SCOT Analysis

Unit: Enrollment and Student Services

Year: 2014

Strengths:

- Strong recruitment and outreach efforts to attract and retain a diverse and talented student body
- Continued assessment of recruitment strategies and a flexibility to change approaches, as needed
- Dedicated, hardworking, and creative staff whose service approach is student-centered and caring
- A seasoned staff with historical knowledge of the institution
- A wide range of co-curricular, paraprofessional, and student employment opportunities that meet student interest and need, engage them to apply what they have learned in the classroom, and help them gain leadership skills
- Engaged student leaders, especially in governance processes and institutional decision making
- Strong partnerships and collaboration – both on and off campus – to offer programs, deliver services, and respond to issues and interests of campus and community concern
- An established culture of collaboration and openness to creativity and new ideas (e.g. early move in initiative for first generation students, Student Success Collaborative, Ashoka)
- Utilization of technology and web applications to streamline processes, provide more on-demand access to services, and reduce waste
- Leaders in cultural and demographic shifts at Western. This includes student recruitment, staff hiring in the division, and increased cultural competency through training in the division and across campus.

Challenges:

- Limited resources and general scholarship funds to attract, support and retain students while facing increasing competition from other institutions for the same pool of potential students
- Limited resources and infrastructure to fully support students from under-represented populations
- Inadequate staffing levels create greater workload demands; Time constraints hamper coordination and communication between offices; Staff retirements/losses impact the transfer of institutional knowledge; Retirements happening more quickly than anticipated
- Insufficient resources/lack of space to meet increased demand for services in several departments and, in general, for programming and event planning – everything is too small to meet growing numbers of students; approaching space needs from a formulaic approach without regard to how to best serve students and provide opportunities for staff to co-learn and co-teach in their departments
- Difficulties keeping up with the changes in technology; technology has negatively impacted relationship building and efficiency when overused in a robotic fashion – in contrast to the relationship/family oriented culture that many of our changing demographics are coming from
- Limited resources to create quality online delivery and information
Missed partnerships as result of not understanding the work others are doing at Western and others not understanding the services our division provides; result is lack of involvement in planning but an expectation to implement complex processes quickly.

Good ideas may be constrained or challenged by funding source issues; difficult to maintain relationships where fiduciary conflicts exist.

Difficult to attract students and staff of color due to the homogeneity of the campus and community.

Creating adequate opportunities for inclusivity and cross-cultural understanding.

Need for better/more communication outside of division-wide meetings.

No longer understood as a division – seen as Student Services and not Student Affairs.

**Opportunities:**

- Increasing partnerships with Academic Affairs in the recruitment and yield of students.
- Explore new markets and geographic locations for recruiting in-state students and for slow growth of out-of-state and international student numbers; Sell our strengths and strong reputation.
- Transform the experience of the incoming student – get University 101/life skills information into the hands of students in the absence of a formal course.
- Embrace and embed pluralism, bringing more richness to our learning and to our culture.
- Enactment of and state support for the Real Hope Act.
- Enhance current facilities to meet the needs of and service delivery to the modern student.
- More initiatives, like C2C, that connect students with youth giving more meaning to their education; Use of social media to reach middle and high school youth with hope of being in college.
- Look for curricular/programmatic partnerships (e.g. tie FIGS and WOOT together?).
- Increasing pool of diversity in hiring; be more aggressive in recruitment.
- Increase our divisional cultural fluency and help alter public perception of campus diversity.
- Increased recognition of accomplishments within the division; help others know the work we do.
- Re-organization of services and staffing; utilize departing staff in part-time transitional roles.
- Use of emerging technologies (e.g. SSC pilot) and divisional research to gain a clearer understanding of retention and greater efficiency/effectiveness of interventions and information sharing.
- Build more business relationships and broaden internship offerings; explore additional partnerships within the local community.
- Gain more general scholarship dollars via the Campaign; identify untapped donor potential; seek.
- Seek grant opportunities to provide additional funding support for critical issues (e.g. mental health); more out-of-box thinking about funding options (example: Harrington field project).
- Encourage professional and leadership development at all staff levels.

**Threats:**

- Declining economic support and increased accountability at the public, state, and federal level.
- Proliferation of institutional/state/federal policies, mandates, and standardization. Are losing the flexibility to use good judgment and address situations in a humane or common sense manner.
- Staff time required to address legislative mandates which often are not well defined (requiring more time for clarification) or for which information is often available via other means
- Resistance in adjusting to Western’s changing student demographics
- Undue burden placed on student leaders to attend to issues the institution should be addressing
- Difficulty attracting and/or retaining faculty and staff of color; Geography is an issue as limited diversity and support networks in the community lead to feelings of not belonging and/or isolation
- Students with severe mental or physical health conditions require considerable case management, which may detract from other students needing attention or assistance
- Declining resources in the community to address issues of concern (e.g. support for physical or mental health needs)
- Growing dependency on third party vendors; concerns about student privacy and access to data
- Institution lacks shared definition and vision of diversity; as the demographics of Western change there is a need to think more broadly beyond race and ethnicity about resources and space for all types of diversity (e.g. religious diversity, queer issues, veterans, students with disabilities)
- Stretching staff time to implement new initiatives (e.g. Ashoka) without adequate resources to address core needs and/or without a clear understanding of institutional priorities
- Institutional culture seems to value and reward unique projects while core service needs remain unmet
- Lack of clarity around institutional priorities. Seem to be changing without discussion or assessment of impact on staff time and resources
- Claim to “Western Cares” without a clear expectation of what that means and its congruence with others expectations (e.g. students, family members)
- Fewer opportunities for educational credit to gain paraprofessional or masters level experience in the student affairs profession; Resulting impact on quality of student services delivery and retention of staff trained in the discipline