

Student Center Assessment Plan

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Background/Organizational Context

The Department of Student Life and the Student Center has a deep commitment to providing strong customer service and a quality work environment emphasizing active empowerment of students as learners and decision makers. We work to provide an attractive and customer focused Student Center that promotes the “living area” of the campus. Recognizing that growth and learning occur in all facets of campus life our department collaborates with members of the Southern New Hampshire Universities community to provide innovative and planned campus programs, activities and services. We continuously evolve our programs and opportunities for student involvement by implementing assessment methods that measure community interests and expectations.

Purpose of the Evaluation

The Student Center must conduct regular assessment and evaluations. The Student Center must employ effective qualitative and quantitative methodologies as appropriate to determine whether and to what degree the stated mission, goals, and student learning and development outcomes are being met. The process must employ sufficient and sound assessment measures to ensure comprehensiveness. Data collected must include responses from students and other affected constituencies. The Student Center must evaluate periodically how well they complement and enhance the institution’s stated mission and educational effectiveness. Results of these evaluations must be used in revising and improving programs and services and in recognizing staff performance. To ensure objectivity and credibility, it is important that a third party evaluator, without vested interests or direct involvement in creating, operating, or providing services to a Student Center, be engaged to conduct an overall evaluation of the initiative.

Audiences

Evaluation of the Student Center facility, staff, programs, services, and governance must be continuous and must be within the context of the Student Center's mission.

General Phases of the Evaluation

- *Planning phase.* The planning and preparation of the study is to be completed by November 2009. This includes the development, testing, and revision of data collection instruments, as well as finalizing the plan for data collection.
- *Data collection phase.* Most of the data collection will take place between December 1, 2009 and December 15, 2009. The survey instrument will be distributed through an email distribution using Qualtrics.com.
- *Data analysis and review of relevant documentation.* Data analysis of the survey results will take place after the survey is closed. A review of relevant documentation and literature will continue throughout the duration of the project.
- *Report writing phase.* Final report writing will take place during January 2010. The final report will be submitted in February 2010.

Decisions

Once the results are presented, the goal is to utilize the results to make necessary budgetary decisions for the upcoming fiscal year. This could result in the loss of funding for special projects or staffing. It is a hope that the results will garner positive change for the organizations, retaining quality services and programs

General Formative and Summative Evaluation Questions

The Student Center evaluation plan incorporates elements of both formative and summative evaluation. The purpose of formative evaluation is to provide information to improve the Student Center facility and services by assessing their ongoing activities. It should be conducted continuously throughout the academic year. Summative evaluation will be conducted on an annual basis through a web-based instrument.

Typical questions that would be asked within the context of formative evaluation are listed below:

- Is the Student Center being operated effectively?
- Were the appropriate persons selected and included in the planned activities?
- Are the Student Center management plans being followed or adjusted?
- Are students moving toward the anticipated/planned goals?
- Which elements/factors of the Student Center are aiding the students to move toward these goals?
- Are the resources being appropriately directed to fulfill the goals of the Student Center?

Within the framework of summative evaluation, the following questions would be appropriate to consider:

- Did the Student Center meet its goals?
- Have the needs of the students and community been met?
- Can the Student Center be continued/perpetuated under existing conditions?
- Were there unintended or unanticipated outcomes as a result of the existence of the Student Center program?

Primary Evaluation Questions

- Do the community members understand that the Student Center is available for their use?
- Do students have an understanding that the Student Center is a student-centered facility?
- Do members of the campus community have an awareness of the services and programs available in the Student Center?
- Are students aware of the hours that the Student Center is open?
- Do students take pride in the Student Center facility?
- Do community members feel that the Student Center provides a positive experience for the campus?
- Do students feel that the Student Center is the “living room” of the campus?

Sample

We will distribute the web-based survey to all students that pay a Student Center Fee as part of attending Southern New Hampshire University.

Instrumentation

The instrument that will be used for the evaluation is a web-based survey that will be distributed using Qualtrics.com. (Appendix 1)

Logistics

The results from the survey will be reviewed and reported the Director and Assistant Director of Student Life and the Student Center. A report will be distributed as part of the departments Budget Request package in February. It will also be presented to

the Student Center Advisory Board as part of its quarterly meeting.

Budget

The primary cost of the evaluation will be the purchase of incentives that will be raffled off at the conclusion of the survey. The total cost of these incentives will be \$200.00. The cost of producing and distributing the instrument will be at no cost to the department. The institution provides these services as part of the institutions operation.

References

- Torres, R.T.; Preskill, H.; and Piontek, M.E. (2005). *Evaluation Strategies for Communicating and Reporting*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA, USA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Fitzpatric, J.L.; Sanders, J.R.; and Worthen, B.R. (2004). *Program Evaluation: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines*, 3rd ed. Boston, MA, USA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Stufflebeam, D.L. (1999). *Evaluation Plans and Operations Checklist*. Evaluation Checklists Project. Retrieved from <http://www.umich.edu/evalctr/checklists>