EXTERNAL PROGRAM REVIEW FINAL REPORT

Department of Student Involvement
Washington State University
February 20-22, 2019

External Review Team

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Acknowledgements
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Washington State University’s (WSU) Division of Student Affairs contracted with experts in the field of college student engagement to conduct an external review of the Department of Student Involvement and other observations about engagement at WSU. Sandra Rodriguez, Director of the Center for Student Engagement at the University of Nevada, Reno and Dr. Melissa Shehane, Associate Director of the Department of Student Activities at Texas A&M University served as external reviewers. The peer review team formulated their recommendations through the application of several frameworks, which were a combined total of 44 years in the field, CAS standards, leadership theory, management practices, and current trends. The critique is focused on the great opportunities and possibilities we see within the Department of Student Involvement.

The review process included:

- An overview of the purpose for the review (January 2019);
- Pre-campus review of archival assessment data, historical accounts, internal manuals, position descriptions, and other aspects of Student Involvement Operations (January – February 2019);
- A three-day site visit by an external review team who conducted interviews with a variety of stakeholders from across campus. (February 2019);
- Preparation of the final report (March – April 2019).

Overall goals provided by Washington State University administrators to guide the review included:

- Make recommendations to the organizational structure;
- Discuss best practices within the field of Student Involvement and Activities and how they compare to the current unit’s operations;
- Outline opportunities for the future;
- Assess the barriers to student involvement on the WSU campus.

Context of the review:
Department of Student Involvement stakeholders were interviewed and made aware that observations would remain anonymous in order to build trust. We sought to capture the spirit of what was said. In some cases we used specific quotes, but names are removed to ensure anonymity. Definitions are essential to ensure understanding; thus, definitions are noted below.

- Student Involvement =The department at Washington State University
- student involvement = action toward involvement by students

Overall Summary of Findings
The Review Team sees a strong commitment among staff within the Department of Student Involvement to Washington State University and its students. Although change will not occur overnight, we believe that the staff within the department are open to explore new ideas and envision what a more effective, efficient, and developmental office could look like in the context of your unique setting. As noted, a deep look into the organization structure, operations, culture and climate, staff and student development, and learning need to be a primary focus in the upcoming years in order for the Department of Student Involvement to best serve WSU students.
Further, by aligning the Student Involvement system-wide possibilities, the WSU staff have an opportunity to lead beyond their campus co-curricular classroom.
Introduction

Washington State University was founded in 1892. There has been a longstanding tradition of students becoming involved for over 100 years (Department of Student Involvement, 2019; Recognized Student Organization Manual, 2019). As noted by the website (Department of Student Involvement, 2019),

Student Involvement has provided a foundation for students to shape their lives, professions and societies. We believe that student involvement creates a transformative out-of-the-classroom experience. Students are challenged to develop their own ideas, critically analyze perspectives, work as a team to find innovative solutions, and anticipate the impact of their decisions within a learning environment.

Student Involvement is a part of the fabric of the WSU Cougar experience. As a premier state institution within Washington, tucked away in the heart of the state, finding opportunities outside of the classroom is imperative for student success. As a brief snapshot the Department of Student Involvement espouses the following mission, vision, and values.

Mission
Student Involvement inspires and empowers students and organizations to prepare for life after Washington State University through meaningful involvement.

Vision
Our vision is that all WSU students are challenged to participate beyond the classroom.

Values
Positive and Safe Environment
- We value spaces conducive to positive student experience, professional work, and sustainable practice, as well as environments that allow all students to feel safe, welcomed, and supported.

Excellence and Innovation
- We value staying current on issues affecting students, as well as improving and building upon current programs. We strive for local, national, and global awareness that informs future goals and progress in an effort to ensure we continue to meet the needs of students. We value using innovation and creativity to address current and future issues.

Open Communication and Respect
- We value open, honest, and transparent communication, believing that communication involves clear dialogue and active listening to ensure respectful relationships.
Inclusiveness
- We value diverse perspectives and the role of diversity in individual and community development. We strive to provide and encourage inclusion of all people.

Integrity and Accountability
- We are committed to upholding the values and responsibilities of the university, while developing an office focusing on guidance, creativity, encouragement, mindfulness, patience, and understanding; and being accountable to students as well as our local and global communities.

Strengths
*Internal and external to the Department*

The following strengths within the Student Involvement office were identified based on conversations during the review:

**Student Involvement staff are committed to the work**
It is evidenced through the intentional conversations with various stakeholders inside and outside of student affairs that everyone is aware that the staff within Student Involvement are committed to serving students at Washington State University and throughout the system. Even though within certain areas, the workload is vast, there is a desire to help students, respond to inquiries, and create a quality experience for WSU students outside of the classroom.

**Student Involvement staff have a desire to improve**
In speaking at all levels of the organization, Student Involvement staff recognize that they could operate better and, as such, have a desire to improve. This consistent desire among staff can be the catalyst to explore change, reorganize, and enhance the operations of the unit.

**Office space**
The department has access to high quality space for their day to day operations. There is flexibility to make adjustments as needed, and numerous areas for students to identify work space for their student organization business. The staff appear to be satisfied and proud of the space they have.

**RSO student support**
The Recognized Student Organization area lead by Evelyn Martinez is a true asset to this department. Countless times, students, staff, and faculty across campus referenced Evelyn as being a phenomenal resource and supervisor. Even though the workload she is juggling is insurmountable, she provides excellent and thoughtful service to those she encounters. The RSO office space is a welcoming environment for all students.

**Desire to operate within a framework**
Numerous staff mentioned the Social Change Model as a framework that has been introduced, but not necessarily applied in full for the department. Staff seem to yearn to either apply and expand
this framework more fully throughout their work or identify another model that will better suit their work with students.

**Potential for internal and external collaboration**
Due to the reach the Department of Student Involvement has with hundreds of student organizations under their purview, there are considerable opportunities to partner with Division of Student Affairs colleagues and externally with academic, system, and community partners. Interviews with all levels of stakeholders yielded a desire to work more closely and collaboratively with the department. As a starting place it may be beneficial to inventory and categorize the types of partnerships that are currently facilitated by the department. Furthermore, developing a common language related to these terms will be helpful to keep everyone on the same page (Hernandez, 2018).

**Academic faculty RSO advisors**
Upon speaking with academic faculty advisors, you have many champions that appreciate the resources the office provides. It appears they are eager to support in more ways and with some strategic organization and support, you may have some allies among your ranks. Faculty advisors can often provide a new perspective on advisory boards, subject matter expertise for staff and student trainings, and content developers for student leader training if appropriate structures are in place.

**Strong history as a land grant institution**
Since 1892, Washington State University has had a strong history as a land-grant institution. Created to provide a practical education for the industrial class and open education opportunities for rural areas, WSU continues to attract students from across the state, many of whom are first generation college students. Due to the makeup of the student population and growing needs of diverse incoming students, WSU can play a pivotal role in creating new markers of student success.
Opportunities
Internal to the Department

Organization structure

Mission, Vision, Values alignment is absent
Upon review of the website, historical and current documents, and conversations with staff and stakeholders, it was evident that strong mission, vision, and values were absent. As such, one could not identify alignment with division, institution, and system-wide goals.

No applied theoretical framework
As noted earlier, staff desire to map to a theoretical framework and there was mention of the social change model. However, the mention of a model does not mean it is put into practice or assessed. We propose that the staff explore a variety of theoretical frameworks and models to identify what aligns best for their work. Bear in mind that there may be more than one that helps guide the beliefs and practices of the department. Intentional time spent selecting, aligning, and developing assessment strategies around the framework is needed.

Leadership/Organization structure is chaotic and a result of larger circumstances
Through interviews, we learned that changes in upper administration resulted in changes in reporting lines. As upper management came and went, reporting lines became less functional. Currently, an executive director is supervising the entire area of Student Involvement and is attempting to advise numerous areas within the larger structure. Current leadership believes they are leaders and not managers and reported feeling “overwhelmed” by the status of the organizational structure.

The subsidiary employees and students “like” the current organizational leadership but do not appreciate the lack of direction. The leadership is seen as being disconnected and incapable of following through because the positions are stretched so thin. One employee stated, “The people who support them are also the ones holding them back.” Students reported feeling like “there is not an adult in the room” in terms of the advisement desired. Students believe they are being told what to do instead of being guided or advised. One student shared,

“Advising should not be telling me how to do it but guiding me. Sit on the various committees and we are being micromanaged through advisors. They listen well, ask us to think creatively. There is a limit to advising because they think about themselves. Advisors need to understand how when a student speaks it impacts the other students.”

An examination of subsidiary position descriptions and interview data yielded a focus on transactional student development. Where the department is named student involvement, it is actually operating at a student activities level. Student Activities plans and presents programs; Student Involvement plans, presents programs connected to a larger theoretical model with learning outcomes specifically focused on student development; Student Engagement does all of the aforementioned but in addition, assesses the student growth and development based on the theoretical framework and learning outcomes and assesses the use of best practices. This data (quantitative and qualitative) allows the department to yield a richer, fuller pedagogy.
The final observation is that there appears to be no expressed accountability for employees. They believe that there is a lack of consistency in policy application by the leadership, which creates a struggle for accountability for themselves as employees. This is exacerbated by the inconsistencies of the organizational structure.

**Recommendations - Organization Structure**
The leadership and the staff must live the mission, vision and values daily. Place visual reminders throughout the space to bring both expectations from those served and accountability from those providing the services.

- The Student Involvement Leadership must do the research on theoretical models and engage the staff on possibilities. Otherwise, each professional is left to their own choice and application of advising style. This creates inconsistencies in practice and application of student development theory. Further, leadership is left without the ability to challenge and grow the advising since there is not a consistent place to start conversations.
- The Student Involvement leadership must equally balance the roles of administrators/advocates. This may mean less hands-on with students and more focus on creating student and staff success.
- Organizational structure/reporting lines need to align with job descriptions and a Student Affairs strategic plan. This act alone can give staff clarity on their roles.
- The staff and the students yeam for self-efficacy. Creating a “tool box” for both staff and student leaders can bridge the gap in day to day practice/student experience.
- Make a complete transition from Student Activities to Student Involvement. This embeds intentionality and purpose and gives staff focus and direction.
- Policy must be developed, communicated and implemented with consistency.

**Organization Operations**

**Customer service**
The Department of Student Involvement has a wide array of space for students and staff. On numerous occasions students shared the lack of customer service they experience when entering the main office and rigidity when it comes to finances and travel. They also noted that the space in this main area does not feel welcoming and oftentimes students congregating in an open space are hushed. Further exploration of layout in the main office may need to be examined. If this space stays relatively the same, one may need to better explore how to communicate the expectations of professionalism with the student leaders that share this space with staff. Student examples are that they are hushed in the office, feel awkward walking into the front, and feel like its a “hostile environment” for students to enter.

**Training and Education**
The lack of training and education became an essential theme early on in our review. Education and training needs to be enhanced for students, staff, and advisors at all levels.

Students conveyed a continued theme throughout the process. There is a lack of understanding of the services of the Department of Student Involvement. Students noted observing information at the beginning of the semester, but did not make connections over the course of the year.
Student employees asked for more formal training, routine check-in and feedback, and evaluation that leads to developmental learning. There is inconsistency among student employee training and education. Some feel more supported than others. One student shared, “My supervisor is more concerned about numbers than our development. There is a big disconnect when I have a staff meeting. They do not understand what I am doing since they rarely come to our programs.”

ASWSU student leaders have a false autonomy related to their work. When asked direct questions about their experience and how they work with their advisor, they did not take ownership of their experience. It appeared that they had to rely heavily on their advisor for answers to minor questions. The leadership of SI must create a space for staff who advise ASWSU student leaders to explore philosophies and/or models of advising.

Student organization leader training currently requires face to face interaction. This is important for new clubs but may not be the most efficient method for an institution the size of WSU. Online platforms can empower students to navigate Student Involvement resources, policies and structures on their own. This could relieve Evelyn from being the primary source of answers.

Student Organization Advisors reported little to no training on advising RSOs. A Recognized Student Organization Manual and one person to answer questions is not enough. Consider reevaluating the staffing pattern associated with RSO support. Advisors can be your biggest allies, but without proper development, training, and access to resources, they will disengage. Further, potential advisors might otherwise not consider being a club advisor. Online resources that do not require signing in to CougSync would help.

Division colleagues noted that they did not know who to go to for what services. These colleagues can be great allies in removing barriers to student involvement. Arming them with a summary or quick guide that maps out the responsibilities for each SI staff member would empower them as allies. As you embark on these recommendations and roll out strategic action items, it may be nice to host a meet and greet or briefing to educate others about the unit.

Student Involvement staff need more coordinated training on student response, free speech, SASH and how to navigate and report those issues in real time. Staff need additional team building focused training to build trust.

**Finances**

Navigating financial structures was a consistent problem addressed by all stakeholders. Students and Student Organization Advisors do not have proper access to financial information and funding. Consistent feedback was shared that there is so much “red tape” and the process needs to be streamlined. Representative quotes shared by students are:

“Financial department – CougSync is bad. I can’t even find the balance for our account. You have to submit a form to get the balance and then an advisor must come to office with you to get the information.”

“It is a challenge to start up the (xxxx) club. A year has passed and we are still not a club.”
Students who are able to engage and manage systems and structures are agentic beings with purpose. Student Involvement should want to enhance this agency around choices and structures. (Cole, 2019).

Communication
Communication is an essential element of workflow. The Department of Student Involvement needs to develop a communication plan that allows for communication to flow up, down, and across the organization. This can be in the form of consistent department meetings, consistent one on one meetings, and weekly “Friday Updates” internally communicated to staff. Currently there is no consistency in communication. Furthermore, a strategy needs to be put in place to communicate with students, faculty, and staff outside of the SI. A semesterly email or newsletter could be a good starting place.

Strategic Planning
Strategic planning is a powerful, disciplined activity that is used to “set priorities, focus energy and resources, strengthen operations, ensure that employees and other stakeholders are working toward common goals, establish agreement around intended outcomes/results, and assess and adjust the organization’s direction in response to a changing environment.” Strategic planning can assist the current leadership in directing human and capital resources, guiding the direction of the organization, make adjustments as necessary, all while keeping the organization focused on long term goals and objectives. It would behoove Student Involvement to align their mission and vision with an effort that supports a strategically planned future (Balanced Scorecard Institute, 2019). Examples of strategic plans are listed in the appendix section.

Logic Models/ Short-Mid-Long Term Goals
Logic models capture the direction of a strategic plan in short, medium, and long term outcomes. Further, they assist the organization in clearly outlining the inputs and outputs necessary to meet those outcomes. The University of Kansas has an excellent systematic breakdown on the use of logic models to initiate change. Below is an example of the University of Nevada, Reno Center for Student Engagement logic model developed to initiate change/improvement of civic learning and democratic engagement.

End of Year Reports
End of Year Reports are critical in assessing progress made over the year by a department. These reports can capture successes, gaps, disciplined use of human and capital resources and sustained direction. The process of staff jointly writing an end of year report is a methodical approach to joint reflection. Leadership who facilitate the reporting process are validating the work and effort their staff put forward that year. Team victories can be celebrated and shortcomings can be addressed. It is a crucial step in reconciling department strategic plans, logic model(s), alignment to division and university goals. Examples of end of year reports can be found in the appendix section.
Recommendations - Organization Operations:

- Marketing efforts for the department of Student Involvement need to be revisited to ensure appropriate efforts are made to communicate services.
- Leadership must articulate clear expectations of creating a welcoming shared environment. Otherwise, true customer service is not possible.
- Training and education
  - Provide student employees more formal training, routine check-in and feedback, and evaluation that leads to developmental learning.
  - The Student Involvement staff who advise ASWSU student leaders should explore philosophies and/or models of advising? The Facilitator University philosophy may be an interesting text to explore (Lake, 2013).
  - Create online educational platforms that are easily accessible by club leadership and advisors. We recommend using a blackboard/Webcampus type of platform to upload all RSO leaders and advisors. Evelyn can be the course instructor and create an entire learning environment for successful student involvement. This can be both creative and efficient in terms of teaching and learning.
  - Upload an RSO advisor manual online for current and potential advisors that does not require going through Cougsync.
  - Center training and recognition during a beginning of the year meet and greet to welcome back advisors, affirm Student Involvement’s commitment to their service and to create an open door policy for all colleagues interested in supporting the SI mission.
  - Empower the staff to speak more proactively to tensions around free speech, student protest, etc. Websites are provided in the appendix section that support advising but that also allow students to learn for themselves.
- For the finances, we recommend a thorough review and potential overhaul of the student organization finance system and how to access information.
- Communication efforts for Student Involvement should be reviewed. We recommend completing a list of all efforts and aligning with community needs.
- Strategic Planning by the department is necessary. It will allow for dialogue by stakeholders, a commitment to a framework of either student activities or student involvement and give the team focus and direction.
- Logic Models should be created for various areas in Student Involvement. We recommend beginning with RSOs and ASWSU advising.
- End of year reports capture advancements in strategic planning. We recommend the SI team set aside a week to work jointly on this publication. Place online for colleagues and students to read.

Organization Culture and Climate

The external reviewers made an interesting discovery through interviews across Student Services that was also evident within Student Involvement. There exists a culture of saying “yes” to requests from students even when they fail to follow policy, protocol or procedures. This culture can be indicative of the staff’s lack of understanding of the necessary balance in their roles as administrators and advocates. A culture of “yes” enables students. Teaching students to navigate and negotiate institutional structures, policies and protocols can be a powerful ally in creating agency in student leaders. Further, a culture of “yes” creates an unhealthy dependence on the staff.
In reality, the staff retain control of the student vision/action by creating this dependency. Saying “no” to poorly planned programs, failure to submit requests for resources in a timely manner can be framed as failing forward so that teaching and learning can take place.

“Advising should not be telling me how to do it but guiding me. Sit on the various committees and we are being micromanaged through advisors. They listen well, ask us to think creatively. There is a limit to advising because they think about themselves. Advisors need to understand how when a student speaks it impacts other students.”

There were several concerns brought to the attention of the reviewers when interviewees were asked about the barriers to student involvement on the WSU campus. The data below is compiled from four different interviews that may include students and staff internal and external to the Department of Student Involvement:

- Funding for student groups becomes a stressor but other groups have it built in already. Make access to funds more streamlined to help students learn.
- An entry barrier is the cost of joining greek life, and the department keeps having to pay for more.
- More visibility for Student Involvement. What are the services?
- Having all the information for Student Involvement in one place so it was accessible to all.
- Students do not understand the full scope of how to get involved.
- Currently students/staff seek out information after the issue not before. How do we get ahead of that?
- Perceived value of service (volunteerism) can be difficult to communicate.
- Students making choices about what to participate in from all they have in their lives can be overwhelming.
- Students are spreading themselves too thin. How do they make a commitment they can keep?
- Student experience is disjointed.
- There has to be a balance between we (staff) driving and the student driving.
- There is an echochamber in advertising of getting the word out so we may not be reaching students that need it.
- Some students are playing the game without knowing the rules – undocumented, homeless, home-schoolers – information is not there, they don’t know how to access it.
- There should be a balance of service delivery for Black/African American students like there is for Latinx students.

When groups were asked how the Division of Student Affairs onboarded staff, the only response they could deliver was to mention the “HRS New Employee Orientation.” They shared the following suggestions:

- Have a new professionals’ division meeting to familiarize them with all departments.
- Have proper training for advisors to work with multicultural RSOs.
- Give the staff an understanding of micro and macro aggression and their impact on students.
- Sometimes we don’t recognize the student having a mental health issue so students end up in crisis.
- Staff and faculty trainings in various areas.
Organization Learning

Teamwork
Directing large multiunit organizations requires investment in the development of human capital. The staff that works in Student Involvement are wonderful individuals. They love working with students. So much more could be done by this department if they worked well together as a team. Teams require members who are self-aware of their strengths and how they are perceived by others. The best teams are those who are committed to lifelong learning about themselves, students, and the profession. There are several tools available to team leaders that create self-efficacy, self-awareness, and a desire to work with others. The Strengthsfinder inventory and the As I See Myself inventory are powerful tools in developing staffs/teams AND students. The leadership of Student Involvement would be wise to invest in these tools. The time spent together taking these inventories and engaging in exercises around them are in and of themselves team builders.

External to the Department
Conversations with bodies and individuals associated with Student Involvement on a system-wide scale yielded observations of support and yet some distrust of institutionalized efforts.

System counterparts to Student Involvement on the WSU campus yearned to have collective discussions about establishing a shared theoretical model for student development. Needs are different for each campus, but the development of students is a common goal for all the institutions. They also expressed a desire for shared language, practice and competencies for system-wide student involvement efforts. System colleagues greatly appreciated the efforts of Student Involvement on the WSU campus.

Graduate student leaders were frustrated with the lack of transparency of meeting locations for the system regents. The date and general location were typically available on notices. The exact location was rarely released in time to plan travel. A student regent sits on the system board. That is appreciated. However, each branch of the graduate student government is attempting to meet the needs within a different set of circumstances. The ability to attend meetings would give them access to information in a timely manner. That is not available with the current system protocol. When asked why the group hasn't written a joint resolution to the system office making that request, there was genuine surprise followed by silence immediately leading to a statement that it would take more work of student leaders who are already burdened. They are able to name the problem but lack self-efficacy moving toward solutions. This is indicative of a governance body that does not understand its power and lacks agency in committing its efforts to gain equity and inclusion in the larger system governance.

Other Observations
Outside of our focus on the Department of Student Involvement, two perceived climate concerns surfaced that we believed were imperative to include in the report. These elements were provided through direct interactions with WSU students and staff.

Sexual Harassment
Campus climate is integral to sustaining and developing professional staff and students. Both of these groups perceive sexual harassment as an issue in Student Involvement. Staff members shared that students had reported being sexually harassed by a peer. They perceived this complaint went
unaddressed. During one of the student sessions, a student reported witnessing a professional staff person engaging in inappropriate behavior. It was unclear if this incident was reported but this led the students to believe a pattern of lack of action on the part of the Student Involvement leadership in addressing their concerns. We strongly recommend these perceptions be addressed immediately.

**Dichotomy of Northside vs. Southside Residential Landscape**

The second campus climate issue that emerged with every student group with whom we met involved residential living halls and a perceived dichotomy between those students with more resources and status and those who have less. More often than not, race, ethnicity and socio-economic status were bridged into these discussions. Below are a few quotes that the reviewers garnered from discussions with students.

"Southside is the ghetto and northside is the bourgeois."

"Southside is family northside is bougie. The same with residents. Not as many resources on southside. More mental health and economic issues. Transportation issues. Not ADA accessible. Food selection is not as healthy. Southside don’t have resources to make your own food. Bad water quality in Waller Hall. Our people of color are in the Southside. I have asked for data and the halls turn me down, the admin turns me down."

"Associated Students focuses on greek life. They don’t care about the rest of the students. AS doesn’t care about the Southside."

"Get faculty of color please."

Serendipitously, a professional staff person shared, if “you were from west or east side of state either a coug or a huskie then it plays out again on this campus with housing.” The quantitative data points to a larger climate issue and perceived barriers to student involvement on the WSU campus. Observations begin with the quality of the halls, the length students must walk to get to the center of campus to access student events and quality food. Embedded in the data is a belief that students of color, those economically disadvantaged, those who are differently abled are relegated to a different status than those students who can afford to live in the northside residential areas. The critique is directed at institutionalized efforts on the part of the administration and student governance that fall short in meeting demands for equity and inclusion. This includes a perceived lack of faculty of color.

**Recommendations - Organization Culture and Climate:**

- Hold regular focus groups/townhalls of students, staff and other stakeholders to understand perceptions about Student Involvement.
- Teach and apply policy consistently. Students who learn to navigate and negotiate policy are stronger, more agentic leaders who will welcome being accountable for their actions. These students are hungry to learn all about how WSU works.
- Various groups had great suggestions for how to successfully onboard new professional staff so that they can spread the Student Affairs message. We recommend you implement these suggestions division-wide.
- Being self aware is an integral part of being a part of a team. We recommend that the SI leadership invest in the tools necessary for a structured approach to team building. Personal inventories allow for group discussion and reflection. Both lead to structured learning.
- We recommend regular meeting of the Student Involvement leadership and their system counterparts. Your colleagues want to work with you to embrace a student development framework that fits the system while respecting individual campus nuances.
- Perceptions about handling of complaints can be cleared up by communicating actions taken to address issues. Title IX issues require confidentiality. Those who have brought concerns to the attention of Student Involvement want to know they have been heard. Reiterating the courage it took to bring those complaints forward on a regular basis can bring integrity to the SI and still allow the leadership to stay within policy.
- Northside vs. Southside dichotomy may require town halls to air out concerns and address perceptions. We also recommend working with students who live in Southside residence halls to reframe the paradigm in a way that taps into the “pride” students expressed even as they complained. Key to this shift, students are sharing an experience. Use that as a platform to bring attention to their concerns while asking them to work with administrators to examine solutions.
- We recommend staff reframe what constitutes a “disadvantaged group” and how to help them gain the tools necessary to remove barriers to self-sufficiency. The Mayers, 1980 article offers a concise guide.
CLOSING COMMENTS:

The Review Team sees a strong commitment among staff within the Department of Student Involvement to Washington State University and its students. Although, change will not occur overnight, we believe that the staff within the department are open to explore new ideas and envision what a more effective, efficient, and developmental office could look like in the context of your unique setting. As noted, a deep look into the organization structure, operations, culture and climate, and learning need to be a primary focus in the upcoming years in order for the Department of Student Involvement to best serve Washington State Students.

Student Involvement
- Want training.
- Want clear understanding of reporting lines.
- Must engage a strategic planning process and develop logic models.
- Must address perceptions around sexual harassment.
- Should address perceptions of northside/southside dichotomy.
- Should revisit the organization chart and bring clarity to each role.
- Should be more purposeful and intentional working on system wide student involvement.
- Should ensure a strategic plan is tied into the Division strategic plan.
- Must be purposeful and intentional about the student development model they are using
  - Create shared language
  - Engage in conversations about best practices around it to help staff apply it and create learning outcomes.

Students
- Engage your students in their own strategic planning process. Empower them to look past immediate agendas and towards a future, shared community so they see themselves as part of the solution.
- Your students want accountability. Hold them to standards they have to work at achieving.
- Let your students fail so they can learn. Failing forward is an excellent means of learning from mistakes. Reflection is an integral part of this pedagogy.
- Encourage critical inquiry from your students as a means of both teaching and learning. This means you must be prepared to have uncomfortable, tension ridden conversations with them.
- Your students want to be advised on processes so they can own the end result. Only then can they accept both success and failures as their own.

Once again, we are grateful for the opportunity to serve as reviewers and appreciate the kind hospitality during our visit.
References


Department of Student Involvement. (2019). *Who are we*. Retrieved from https://studentinvolvement.wsu.edu/who-we-are/


Appendix

Examples of Strategic Plans for Departments of Student Involvement:

University of Nebraska, Lincoln
https://involved.unl.edu/2017-2020%20Strategic%20Plan%202017-18%20goals.pdf


Texas Tech
https://www.depts.ttu.edu/sub/strategicplan.php

Examples of End of Year Reports for Student Involvement:

University of Colorado, Boulder
https://www.colorado.edu/involvement/about/csi-year-end-report

Portland State University:

Loyola University Chicago:
https://www.luc.edu/media/lucedu/studentdevelopment/sdassessment/pdfs/2013AR.pdf

University of New Orleans:

Example of Logic Model:

University of Nevada, Reno

Examples of Student Government Strategic Plans

University of Nevada, Reno - Joint Vision 2017

University of Nevada, Reno No Walls 2025
http://de5u0yfu98nbk.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/02142829/No-Walls-2025-ASGStudentVisOnForTheUniversityOfNevadaReno1.pdf
Wright State University

UT Martin

Examples of Student Expression websites

U.C. Davis
https://studentexpression.ucdavis.edu/

Highpoint University
http://www.highpoint.edu/studentlife/students-rights-responsibilities/

University of Nevada, Reno
https://www.unr.edu/student-expression
Student Involvement External Review
Interview Questions

Day 1: Wednesday, February 20

Breakfast and Kick-Off

• What are the goals and objectives WSU would like the external reviewers to accomplish?

Student Involvement Staff Meeting

*Purpose: Discuss the department’s areas of focus, successes & gaps.*

• What are successes for your area?
• What are some gaps?
• What are your department’s current areas of focus?
• What do you hope the areas of focus would be in the next 1-3 years?

Student Involvement – Individual Staff meetings

*Purpose: Discuss individual roles & perspectives.*

*Questions:*

• Tell me about your role within Student Involvement.
• When you look back on your time as a student leader/SI staff on the WSU campus, where will you have had the greatest impact?
• What roadblocks could be moved out of the way to allow you to reach excellence in your role?
• Are you encouraged to collaborate with other departments/areas? What were the results?
• How is this office doing engaging with other faculty, students, and staff?
• How often do you take time to reflect on your work as an individual? As part of the SI team?
• One year from now, if there was 1 recommendation that was implemented, what would it be and why?
• Do you believe a positive evaluation of your work is connected to student leaders’ successes and/or failures?
• What student development model do you use in your day to day work with students?
• What learning outcomes, metrics do you use to drive your work?
• In what way do you assess your programs?
• Do you believe you are given the tools necessary to be a good administrator/advisor? If so, what are those?

Lunch w/ ASWSU committees & boards, Student Entertainment board (SEB)

*Purpose: Understand the needs, wants and interests of student leaders who serve in identity-based, service/functional, and programming roles.*

*Target topics: advising and support*

• Tell us about yourself and your role as a student leader
• Tell us about the support you receive from Student Involvement in your roles as student leaders?
• What impact does advising have on your ability to carry out your role as a student leader?
Other questions as the dialog developed.

**Student Involvement - Individual Staff meetings (cont’d)**

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**Student Success & Engagement 3:10-4:00pm**

*Purpose: Gather understanding of involvement as a means of student success and larger student experience.*

- What does involvement mean to you?
- What does student success mean to you?
- What does being a Cougar mean to you?
- How does the Office of Student Involvement support student success? What areas could they improve on?

**Student Involvement Student Staff 4:30-5:15pm**

*Purpose: Explore services and functions from the student employee perspective?*

- Tell us about your role as a student employee in the office?
- Did you receive training when you started in your role? If so, is the training you receive sufficient for you to complete your job responsibilities? What areas of the training may be enhanced?
- Does your supervisor provide opportunities for structured reflection related to what you are learning in your employee role and how it will apply to your future career?
- Do you have a performance evaluation based on your student employee role?
• If you were in charge of hiring, training, and evaluating student employees, what would be the best way to approach it?

Dinner with Faculty & Staff Partners 5:30-7:00pm
Faculty Senate, APAC, Advisors affiliated with ASWSU committees & RSOs, Foley Institute, Risk Management

Purpose: Gather understanding of involvement as a means of student success and ways faculty/staff invest in engagement outside the classroom.

• What does involvement mean to you?
• What does student success mean to you?
• What does being a Cougar mean to you?
• How are faculty/staff engaged outside of the classroom?

Day 2: Thursday, February 21

Student Affairs Directors

Purpose: Discuss role of Student Involvement & intersections with other departments. Target topic: Collaborations, opportunities to serve diverse students.

• What is your role and how do you interface with Student Involvement?
• What are some opportunities to best serve Washington State students?
• Would you like to share any final thoughts?

System-wide representatives: Student Affairs Cabinet, Student Involvement Staff

Purpose: Discuss current and additional collaboration across the WSU-system and articulating a WSU student experience.

• Please introduce yourselves and your institution.
• In a perfect world, what does a more system-wide student involvement framework look like?
• Is there an expectation to work from a system perspective?
• Where are the needs to collaborate?

Center for Civic Engagement & Student Media Staff

Purpose: Understand the points of intersection between these units and Student Involvement. Both report to Brian Shuffield. Target topic: leadership and cross-department collaboration.

• Tell us about your department.
• What is the history of the Center for Civic Engagement?
• Do you see yourselves working with academic or student volunteers?
• What accomplishments are you most proud of?
• How do you view your office?
• Describe your organization chart?
• If you could wave your magic wand, where would you be placed?
• Could you provide recommendations about specifically Student Involvement?
Lunch w/ Students from CEIE (Community, Equity & Inclusive Excellence pillar) & A&O (Access & Opportunity offices)

Purpose: Understand variety of ways students are involved on campus. Target topic: barriers to involvement.

- Tells about yourselves and how you are involved?
- What do you see as barriers to involvement on campus?

Student Government Council student representatives

Purpose: discuss current structures and opportunities for additional operations

- What is the structure?
- Student leaders from representative bodies?
- Describe your location and relationship with the board of regents.
- Do you believe there is transparency?
- What can student involvement do to help you be better student representative bodies?
- Can you give us opportunities or additional ways for collaboration across the system?

Involved Students Session

Purpose: Understand variety of ways students are involved on campus. Target topic: barriers to involvement.

- How did you get involved on the WSU campus?
- How do you expect to be advised by the staff?

Registered Student Organization (RSO) student leaders

Purpose: Understand the needs, wants and interests of student leaders who serve in identity-based, service/functional, and programming roles. Target topics: advising and support structures.

- How did you get involved on the WSU campus?
- How do you expect to be advised by the staff?
- What has your experience been like as RSO leaders with your club and student involvement?
- What observations do you have on advising and support structures?

Leadership Program participants

Purpose: Understand variety of ways students are involved on campus. Target topic: barriers to involvement.

- Why did you get involved?
- What do you think of the Social Change Model?
- Would you recommend to a student?
- What doors opened up?
- What would have made it better?
- What recommendations do you have?
Dinner w/ ASWSU & GPSA Executive Officers & Senators

- What successes have GPSA experienced?
- What have been the barriers to full participation by graduate students

Day 3: Friday, February 22

Student Engagement Pillar Executive Directors & Directors

*Purpose:* Understand the points of intersection between these units and Student Involvement.
*Target topics:* leadership, cross-department collaboration, barriers to involvement.

- Tell us about your collaborations with Student Involvement.
- What percent of the students on the campus are undocumented or come from parents who are undocumented?
- What are the barriers to involvement on this campus?
- Do you know the training the students go through?
- Do you know the training for the advisors?
- If you could receive training on how to infiltrate structure?

Student Affairs Associate VPs

*Purpose:* Gain insight to the Division's bigger picture.

- What do you think we should know about student involvement within the Division?

Student Affairs Staff

(non-director-level who work directly with students)

*Purpose:* Discuss barriers to and successes of involvement.

- What do you believe are barriers to and successes of involvement?
- Is there a map of what the COUG experience looks like from beginning to end?
- How are we helping staff/colleagues find that information?
- Do you feel connected to your institution as young professionals?

Lunch w/ 1st Year Students

*Open session lunch w/ 1st year students* *Purpose:* Understand levels of involvement, barriers to and reasons why students are or are not involved.

- Tell us about yourself
- What are the barriers to involvement on this campus?

Closing meeting- Student Involvement Staff

*Purpose:* Opportunity to ask follow-up/clarifying questions. Provide a few, high-level observations from the visit.

- Do you have any questions for us?