

Student Affairs Strategic Planning Process: Frequently Asked Questions

1) What do we want to accomplish by the end of the strategic planning process?

- Consistent with national trends and the University's strategic plan, by the end of the strategic planning process we hope to create a culture within the division of student affairs where the primary focus of our work is supporting and facilitating student learning.

2) What do we think needs to happen in order for us to accomplish our overarching goal?

- Identify the learning experiences that the division of student affairs does, and should, provide students as a means of articulating student affairs contributions to learner-centered education.
- Develop an assessment process that allows us to:
 1. Understand the degree to which we are accomplishing our learning goals.
 2. Align our services with current and emerging trends in student needs and expectations.
 3. Evaluate our progress as a division with respect to our learning and student services goals, and evaluate the contributions of each department and staff person toward goal achievement.
- Develop consistent language around student learning that will help us better articulate our contributions to student learning to faculty, staff, students, parents and others.

3) How will this strategic plan better the work of individuals and departments?

- Assists us in clearly articulating how we contribute to the student experience, and more specifically, student learning.
- Reinforces the message (through the identification of learning outcomes) that we are primarily educators (versus service providers only).
- A comprehensive assessment process, focused on better understanding what we do, and should, contribute to student learning, and aligning our services with current and emerging student trends, is a strategy for helping us make the most effective use of our limited resources.

4) What is the role of the SPIGs and the Project Teams (now affectionately know as SPATs) in the Strategic Planning Process?

- As a Division, we have identified five initiatives (*Fostering an Intellectual Student Culture, Preserving and Advancing the Unique USC Student Experience; Inventing the Future of Student Services and Promoting Local and Global Citizenship; and Creating a Culture of Evidence*); around which to articulate some specific learning outcomes to meet our overarching Divisional goals. The **SPIGs** generated a list of ideas in support of these initiatives. The **SPATs** are developing comprehensive program proposals for four of the SPIG ideas "voted on" by the Divisional leadership at the Spring Retreat.

5) What is my role as a Director and/or as a member of the Leadership of the Division of Student Affairs in the execution of the Strategic Plan?

- Each department and each staff member is being asked to consider the ways in which departmental and individual work contributes to the strategic planning initiatives, and such contributions will be part of the annual performance evaluation and resource allocation process.
- Given that our fifth initiative, *Creating a Culture of Evidence*, is a strategy to help chart and ensure our progress in meeting our overall goals for the strategic plan and as a Division, each department will also be expected to identify a set of learning and service outcomes, and to develop an assessment strategy to understand the extent to which your programs, services, and activities support your identified service and learning outcomes.
- As a member of the leadership of the Division, you have a primary role in ensuring that the work of your department, and that of the staff members whom you supervise, is actively contributing to the goals of the strategic plan. Additionally, talking *clearly, consistently, and often* about the Division's strategic plan with colleagues, students, faculty members, parents and others will help ensure that the plan becomes more than just a set of ideas on a piece of paper.