Associate Deans | Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences |
| Yael Katz | Associate Dean | Creativity |
| Cathi Berge | Vice President | Human Resources & Organizational Development |
| Linda Dalton | Registrar | Office of the Registrar |
| Christine Szustaczek | Director | Corporate Communications and External Relations |
| Ronni Rosenberg | Dean | Faculty of Animation, Arts & Design |
| Richard Finch | Dean | Faculty of Applied Health & Community Studies |

| Name | Position | Affiliation |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Student Leadership & Engagement Team | | Student Leadership & Engagement |
| Jenna Pulver | President | Student Union |
| Jon Jones | Director | Academic Campus Planning |
| Janet Shuh | Associate Dean & Co-Chair | Student Success Advancement Team |
| Katheryn Cameron | Associate Dean | Faculty of Applied Health & Community Studies |
| Carole Bowman | Professor, Academic Advisor | Faculty of Business |
| Anne-Liisa Longmore | Program Coordinator | Marketing |

APPENDIX 3. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Where appropriate, the following questions, organized by theme, were used to guide the semi-structured stakeholder interviews conducted as part of this review:

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT:

1. How does the work of the Student Services Division (SSD) impact the Sheridan institutional mission? Is there a relationship between the work of the SSD and the academic plan?
2. Is the Student Services Division mission clearly understood?
3. How are the long term strategic initiatives and annual goals aligned to the division's mission?
4. Have the student demographics and characteristics of Sheridan learners been researched and well documented? What changes are anticipated? How will the Student Services mission and associated strategies align/respond to the anticipated needs and characteristics of the future Sheridan learner?

ORGANIZATIONAL DESIGN, DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE AND PRIORITIES:

1. How are financial, human and physical resources able to support the delivery of an exceptional student experience?
2. How stable and supportive is the current Student Services Division funding model to accomplish your goals?
3. What are the most pressing concerns and important challenges facing Student Services, and how are you addressing these or planning to address these challenges?
4. To what extent do staff understand the roles and the functions of every unit within Student Services, supports and programs?

SCOPE, INTEGRATION, CLARITY, CAPACITY, AND QUALITY OF STUDENT LIFE, SERVICE EXCELLENCE, PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

1. When you think about a full complement of services, supports and programs; what gaps in services/programs exist between the current state and future needs? How might any gaps be addressed?

2. In what ways are Sheridan Student Services, supports and programs integrated and connected within and outside the Division? How might they be improved?
3. To what degree are Sheridan Student Services, supports and programs easily navigated by students?
4. How effective are communications with students?
5. What professional standards, program outcomes or student learning outcomes have you established in your unit? How are they connected to the Division plans and reporting?
6. How are students involved in the identification and development of ideas, the discussion of programs and decision making to enhance the student experience?
7. Are there opportunities you can identify to integrate learning and personal development to enhance student engagement and success throughout the student's tenure at Sheridan?
8. How might Student Services enhance the quality of the student experience through additional efforts in student leadership development, community service learning, personal wellness, student activities, clubs and programs?
9. Can you describe an intentional, transformational approach to student success that begins at admission and continues throughout the student's tenure at Sheridan? How might this improve?

APPENDIX 4. TRADITIONAL & INNOVATIVE STUDENT AFFAIRS MODELS

TRADITIONAL MODELS

Student-centred ethic of care model

A fundamental response to student needs. Services are designed to facilitate student success. Policies, programs and integrated services are centred on an ethic to care. The ethic of care model acknowledges that some students are not adequately prepared academically or socially to be successful. This model focuses attention on students most in need of support.

The strength of the ethic of care model is a caring environment where students are assisted in very a compassionate and sensitive manner. The weakness of the model is that it is time consuming and ultimately expensive.

Student-driven model

Student involvement and leadership are core principles where the focus is on developing leadership capacity and integrating students as a member of the university community. Students are highly involved in operating campus activities. The institution makes a commitment to student employment and allocation of discretionary funds. Paraprofessionals are key to successful implementation. The strength of the model is the enriched learning experiences outside the classroom. Retention rates and enriched student life are high. The weakness of the Student-driven model is the potential lack of adaptability. Traditional students at a given institution may dominate and potentially squelch involvement of a diverse population.

Student Agency Model

Students are completely responsible for student life and are full partners with Academic Stakeholders and staff in its operation. Academic Stakeholders and staff create structures that empower students to become invested in creating and learning.

The strength of this model is student the degree of student investment in their educational experience. The challenges include a potential lack of efficiency and the urge to reinvent systems on an annual basis.

INNOVATIVE MODELS

Academic-Student Affairs collaboration

A tightly coupled structure and operational philosophy between academic and Student Affairs that emphasizes seamless collaboration. There is an emphasis on student and Academic Stakeholders/staff interaction around enhanced learning. Academic Stakeholders and Student Affairs professionals are partners to facilitate the educational mission

The strength of this model is the ability to shape a high-quality learning environment and where Academic Stakeholders and Student Affairs staff work in a team-oriented way to maximize resources and impact. A challenge in fully successfully implementing this model is to ensure a full appreciation of the value that both partners bring to student learning.

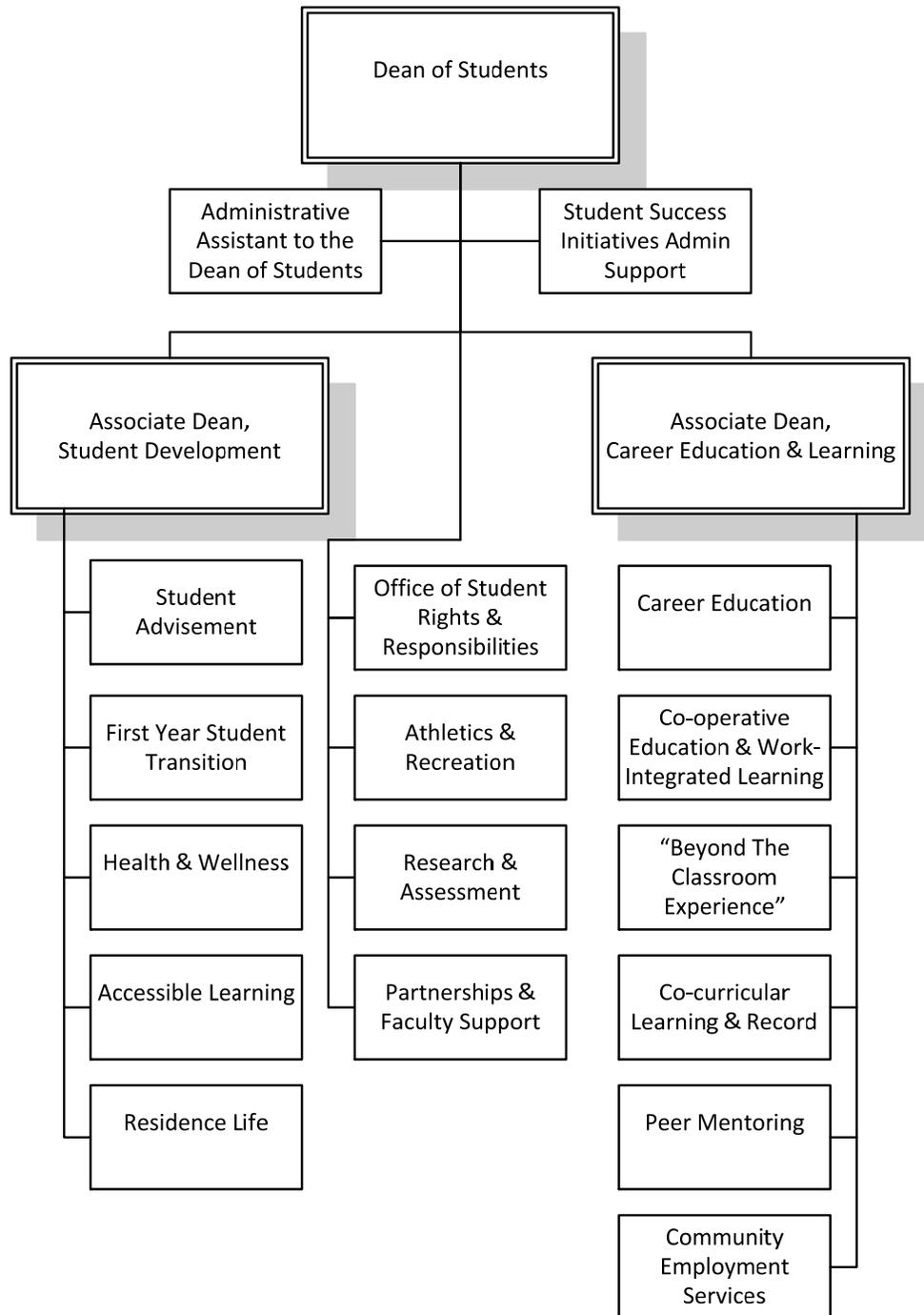
Academic centered model

Student Affairs programs and services are organized around the academic program. Academic experiences take a priority over traditional co-curricular activities. Student Affairs focuses on supporting students and curriculum in an intense academic environment. This model is more common in small liberal arts schools.

Strengths of this model include absolute clarity about the purpose of Student Affairs to support the educational mission. It also aligns the growing academic importance of Student Affairs in supporting student learning. On the other hand, this model requires a high degree of Academic Stakeholders-student interaction outside the classroom. This can become a workload issue for Academic Stakeholders and a resource issue for the institution.

Source: Manning, K., Kinzie, J., & Schuh, J. (2006). *One size does not fit all: Tradition and innovative models of student affairs practice*. New York, N.Y.: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

APPENDIX 5. ORGANIZATION CHART BY FUNCTION



APPENDIX 6. EMERGING TRENDS IN STUDENT AFFAIRS

1. **Strategic Enrolment Management** – links enrolment targets with marketing, retention efforts in a financial framework
2. **Integration** – creating integrated experience for student in which skill development and a sense of community are woven into the classroom experience. Supplemental instruction and leadership development are examples.
3. **Student Mental Health and Wellbeing** – requires multidisciplinary teams, informed by a campus strategy, to support students in need, build resiliency as a coping mechanism and reduce the stigma of mental health issues. A broad approach for both physical and mental health is required.
4. **The Built Environment** – building learning environments that invites interaction and collaboration amongst students and with Academic Stakeholders, that is safe and accessible, and opportunities for special populations and interest groups.
5. **Support for Distance Learners** – well-rounded and supportive experiences for on-line learners must include new models of service delivery.
6. **Assessment and Evidence-based Planning** – assessment as a key part of continuous program development and informing decision making
7. **Information Technology** – the pervasive use of technology in today’s society has changed how today’s student, often referred to as the “digital native”, communicates, accesses information and learns.
8. **A strong ethic of professional development and commitment to change management processes** must be imbedded in each Student Services unit. Professional staff working to support student success must stay current with emerging trends and issues with students.

Source: Fisher, D., Hannah, D., Cull, I., Patterson, P., Cummings, H., Vetere, H. L., & Robinson, N. (2011). *Leaders in learning: Student affairs in Canada in the 21st century, and implications for the Canadian Association of College and University Student Services*. A paper prepared for the CACUSS Identity Project.

APPENDIX 7. LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING EXAMPLES

Curricular

- Active based teaching and learning pedagogy and purposefully designed space
- Blended teaching and learning
- Flipped classroom technology enhancements
- 1st year seminars
- Collaborative assignments and projects
- Writing intensive courses
- Capstone courses, research and projects
- Integrated academic foundation and transition skills
- Field placements, practica, internships
- Performance based learning
- Entrepreneurship programs

Co-Curricular

- SI (Supplemental Instruction)
- Accessible learning accommodations and learning strategies
- Writing assistance centre
- Mathematics assistance centre
- Co-operative education and work integrated learning
- Community engagement and service learning
- Residence learning communities
- Professional training placements and service provision
- Global exchange learning
- Internships
- Undergraduate research
- E portfolios
- On-line assignment planner

Extra-Curricular

- Student success programs in writing, mathematics, research, study skills and time management
- Student leadership development
- Career development
- Health and wellness education
- Diversity and equity

- Student athlete development
- Peer to peer teaching/learning/mentorship
- Academic Stakeholders based learning communities, clubs and societies
- Volunteering
- Personal/academic integrity
- Judicial affairs and restorative justice
- Healthy/Safe campus initiatives
- Community engagement/town and gown