

EVANGEL UNIVERSITY
AQIP ACTION PROJECT #3: ENHANCED STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES
FIRST ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

1. DESCRIBE THE PAST YEAR'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND THE CURRENT STATUS OF THIS ACTION PROJECT.

The provocative propositions that evolved from Evangel's Conversation Day on October 27, 2004 were consolidated into five key proposals. Proposal #3 consolidated two propositions as follows:

We propose that all areas of student services, including academic services, be organized to meet the diverse needs (i. e. advising, registration, library, student accounts) of both traditional and non-traditional student populations. (Combination of original Propositions 11 and 12 considered to be duplicates).

Proposition 11

We propose that the university increase interdepartmental awareness of new and non-traditional student populations to better meet those students' needs. Expanding hours of such services as the library, student accounts and making sure facilities are open to students during class time (many non-traditional students work during the 8-4:30 hours and we need to have someone in various departments available during non-traditional hours). The university could have a smoother registration process for new students (increased communication so all faculty and staff know what is involved in registration and which department handles what; a kind of "registration for dummies" packet is given to new students with a step-by-step guide to registration and any other FAQ's)...

Because the needs of this growing student population are being overlooked and those are populations with a lot of room for growth.

Proposition 12

We propose that all offices that provide necessary services to students be open extended hours, year round, to accommodate the needs of all students, traditional, resident and non-resident, Degree Completion and graduate students...

Because we value each student and desire to serve their needs, without regard to their resident, non-resident, Degree Completion or Graduate student status.

Over the next several months, the five proposals were advanced through additional faculty/staff selection processes to identify the three projects that should be acted on first. The project to enhance student support services was chartered as AQIP Action Team #3 and formally launched with team leader training on May 2, 2005. The Charter for Team #3 included the following specifics to guide the team's actions:

Data that led to the selection of this project: EU's support service areas need relief from putting out fires related to complaints and to maintain focus that their everyday work adds value to their students. We have informal data that tells us we are not proactively assessing and adapting our support services to the changes in our student population and the new programs we are offering. This project will enable us to gather concrete data about the root causes of current problems and to develop a process that will require a support services assessment and continuous process improvement.

Project Scope: *The team task is to:*

- 1. Gather concrete data about the root causes of current support services problems including, but not limited to quantitative and qualitative process measures such as time students wait to be served, hours of operations, perceived quality and convenience of service by students, and efficiency of current support services. Service areas include, but are not limited to admissions, bookstore, student accounts, wellness, security, financial aid, registrar, information technology, and library.*
- 2. Develop a plan and processes to improve support services.*
- 3. Develop a plan and process to implement continuous improvement to our support services.*

AQIP Team #3 formally met six times between the launch and this annual report. Team members were assigned various responsibilities between meetings. The team followed the effective meeting processes (ground rules, team roles, agendas, and meeting outcomes/actions report, and use of tools such as brainstorming, consensus building, and data analysis) that team leaders and facilitators were taught at the launch of the AQIP project teams. Following is a summary of the team's primary activities as they relate to the scope of the project described in the charter:

Gathering Data

- An initial brainstorming session identified key areas of support services and the various segments of the student population they serve.
 - Key student support service areas: student accounts, advising, records, financial aid, academic support, IT/computer support, security, library, housing, bookstore, gym, parking, campus life, disability services, joust, CLEP & ACT testing, fixer, health & counseling, chapel, commuter services.
 - Student groups: International, transfer, disability, VA, traditional day-time, non-traditional day-time, adult degree completion, adult AA, graduate studies, full-time, part-time, gifted, limited load, freshman, senior, minority, social probation, academic probation athletes, financial need.
- The team used consensus building tools to agree that the non-traditional student that are associated with new programs launched in the past several years such as adult degree completion, Associate Arts, and graduate programs appeared to be the primary source of complaints regarding student services. These student groups comprise approximately 400 of the student population.
- A process was launched to identify the specific areas of student support services that most needed improvement to bring this targeted group to an appropriate level of satisfaction. The process had three phases:
 - A team representative visited with several adult Degree Completion classes to identify the potential areas of concern for support services by this student segment.
 - Based on the areas of support services identified in the class visits, a survey was developed and given to graduate students in the psychology, education, and organizational leadership programs as well as students in the Degree Completion programs. A total of 57 students responded. The responses were compiled to identify the most frequent problem areas and those that seem to be the highest degree of concern to the students. The results are summarized below and listed in order of their importance based on the Weighted rating which combines frequency cited with severity of the rating:

Service Area	% Who Rated	Average Rating	Weighted Rating
Bookstore	70%	2.7	188
Information Technology/Computer support	54%	3.4	182
Parking	40%	2.5	102
Library	39%	2.5	98
Financial Aid	25%	3.4	84
Advising	33%	2.1	68
Security	25%	2.6	63
Student accounts	26%	2.1	56
Records	14%	2.6	37
Cafeteria	12%	2.6	32
Campus Life	7%	3.0	21
Health	7%	2.5	18
Joust	5%	1.7	9

Other service areas on the survey which had a weighted rating of 2 or less are CLEP, disability, housing, and VA support.

- The team carefully reviewed the survey data and comments and recognized that the survey responses related to whether the student had ever experienced problems with these areas rather than whether they were currently a

problem. So, the team compiled information on what improvement actions had already been taken in relation to the areas that were identified. Key improvements already made were:

- Information Technology/Computer Support expanded coverage during the fall and spring semesters until 11 p.m. and until 7:30 p.m. in the summer to support faculty teaching in the various non-traditional programs and to provide evening access to a computer lab.
- Beginning in the fall 2004, the bookstore expanded its evening hours to 6 p.m. and continued its Saturday hours from 10:00 – 2:00 to provide access to degree completion and graduate program students. The bookstore also delayed the start of its summer hours until the end of May and kept its Saturday hours during the summer in 2005 to accommodate those students who could not come before the 3 p.m. closing time during the summer.
- The library adjusted its hours to provide non-traditional students better access.

Develop a Plan and Processes to Improve Student Services

After considering improvements already made, the team decided that the frequency and severity of concerns with IT/computer support and bookstore support services identified the primary opportunities to improve student services. These two areas affected 70% and 54% of the students respectively. The severity of the computer issue (3.4 of 5) was the highest of any group. As a result, the following actions were taken:

- **Information Technology/Computer Support services:**

- Used specific comments from surveys to develop a table with issue categories, specific comments, and how issues are resolved. The primary categories of problems are E-Mail, Website, computer lab availability, and support services.
- Compiled information about what instructions are provided or available to students regarding email and computer services including printed and website information.
- Met with Degree Completion and Graduate staff to discuss how the computer services information is provided to adult students.
- Discussed priorities related to IT issues and agreed that:
 - √ Communication needs to improve between IT and:
 - a) Program managers regarding changes to distribution lists and appropriate use of the lists¹ and
 - b) Students regarding help desk contacts, email forwarding directions, and availability of services, labs, etc.
 - √ The system for e-mails needs to be more flexible to recognize a non-traditional student's personal account as the primary communication rather than forcing them to use the Evangel account; or to provide students with instructions and easy process for messages to be automatically forwarded to their personal account and deleted from their EU account.
 - √ Students need access to computer labs at non-traditional times during all terms, including summer.
 - √ Review of IT issues summary and recommendations to provide specific directions to students for forwarding student email, improving student portal term identification, and compiling a list of student questions regarding IT services.
- Action items** that still need to be taken by the IT/Computer Support department are:

¹ Near the end of the team's work, IT disabled the mass student email by student group through the global address book. Students must now be e-mailed by going through the CAMS system by student enrollment term. This system does not work for the non-traditional programs as we may have active students working on degree requirements but not currently enrolled in a class. No communication came from IT to the program managers regarding this change. The GAPS office discovered this change when they attempted to email the DC and Graduate students information regarding graduation ceremony and schedule. They are currently emailing students by using an "active student" spreadsheet in Excel.

- √ Explore and resolve whether off-campus students can elect to enter a personal account as their primary communication link with faculty and staff.
- √ Adjust the CAMS system to recognize non-traditional program students based on their graduate program, or their degree completion or AA program and cohort. The objective is to make it easy to e-mail non-traditional students and access their records based on cohort or degree program.
- √ Improve the identification of non-traditional student terms or allow automatic selection be added to student portal.
- √ Create a printed pamphlet/guide specifically designed for non-traditional and commuter students who live off campus similar to the one developed for traditional on-campus students. The guide should include specific instructions for selecting their forwarding email accounts and distribute them to all adult program students along with a list of frequently asked questions and responses.

- **Bookstore support services:**

- Team representatives discussed the survey results with the campus bookstore manager who responded with a letter addressing the issues.
- Discussed potential solutions related to short orders on textbooks and surveyed degree completion students regarding their choice of the following options:
 - √ Continue current options to purchase books from Founders or other sources
 - √ Five-week class cycle order option: week #2 deliver order forms, week #3 pick up order forms, week #4 deliver books
 - √ Purchase all texts for one block at the beginning of the date block

The preferred option was to continue the current practice of the students having an option to purchase the books at the Founders bookstore or wherever they choose.

- Received clarification on what can be said regarding the purchase of text books from other sources as specified in the contract with Founders. Outcome: It is preferred that no announcements be made to students about purchasing textbooks from other vendors. However, if asked, we may respond with that information.
- Resolved need to gather additional information regarding student needs and opportunities for purchasing textbooks.
- Identified that one of the major problems is that a new faculty person may change the book on short notice given the 5-6 week cycle of classes.
- An action item** that the team recommends be considered to further improve these services is for the Graduate and Professional Studies Department to include restrictions on changes to dates/times of classes and change in textbook in faculty contracts for adult programs.

Plan to Implement Continuous Improvement in Student Support Services

The team narrowed its study to the areas where the greatest opportunities existed to improve satisfaction with student services. As a result, we identified specific improvements in the IT/computer support and bookstore support for non-traditional students. Even so, this focus identified the following root causes of the problems with student services that would have broad impact on satisfaction across all student segments:

- Failure to assess the differences in needs and expectations of various segment groups of students as EU has expanded its programs, particularly to non-traditional students.
- Inadequate consideration of impact on student support services in the launching of new academic programs or changes in key processes and systems. In this case, impact means the need for adjustments to access, types of service, and communication that specifically meets the needs and expectations of students who would enter the new program.

- Failure to establish a systematic process to measure student satisfaction with support services and act on the results.
- A lack of clear and frequent communication to students about support services that relates to the varied needs of different student segments. In some cases, the communication that is developed for traditional students is not customized to address the specific needs of non-traditional students.

As a result, AQIP Action Team #3 proposes the following processes be required and supported by the administration:

1. A Student Services Impact Study must be developed and completed for any new academic program or key process or system change developed by a student service department. The academic or student service department must submit the impact study for approval to an appropriate authority along with every change. The primary purpose of the Impact Study will be to develop a discipline of cross-functional and customer satisfaction thinking and to assure that the implementation of the program or system is communicated to student service personnel and accompanied by appropriate changes and resources to meet the expectations of those being served. The team has developed and attached to this report an initial draft of a format for the impact study.
2. A department or committee will be responsible to develop, conduct, and analyze satisfaction surveys of all student segments at least annually. The surveys must be designed in such a way that they identify the different segments and needs of the student population and include an evaluation of each relevant function of student support services. The department or committee will be responsible for determining how the survey will be conducted so that participation is optimized. The department or committee will also be responsible for analyzing the results, identifying areas where services need to be improved and reviewing improvement strategies proposed by the affected service area.

STUDENT SERVICES IMPACT STUDY

DEPARTMENT SUBMITTING: _____

PERSON RESPONSIBLE: _____

DATE STUDY SUBMITTED: _____

1. Briefly describe the new program or process change being proposed.
2. What segment or segments of the student population will be affected by this program (resident, commuter, degree completion, adult Associate of Arts, graduate students)?
3. What are the unique needs of each segment group as they relate to the program or process change?
4. What student services are most likely to be affected by the new program or process change? <input type="checkbox"/> Academic and Career Support Center <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Parking <input type="checkbox"/> Advising <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Aid <input type="checkbox"/> Records <input type="checkbox"/> Bookstore <input type="checkbox"/> Health <input type="checkbox"/> Security <input type="checkbox"/> Cafeteria <input type="checkbox"/> Housing <input type="checkbox"/> Student accounts <input type="checkbox"/> Campus Life <input type="checkbox"/> Joust <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate and Professional Studies <input type="checkbox"/> Information Technology/Computer Support <input type="checkbox"/> Library <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
5. How did you determine what student services would be affected (Recommend that a brief description of the new program or system change be sent to the chairs of academic departments and supervisors of all other departments and ask for them to advise whether and how the program may impact them and to ask any questions they may have)?
6. For each student service area affected, work with that department/area to describe how the student service will be adjusted to accommodate the special needs of the affected students (consider access to services, need for communication, impact on staffing, etc.).
7. Provide a plan for assessing whether or not the students' expectations with the program or process change and the affiliated student services are being met.

2. DESCRIBE HOW THE INSTITUTION INVOLVED PEOPLE IN WORK ON THIS ACTION PROJECT.

When selecting the team members, the AQIP Steering Committee decided that it should consist primarily of representatives from the various student support service areas. Dorynda Carpenter from the Graduate and Professional Studies area was selected as the team leader. Other members were Scott Crawford, IT/Computer support; Sheri Phillips, academic support; Christy Rowden, admissions, Betty Schoolfield, business office; Flow Byerly, financial aid; Cathy Williams, records and registration; Dennis Wubbena, business department faculty; and Martin Mittelstadt, theology department faculty. AQIP Steering Committee member Bernie Dana was selected as the facilitator. Dr. Mittelstadt resigned from the team soon after it was formed due to time constraints. Flo Byerly participated in many of the team meetings before leaving her employment at EU. She was replaced by financial aid staff member Mandy Spigle.

For the most part, the team has remained highly motivated to pursue its mission. Individual members took responsibility for assignments between meetings. The primary struggles came at times when work load peaked for various members. It was difficult to sustain involvement of faculty members during the summer when they were not contracted to teach. The AQIP Steering Committee and Campus Planning Council also did not meet regularly during the summer. On July 1, 2006 the team leader resigned due to workload issues but has continued as a team member. The team met in mid-July to review a comprehensive report on its work and to determine what yet needed to be accomplished. The team concluded that it could complete its mission in approximately 4 months and identified the strategies to achieve this goal. Another team member (Betty Schoolfield) agreed to be the team leader with agreement that the facilitator would draft the reports.

The periodic requirements to report to the AQIP steering team was helpful in motivating the team, but for the most part the team's primary motivation has been the desire to achieve its mission in a meaningful way.

3. DESCRIBE YOUR PLANNED NEXT STEPS FOR THIS ACTION PROJECT.

The next steps are:

- Recommend to the AQIP Steering Committee that the proposed Impact Study be implemented as soon as possible (see report under #1). This recommendation will have to proceed through the Campus Planning Council to the Board of Administration for approval to implement as policy.
- Develop a new survey to administer to students in the non-traditional programs to assess the current satisfaction with student support services in the five areas where problems were identified in the previous survey. Actions have been taken in a number of these areas so the team wants to assess and solicit the specific concerns of the non-traditional students to develop further improvements where needed.
- Based on the ratings and specific feedback from the survey, the team will ask the affected student support services to prepare a plan of action to adjust processes and services to improve satisfaction with their services and to identify ways that these improvements can be measured and monitored in the future. The team will develop a guide for reporting back to the team the systems improvements/measurements that are planned.
- Provide a final report to the AQIP Steering Committee by the end of November 2006 that identifies all of the improvements to student services that have been achieved.

4. DESCRIBE ANY "EFFECTIVE PRACTICE(S)" THAT RESULTED FROM YOUR WORK ON THIS ACTION PROJECT.

The AQIP team has recommended two systems changes that they believe constitute effective practices:

1. A requirement that all proposals for new academic programs or significant program changes of any kind be accompanied by a systematic study of the program's impact on student services and appropriate plans for student services to be adjusted as need to meet the needs of the students in the program. This approach is needed to prevent problems with providing effective student support services associated with the new programs.
2. A requirement that a standing department or committee be responsible to develop, conduct, and analyze annual surveys of student satisfaction with support services. These surveys must be developed and conducted so that they recognize key student segments such as traditional resident students, traditional commuter students, non-traditional degree completion students, non-traditional graduate students, etc. the department or committee will also be

responsible for identifying areas where services need to be improved and for the initial review of improvement strategies.

5. WHAT CHALLENGES, IF ANY, ARE YOU STILL FACING IN REGARD TO THIS ACTION PROJECT?

As the AQIP team worked on identifying improvements to student support services, we determined that the scope was too broad. Using the information provided through conversation day and other sources, the team decided that most of the problems were related to the launch of new programs for non-traditional students in the past 4 years. As a result, the team decided to focus on identifying and improving those issues.

During the course of identifying issues, the team saw improvement opportunities and proceeded to “negotiate” changes (often verbal agreements) with the support service area manager/leader. The team realized later that these “negotiated” changes may not be sustained with a leadership change in the support service area. The team now realizes that it must help identify the problems, provide data and information to the service area, and then ask the support service area to provide written process improvements that they will implement to improve. In some cases these changes may need to become part of outsourcing agreements, written policies of the University or department, or even faculty contracts. The accountability must go back to the support service area rather than remain with the temporary AQIP team.