

**SMU Division of Student Affairs  
Strategic Planning Process Charge  
2007-2008**

Two definitions of strategic planning include:

- *A process or document outlining an organization's priorities toward which fiscal and human resources will be directed* (attribution unknown)
- *A disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, why it does it, with a focus on the future.* (Bryson, John M., Robert C. Einsweiler, 1987)

With the aforementioned definitions as a framework, the charge of the steering committee for the SMU Division of Student Affairs' strategic planning process is to develop a strategic planning process focused on:

- 1) Ensuring that ALL students have the opportunity and support to be successful.
- 2) The Philosophy that "Learning Happens Everywhere" and that "Learning Has No Boundaries."
- 3) Developing and Maintaining an Exemplary Division of Student Affairs.

(See pg 2 for expanded definitions of each of the points above).

Through our focus on student success; student learning; and maintaining an exemplary student affairs division; it should be a "given" that we would offer high quality service; spend our current resources wisely and develop avenues for generating resources; and be **bold** and **imaginative** in thinking about what we can collectively accomplish.

While no particular format is proposed for the strategic planning process it should be one that: engages the entire division; allows for rigorous examination of our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats; provides opportunity for "outside of the division" influence, consultation, and comment; and is tied to the university's overall strategic plan.

The final product should be a written plan that will guide our direction for the next three years and sets forth a process for us to accomplish our vision; explicitly connects our fiscal and human resources, our organizational structure, and our assessment efforts toward the realization of the plan; and one that is succinct enough that Student Affairs staff can "*remember it; recite it and rally around it.*" The written planning document should be completed by December 1, 2007 though the work toward its achievement will be continuous.

**SMU Division of Student Affairs  
Strategic Planning Focus**

- 1) Ensuring that all students have the opportunity and support to be successful**

We must commit ourselves to ensuring that all SMU students have the opportunity and support to be successful. Not only defining success as our ability to retain and graduate all of the students who begin SMU as first year student or transfer students, but that success means that we are helping to create an environment that:

- Enables all students to take full advantage of the breadth and depth of academic and student life experiences that SMU has to offer.
- Encourages students to make good choices regarding their health, safety, and overall well being.
- Facilitates opportunities for students to develop quality relationships with other members of the diverse student community.
- Helps students achieve those all important student development outcomes: leadership and identity development; career exploration and decision making; ethical and moral reasoning; etc.

Additionally, we must ensure that we: have equitable rates of retention among different groups of students; have a strong safety net for students so that we have ways of identifying students about whom we are concerned; are able to determine the extent to which our services, programs and activities are reaching all students and how we might better serve and outreach to those populations of students whom we are currently under-serving; commit ourselves to working not only with the students who are easy for us to work with and/or highly visible, but also with those students that we find more challenging or who do not seem to be as connected to the institution and to other students.

**Goals:**

- 1). Enhance student Leadership opportunities for more “middle” students by growing the Leadership Certificate program to 150 students.
- 2). Become the industry leader in providing alcohol and drug education and prevention programs.
- 3). Create a “Sophomore Experience” that provides a well rounded co-curricular program for students in the second year starting with a sophomore live-on requirement and including intentional outreach and programming for this population.

**2) Committing ourselves to the philosophy that “Learning Happens Everywhere” and that “Learning Has no Boundaries.”**

Our profession has called us to be more intentional about our roles as educators and to more deliberately focus our work on student learning and transformative education. According to two Student Affairs-related publications:

**The Student Learning Imperative** (American College Personnel Association 1996).

*If learning is the primary measure of institutional productivity by which the quality of undergraduate education is determined, what and how much students learn must also be the criteria by which the value of student affairs is judged.*

**Learning Reconsidered:** (1994 National Association of Student Personnel Administrators; American College Student Personnel Association)  
*A truly transformative education repeatedly exposes students to multiple opportunities for intentional learning through formal academic curriculum, student life, collaborative and co-curricular programming, community-based and global experiences.*

To meet the challenges of *The Student Learning Imperative* and *Learning Reconsidered* we need to:

- Be more intentional about identifying, articulating, and assessing the learning that occurs as a result of student involvement, engagement, and participation in student affairs services, programs, and activities.
- Understand that we are a partner to, and not in competition with, our faculty colleagues and to continue to find ways to engage faculty in our work and help students make the connection between their inside-of the classroom and outside-of-the-classroom learning.
- Expand our concept of where students learn to also include outside-of-campus boundaries.
- As members of a learning profession, commit ourselves to being life-long learners—investing in our own professional development; keeping abreast of the research in our field; engaging in research and writing.

**Goals:**

- 1). Implement a Residential College model that includes construction of new residential halls and programming.
- 2). Create faculty development and participation incentives that will increase the number of faculty that include service-learning in their classes.
- 3). Enhance student employment preparation through career development training and internship support.
- 4). Enhance connection of the Chaplain's office with other areas of Student Affairs.

**3) Developing and Maintaining an Exemplary Division of Student Affairs**

While the word exemplary is a relative one and open to interpretation, for the purposes of our planning efforts some definitions of exemplary could include a Division of Student Affairs:

- Whose departments are operating in accordance with the Council for Academic Standards (CAS) or other professional standards for student affairs and/or departments within student affairs.
- Regularly assesses its strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities.
- Seen by students, parents, faculty, administrators and campus departments as responsive to student needs, issues and concerns.
- Identified as a model by other colleges and universities for our programs and services, activities, and our innovative thinking about student affairs work

- One in which people enjoy working and attracts the “best and brightest” to apply for positions within our Division.

**Goals:**

- 1). Gain compliance with AAHC Accreditation Guidelines by establishing a clearinghouse for health education activities and maintaining national certification requirements.
- 2). Enhance use of technology in order to best meet the needs and interest of today’s population.
- 3). Enhance visibility of Student Affairs programs and services through an intentional marketing campaign to “get the word out”.