The Student Success Task Force

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Woodbury University

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Origins

- National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) in 2005
  - At or above national norms in all 5 benchmarks
  - Best at creating a supportive student environment
  - Needed improvement in enhanced educational experiences
National Project

• Participation in Building Engagement and Attainment among Minority Students (BEAMS) project

• Sponsored by the Institute for Higher Education Policy (IHEP)
Other Campus Initiatives

• Increased Focus on Student Success in Spring 2005
  – Creation of Institute for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (IETL)
  – Formation of Woodbury Reaccreditation Steering Committee (WRSC)
Identity Retreats

• Created six guiding principles:
  – Transdisciplinarity
  – Social Responsibility
  – Innovation and Creativity
  – Communication
  – The Integrated Student
  – Academic Quality
BEAMS

• Task Force composed of members from Academic Support, Student Affairs, Development, Students and Faculty
• Led by Phyllis Cremer
  – Included Lusine Arutunyan, Janice Blair, Ilene Blaisch, Doug Cremer, Paul Decker, Satinder Dhiman, Anne Erlich, Liana Jindaryan, Benoush McKay, Vickie Nettles, and Randy Stauffer
BEAMS

• Five Student Focus Groups in Spring 2006
  – Discussed results of NSSE
  – Found students were engaged in numerous learning activities outside the classroom
  – But became aware of how these activities connected to their education only upon later reflection
ITS

- Planning for Institute of Transdisciplinary Studies begun in Spring 2006
- Institute created in Summer 2006
From BEAMS to SSTF

- Integration of BEAMS committee into reaccreditation effort as the Student Success Task Force (SSTF) in Spring 2006
- Charged with the review and reform of general education and integration of curricular and co-curricular programs
SSTF

• Given the educational charge of SSTF, membership required to be at least 50% faculty
• Faculty members Will McConnell, Paulette Singley, Phil Pack join the task force
• Six members (Janice, Ilene, Phyllis, Doug, Paul and Randy) prepare for the Summer Academy
Initial Planning

• Summer Academy in Puerto Rico
  – Developed plans for three-part (faculty, staff and student) learning communities
  – Explored issues of learning outside the classroom and co-curricular integration
Learning Communities

- Developed over Fall 2006 and implemented in Spring 2007
- Composed of faculty members from SSTF, staff directors and coordinators, and student leaders
- Created numerous suggestions for action concerning enhancing educational experiences
Process

• **Internal Scan**: Focus on individual significant learning experiences

• **Literature Review**: Research on curricular and co-curricular learning perspectives; development of significant learning concepts
Process

- **Synthesis**: All three Learning Communities met and discussed commonalities and differences

- **Strategies**: Discern possible approaches for enhancing educational experiences

- **Recommendations**: All three Learning Communities met and discussed their ideas for beneficial strategies to pursue
Results

- Implement and sustain a campus culture that supports innovative teaching strategies
- Create social and informal learning spaces on campus
- Develop an adjunct faculty program to inform and incorporate them into the community
Results

• Develop focused groups or alliances to address common life, community and career issues

• Create affiliations around transdisciplinary issues for all members of the community (students, staff and faculty)
Further Change

- In January 2007, the Office of Student Development (OSD), a merger of Student Affairs and Academic Development, created under Academic Affairs with Phyllis Cremer as Assoc. VP.
- In May 2007, Vic Liptak, incoming Dean of the Faculty, joins SSTF; Randy Stauffer remains as a faculty member.
- Lusine Arutunyan, ASG President, replaced by Ani Okkassian, incoming ASG President.
Subsequent Planning

- Summer Academy in New Mexico
  - Team composed of Doug, Phyllis, Paul, Vic and Ani
  - Developed plans to implement results from learning communities
  - Established goals to accomplish over the next two years
Vision

• Woodbury University is centered on learning; not only student learning, but staff and faculty as well.
• Woodbury University is centered on teaching; not only faculty teaching, but staff and students as well.
Vision

• The university serves a generation of students who will make a significant impact in the world of architecture, business, design, media, social sciences and civic engagement.
Vision

• The students, staff and faculty will model ways to communicate, learn and make decisions that will foster growth and change.

• Students as well as members of the Woodbury community will be sought after because of their diverse knowledge, professional skills, developed talents, and transdisciplinary abilities.
Goals

- Our communication plan allows all members of the university community to be informed participants.
- Our faculty development program brings full-time and adjunct faculty closer together in creating enhanced teaching and learning.
Goals

- Our co-curricular process integrates learning inside and outside the classroom
- Our professional/personal development curriculum for students fully supports the six principles
Goals

• Our General Education curriculum is an essential and defining aspect of the Woodbury education