SCOT Analysis
Unit: Enrollment and Student Services
Year: 2017

STRENGTHS

Student Success – Student-centered; Staff committed to student success and personalized service; passion for service; strong support for students on an individual level

Caring – Compassionate and caring; students report genuine sense of being cared for by and connection to faculty & staff; empathetic

Collaboration - Staff collaborate well within division and across campus; sense of community; spirit of cooperation

Student Engagement - Many opportunities for student engagement; students involved in decision-making; encourage student leadership; support student advocacy

Co-curricular Offerings - Provide education that supports the classroom experience

Diversity - Commitment to equity and respect for underrepresented student populations; inclusive; Diverse mini community / diverse staff / actually reveling in dealing well w/diverse groups

Emergency Management - Go beyond call of duty; emergency response “in the moment”

Staffing – Lots of institutional knowledge; adaptable; competent team; dedicated; staff development

CHALLENGES

Space – Insufficient space in offices and for community gatherings; limited in redesigning space to better meet service needs; lack of transparency/ability to collaborate on campus space needs as a whole; geographic location and present buildings limit growth

Resources – Budget and staff limitations (e.g. mental health services, disability Resources, advising); doing more with less; competition for scarce resources; impact of minimum wage increases on student employment in the division

Staffing – Losing institutional knowledge with retirements; salaries not competitive with other institutions and not keeping up with cost-of-living in Bellingham; staff stretched thin; high turnover in some areas; how to support more people to take advantage of professional development opportunities; job descriptions have inflated expectations of skills required and workload within the job; respect of all roles/individuals in the division; remaining cognizant of need for self-care – balance risk of becoming resigned or cynical with hope, patience, long-range vision

Process improvement – Staff time is often focused on reaction to a situation (e.g. student crisis, mental health situation) which reduces time to think or plan proactive response; need deeper level of training to avoid reactive responses; time constraints/limitations to examine current processes; planning needs
take time and can take significant time to act on even when needs are expressed (e.g. ESC remodel); implementation of new initiatives without understanding how it impacts other areas; layers in decision-making slow down processes; run the risk of operating in an echo chamber – need to identify what makes us unique while also reaching outside the institution to learn from new sources of information and find inspiration; as a division and an institution we need to grow into our size and develop/refine processes that support that growth

**Technology** – Maximizing current and recent investments and ensuring effectiveness of the use of the tools in serving students with metrics that reflect our desired outcomes; utilize technology tools in better ways to free up more time for students; need more technology infrastructure to support the tools we have or wish to invest in; departmental websites are not always conducive to the end user

**Communication** – More time to communicate and collaborate across departments – demands constrain our ability to coordinate efforts which can lead to ill-intentioned duplication of services or programs within the division or across the university; lack of time to share and/or stay current of on-campus resources that can support students; finding effective ways to communicate with and reach students using the methods they expect (e.g. text messaging); maximizing cross-departmental communication of efforts in the local community

**Student support** - Students don’t show up on radar until it’s too late; students need more intensive, ongoing care than can be provided (at capacity in many ways); difficulty relating generationally to students; supporting undocumented students and providing service to diverse students generally; delicate balance between caring/support and accountability/development (when to hold up and when to let fall down); the impact of student mental health on them, staff, and faculty; understanding the needs to prepare for and support a changing demographic

**Prioritization** – Difficult to prioritize competing demands and needs; hesitation to let go of anything; isolated/siloed departments - need ways to understand and assess priorities across campus

**Diversity** - Incorporate understanding the needs of diversity across university; recruitment of a diverse student population and staff of color; limited diversity at the mid-manager level

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**Staffing** – Turnover brings in new people with new ideas and energy; new Vice President – resource assessment

**Partnerships/Collaboration** – More collaborations across the division and university – stronger connection between curricular and co-curricular; examine how other institutions carry out similar work; work with external organizations to help students better prepare before arrival; overnight transition programs for local students; engage with external stakeholders (students, community organizations, parents, alumni, high school counselors and teachers); tap into expertise outside of higher education and external to WWU (Bellingham, Whatcom County, Seattle); embedded / satellite offices within other areas of the campus

**Communication** - Market our talents and gifts, tell the stories of our dedicated students
Student support – Look to larger scale means of reaching/serving students & addressing their struggles; decreased stigma over mental health and resources

Technology – Invest in upfront costs to improve technological processes

Diversity - Opportunity to respond in skillful and meaningful ways to oppression; growth in Hispanic population; diversity in the region we have not yet tapped into; new ESC and improved visibility will be an opportunity for the campus community to connect and strengthen that resource; raise the questions and engage in the conversation of what higher education really is and what role we play; listen with compassion

Staff development - Encourage students (esp. women, non-traditional, minorities) to consider careers in academia, faculty & staff positions; more opportunities for professional development

THREATS (Real or Potential)

Recruitment/Retention – Market competition in particular job areas results in difficulties recruiting and/or retaining employees; local cost-of-living has had an impact across the board in attracting and retaining employees and is also an issue for students; remaining cost competitive against growth/opportunity at other schools; WWU still viewed as a small school, internally and externally; WWU is the only school in the state that doesn’t give applicants access to the student portal (e.g. MyWestern); Geographical isolation; being viewed as an unsafe space

Political/Social climate - Increasing public concern and accountability about the cost and value of higher education; introduction of legislative bills with the potential to discriminate against an under-represented population(s); issues of free speech [for and against]; climate of divisiveness in our country; anti-public education agendas

Resources – State capacity to fund higher education; minimum wage increase and resulting budget strains; future role of the federal government in educational funding

Student Health - Changes in Affordable Care Act and potential loss of health coverage – may have a negative impact on student success/retention

Technology - Digital age results in less human interaction and potential for missed information; social media conversations; some institutional processes can be cumbersome and impact efficiency (e.g. hiring process, contract review