

UNC Asheville Division of Student Affairs Departmental Annual Report

*Office of Special Programs
2008/2009*

Department Mission

The Office of Special Programs, a division of Student Affairs, endeavors to enhance the UNC Asheville experience

- for parents and families, by providing information and developing programs,
- for student veterans, by ensuring a successful transition to an academic environment, and
- for student volunteers, by encouraging meaningful engagement in civic activities.

Executive Summary -

The Office of Special Programs provides programming for parents and families, student veterans, and student volunteers. About five years ago, the traditional Parents Day transitioned into a Family Weekend. This office planned a successful event this year. This event is planned to promote parental involvement and to encourage parents to feel a part of the UNC Asheville community. Communication with parents is essential. This office provides a link between the University and parents. An inventory was taken throughout the campus to determine how many times and by whom our parents are contacted. The National Parents Council serves as the voice of parents. Communication to our parents takes the form of web page information, emails and newsletters. A smaller version of Family News was designed to reflect budget concerns. Being a new entity, each initiative was new. Heretofore, there was not student veterans program, per se. A UNC Asheville Veterans Advisory Board was formed. Conversations were initiated between the Veterans Administration and UNC Asheville to begin a collaborative effort to bring meaningful programs to our student veterans. A colloquium of personnel associated with student veterans from area colleges was hosted by this office. This office also collaborated with Office of Multicultural programs to coordinate the MLK, Jr. Day of Service and helped coordinate a local spring break. All programs for parents and students were planned with the goal of encouraging the success of our students. This office also organized three special events which applauded the success of our students: the Academic and Leadership Awards ceremony, the Winter Commencement Rehearsal reception, and the 2009 Commencement Rehearsal breakfast.

Goal #1 Enhance Communication with Parents

Linkage to Foundation Documents

Division Goal - University Strategic Action Plan

Student Affairs develops and implements programs and services that foster a nurturing environment for students to persist and achieve academically.

University Strategic Plan Learning Goals –

Create a ...robust web presence: WG 19, Social sustainability (20 (11)

UNC Tomorrow Priorities

4.7.4 UNC should communicate its resources

Community Principals

Just (2), disciplined (4), Caring (5)

CAS Standards – *for parents is now being written.*

Measured Outcomes –

- Correct contact information on file for 90% of families
- 85% of parents indicate they are satisfied with web and printed correspondence
- 75% of parents respond that they receive information in a timely and detailed manner.

Action Plan –

- Update the parents' webpage by making it more useful and easier to find.
- Create and print a comprehensive Parents' Guide for Fall 2009
- Compile accurate contact information for each family or parent through information received at Summit and on Admission applications.

Assessment Method

- There is now a heading at the top of the UNC Asheville home page that says "Parents and Families". Prior to that heading, parents had to know that to reach their page that they needed to navigate through Alumni and Friends.
- Due to budgetary constraints a printed Parents' Guide will not be printed; however, it should be ready to go online for Fall, 2009.
- Correct contact information is on file for 98% of our parents. This was measured by the number of returned mailings we received when we mailed Family News to our parents.

Summary of Findings –

A survey was given to our parents. We had a 29% response rate. We found that 44.7% of those responding were satisfied with our web site; however, 46% were not aware of it. Over 76% were satisfied with our printed materials and 65.3% of those responded felt that they heard from UNC Asheville in a timely and informative manner.

Decisions

The Parents Web page will continue to be a work in progress. Due the outsourcing of the UNC Asheville web site, every effort will be made to make the appearance of its page complement the rest of the University's pages.

We will continue to update the parental contact as we receive it. We did learn that we had some parents still receiving emails from us whose children had already graduated. A program is being written to only pull emails of current parents when we are sending anything out. Some parents indicated that they would like to hear from us through "text messaging," and "face book".

Timeframe to reassess –Spring, 2010.

Goal # 2 Increase Parental Engagement with the University

Linkage to Foundation Documents

Division Goal –

Student Affairs develops and implements programs to foster an inclusive, nurturing and challenging community.

University Strategic Action Plan

Align the participation of ...community relationships to assure the success of aggressive fundraising effort.

University Strategic Plan Learning Goals –

Investing in People, Inclusion and Diversity

UNC Tomorrow Priorities –

4.7.4

Community Principals –

Purposeful, Open, Just, Caring, Celebrative

CAS standards for Parents are being written now.-

Measured Outcomes –

- 300 Families attend Family Weekend
- 50 families attend Move-in reception
- The National Parents Council will include at least one minority family.

Action Plan –

- Coordinate family weekend activities
- Hold 2 National Parents Council meetings, 1 per semester
- Plan and hold a parents' reception on move-in day.
- Identify pockets of students attending UNC Asheville and plan send off receptions for the students with the parents from the area acting as hosts.

Assessment Method

We surveyed parents who attended Family Weekend and received an overwhelming favorable response. Over 300 families were in attendance. When we reviewed the survey sent this spring, 42% of those responding said that they attended Family Weekend. 77.3% of the respondents said that they were satisfied with the communication which they received specifically related to Family Weekend.

Summary of Findings We will continue to review the results of the Family Weekend. Plans are now underway for Family Weekend '09 to be held Sept. 11-13. The dates were moved up a week so as not to conflict with any religious holy days. The Move-in reception will be held this fall; therefore, there are no statistics to report. The National Parents Council does have a family from Nigerian heritage on its roster at this moment. Two other minority parents have indicated that they would like to participate in the Parents Council. An inventory was taken to determine how many times and what information is sent to parents. Parents hear from the Health and Counseling, Orientation, Development, Publications, Advising and Learning Support, Business Office, as well as the Office of Special Programs.

Decisions:

Unfortunately, due the budget crunch, a 'hold the date' card will not be sent out separately for Family Weekend. The 'hold the date' info was in the spring Family News. In the past, a Family News letter was sent in August, also heralding Family Weekend and a separate mailing outlining Family weekend events were mailed. This year, Family Weekend

information will be contained in Family News so that there will only be one mailing. The goal for a regional send offs will not happen this year due to the budget cuts; however, the feasibility of identifying parents from a certain area and hosting a reception for them during summer orientation is being reviewed. The information concerning the inventory of Parent Contact is valuable information. It tells us how many are in contact with our parents throughout the year.

Timeframe to reassess – Family Weekend events will be assessed in October, 2009. Other outcomes will be reviewed in Spring, 2010.

Goal # 3 Create a more welcoming environment for student veterans.

Linkage to Foundation Documents

Division Goal –

Students are encouraged to take ownership of their personal and intellectual development. Students appreciate and respect diversity. Students lead with integrity.

University Strategic Action Plan –

The Campus Experience: Become a more engaged, inclusive campus community, providing a robust learning experience for students. Respect for differences.

University Strategic Plan Learning Goals

Diversity and Inclusion

UNC Tomorrow Priorities –

4.21. UNC should increase access to its educational programs...for non-traditional students...

Community Principals –

Open, Just, Disciplined, Caring

CAS Standards –Equity and Access, Diversity

Measured Outcomes –

- 90% of student veterans indicate that they fell welcome and supported
- At least 12 veterans will attend veteran receptions

Action Plan

- Create a webpage with resources for student veterans.
- Hold at least 2 receptions per semester for student veterans
- Hold events recognizing Memorial Day and Veterans Day
- Create a Military Advisory Board for veteran services.

Assessment Method –

- 90% of student veterans indicate that they feel welcome and supported
- At least 12 veterans will attend a veterans' reception

Lists were made of those attending veteran events. An average of 12 veterans attended throughout the year. Over 90% of those attending indicated that they felt supported. A survey was also taken at the Highsmith University Union. 25 veterans took that survey. Less than half indicated that they advantage of the programs at Highsmith.

Summary of Findings

Veterans are able to navigate through the web pages at UNC Asheville to determine what is needed. An Office of Special Programs web page is being designed to complement the new 'look' of the UNC Asheville webpage. A printed brochure for veterans was readied; however, that is now on the back burner. Resources for veterans were explored by inviting area universities and community colleges to a seminar here at UNC Asheville to talk about ways we can best serve our student veterans. For the first time a Veterans' Day observance was held on campus. At least twice a semester, the student veterans were invited to informal gatherings. Each time, the students told us how much they appreciated the fact that they could meet other students who have had similar experiences. A Military Advisory Board comprised of faculty and administrators was created.

Decisions –

It will be good to continue welcoming our student veterans through various activities and receptions. It does give them the opportunity to relate to their colleagues. When the new web design for the University becomes a reality, information for veterans will also be included in the Office of Special Programs page. The Military Advisory Board will continue to meet to discuss the needs of these students.

Timeframe to reassess – Spring, 2010

Goals & Assessment

Goal #4 Enhance and define the relationship between the Office of Special Programs and the Key Center.

Linkage to Foundation Documents

Division Goal –

Prepare students to be productive citizens of a global society. Students serve the local and global community and students live life with passion and compassion.

University Strategic Action Plan –

Implementation: Year 1. Consult with the Asheville Community on the urgency of local and regional collaborations for service.

University Strategic Plan Learning Goals –

Build a respectful, vibrant, responsible campus community by encouraging a culture of civic and public engagement.

UNC Tomorrow Priorities –

4.7.2 UNC should develop a strategic plan for scholarly public service on each campus that is detailed and specific in definition and scope. In addition to 4.1, 4.2, 4.6.3.

Community Principals

Purposeful, Caring, Just

CAS Standards –

Clarified values, Collaboration.

Measured Outcomes

- A written set of guiding principles outlining responsibilities of each office.

- Collaboration with the Key Center.

Action Plan

- Meet with the Director of the Key Center
- Retain membership with DOVIA (Area directors of volunteer services).

Assessment Method

By attending meetings.

Findings

It was determined that this office would coordinate volunteer opportunities that the Key Center did not initiate.

Decisions –

This office helped with the MLK, Jr. Day of Service and with the local alternative spring break. Students see the Key Center as their resource for volunteer activities. This is the way it should be. It is the repository of volunteer information. I will continue the DOVIA membership so that there is a UNC Asheville presence and will pass on volunteer opportunities to the Key Center.

Timeframe to reassess –spring, 2010.