

Peer Review Team Report
on
The Office of Business Services
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Introduction

The 2008-2009 Systematic Program Review for the Office of Business Services is the first time The Office of Business Services, and all of the areas/departments it oversees, have undergone the program review process. The peer review committee would like to commend all participating supervisors and employees for the extensive planning and coordination that has gone into the compilation of such a comprehensive document. Realizing that there are numerous and often dissimilar areas that provided input for the final document the peer review committee feels that this initial review has laid a strong foundation for subsequent systematic program review efforts.

Description

The Office of Business Services provides central management and administrative support services in the following departments: Auxiliary Services, Accounting and Budget, Campus Police and Security, Facilities Planning and Campus Development, and Maintenance and Operations. Under the direction of the Vice President of Business Services, and five directors, the Office of Business Services consists of approximately 70 plus full-time, part-time and hourly staff members that provide both direct and indirect support for the district with an emphasis on fiscal oversight and practical business services. The overarching mission of the department is to promote and achieve the efficient management and preservation of Antelope Valley College resources.

The missions for each of the subordinate areas managed by the Office of Business Services are as follows:

Auxiliary Services Accounting Office – To provide support and business services for both the Marauder Bookstore and Antelope Valley College Cafeteria by managing departmental budgets and performing all accounting processes, including accounts receivable and payables.

Bookstore – To serve the Antelope Valley College community with distinction by providing course materials and supplies to meet students' academic needs.

Cafeteria – To provide a wide variety of high quality food, beverages and catering services to meet the needs of the Antelope Valley College community.

Accounting and Budget – To provide central management and support services in the areas of budget and accounting, including procurement, accounts receivable and payables, warehouse, mail and reprographic services. Indirect student and staff support provides fiscal oversight and practical business services to promote and achieve the efficient management and preservation of Antelope Valley College resources.

Campus Police and Security – To provide qualified, professional and courteous law enforcement and security service to the student body, faculty and staff of Antelope Valley

College. It is our goal to make every reasonable effort to protect persons and property on our campus, thereby affording our students the best educational environment possible.

Facilities Planning and Campus Development – To keep our campus environment safe, attractive, functional and efficient.

Maintenance and Operations – To provide and ensure quality service to all students, faculty, administration and staff through the maintenance of a “clean campus” rule that not only affects the students, but all who frequently visit our campus.

Self Evaluation

As is evident in the supporting documentation provided by the Systematic Program Review for the Office of Business Services, staff played an integral part of the self evaluation process. During peer review team interviews, managers and staff alike confirmed this fact. Each department utilized a team captain that was responsible for gathering and analyzing data, completing surveys, and compiling information to be reported in their respective areas’ self-study document. Each department also relied upon other District plans to guide them in their self evaluation efforts. These district plans include the Educational Master Plan, Facilities Master Plan, Finance Plan as well as the Human Resource Plan. References to these documents throughout the entire Systematic Program Review for the Office of Business Services document showed that much time and collaborative effort was spent aligning the goals and services of the Office of Business Services, and those of the departments it governs, with the missions and goals of the numerous institutional areas that operate outside the purview of the Office of Business Services.

With few exceptions, each area under the Office of Business Services provided both quantitative and qualitative data in the form of survey results and fiscal reports as well as anecdotal staff input to support the self-study. One, among many exceptional examples of quantitative data, is the results of the survey conducted by the Night Custodians that identified a communication disconnect between the night and day custodial staff.

Areas with little supporting data were those of the Auxiliary Services and Campus Police and Security. This was a concern of Vice President Deborah Wallace. The lack of qualitative or quantitative supporting data was attributed to these areas going through transitional periods with little integrated supervision at the time the self-study document was written.

Planning

The systematic program review process facilitated many of the Business Services’ supporting areas to create written policies and procedures. While the process is not yet complete, Maintenance and Operations interviews confirm that much progress is being made in this area.

Operational outcomes play a major role in the planning process for the Office of Business Services. The systematic program review process emphasized the need for operational outcomes development and measurement, and this process was adopted into the Office of Business Services planning procedures. Under the direction of the Vice President of Business Services, program review and the operational outcomes forms were listed on the weekly agendas and strategies were discussed to assist the directors with gathering information for their respective departments. Reviewing each department's operational outcomes on a weekly basis provided insight on the needs of the department. Because the Office of Business Services is very diverse in its needs, as it serves the District, being able to assess and measure operational outcomes and frequent scrutiny of the results provides the opportunity to document, with evidence, achievements and potential areas of concern. The systematic program review document shows that this process is one of the driving forces of the Department of Business Services and the Department of Facilities Planning and Campus Development. Though the formal terminology of "operational outcomes" may not have been entirely adopted for the later, the spirit of the process does certainly exist.

Summary and Recommendations

Throughout the self-study document, the central theme of all areas under the Office of Business Services became evident. The looming statewide budget crisis and lack of needed resources will make it very difficult to provide the services needed for the campus. It is anticipated that the statewide budget will continue to be on the course of a downward spiral. Staff will have to continually seek ways to improve services, with little resources. Aligning the needs of departments with the demands of a growing campus will require following up on campus goals, persistent realignment toward operational outcomes, and the celebration of achievements.

Office of Business Services Recommendations

1. Review and implement a range of accounting directives as noted in the various accounting guidelines as provided on the state, federal and local levels.
2. Acquisition of new software is necessary to assist in tracking revenue and expenditure. The current system (PeopleSoft) that is utilized through the Los County Office of Operations is not sufficient to track the salaries and benefits budgets, which account for 85% of the District's unrestricted general fund.
3. Implementation of a position control system is critical to assisting the District better forecast the budgets for salaries and benefits.
4. Communicate effectively on a regular basis to help ensure that staff stays abreast of the dynamic changes of the statewide budget.
5. Obtain and implement an adequate maintenance management software program to track Facilities Work Requests (FWRs).
6. Hire additional staff as per the HR plan to help ensure that the 14% growth in student population is adequately served.
7. Create a priority list of policy and procedures needed for all departments.

8. Review patrol logs, crime/arrest reports, incident reports and statistics to determine campus crime trends.
9. Conduct informal stakeholder surveys of student body, faculty, staff, and the community.
10. Establish a deferred maintenance program to allow the District to update obsolete equipment.
11. Identify all hazardous construction materials and safety hazards on campus. Provide for a safe method of handling, removal and repair.
12. Review the bookstore and food service operations to help ensure the auxiliary services are self-sufficient and fiscally sound.
13. Implement a just-in-time inventory system for functional departments such as the warehouse, and food services to help control costs.
14. Review police and security services standard operating procedures to help ensure that the District has a safe and supportive learning environment for student success and equity.
15. Build campus facilities to accommodate growth that are safe, environmentally sound, and support the learning environment for students.
16. Departments should dialog on a regular basis to help ensure that staff concerns are documented and achievements are celebrated.
17. Maintain clean facilities that are conducive to the learning environment.

Peer Review Team Recommendations

1. Separate the reviews of the programs under the Office of Business Services into separate self-study reports to make the review process more manageable.
2. The staffing needs throughout the Office of Business Services must be an institutional priority so that programs under this area may more effectively serve student and employee needs and the district's investments in technology and facilities are not wasted.
3. Each department should work with the Student Learning Outcomes Committee to refine operational outcomes. It is evident in the self-study documentation that many of the documented outcomes are short term goals rather than long term outcomes.
4. Each department should gather and include supporting statistics in future reports to support and justify budget requests.
5. Each department should work with the Office of Institutional Research and Planning to develop an evaluation instrument that will assess how well the area is meeting the needs of students, staff, and the community.