

Date: March 4, 2020
To: Cathy Sandeen, UAA Chancellor
From: Bruce Schultz, UAA Vice Chancellor, Student Affairs
RE: Program Review Recommendations – Student Development

I have completed my review of the report submitted by Dean of Students Ben Morton, which include the following departments:

- Career Services
- Dean of Students Office
- Disability Support Services
- Student Health & Counseling Center
- Multicultural Center
- Native Student Services
- Residence Life
- Student Life and Leadership

The eight student development departments comprising this review have broad responsibilities for supporting students at nearly every point in their UAA experience, from pre-enrollment and onboarding through to graduation and job placement. These programs expand educational opportunity, support student learning, strengthen the UAA community, keep students safe, develop campus life and the total college experience, increase student success in- and outside the classroom, help students determine their career preferences and strengths, and expose graduating students to future employers and assist in gaining meaningful employment.

The Student Affairs general fund budget cuts from FY15 to FY20 total \$3.9M, which is 34% of the Student Affairs's FY14 general fund allocation. Furthermore, between FY14 and FY19, Student Affairs has reduced its personnel spend by \$2.2M. These reductions impact every UAA Student Affairs function, each of which are basic student services provided by almost any comparable U.S. metropolitan public university.

According to the Chronicle of Higher Education¹, UAA’s percentage of total spending devoted to student services in FY18 was \$3,020 per student FTE, which is \$1,454 less than UAF and \$510 less than UAS. UAA Student Affairs has taken drastic budget reduction measures such as eliminating divisions, departments, and programs; reorganizing and merging departments; eliminating three associate vice chancellor positions; eliminating exempt and non-exempt positions; reducing service hours to bare minimums required for safe operations; implementing new technologies in an effort to improve the student experience and increase efficiency with reduced staffing; reducing travel; maximizing Federal Work Study benefits by hiring Federal Work Study students within Student Affairs and maximizing assistance through the JLD program; supplementing the reduced budgets with grant funding; and reduced spending on storage. This is not an exhaustive list of actions taken by Student Affairs to maintain the integrity of the student services programs and services with ever-decreasing operating budgets and staffing.

It’s important to note that Student Affairs is currently projecting to start FY21 with a \$280K deficit. This deficit is due to the the loss of internship revenue transferred from Career Services to the academic colleges, unfunded personnel increases associated with transferring duties from eliminated positions to the limited student development and enrollment services staff that remain, and covering unfunded personnel increases to retain employees identified as operationally critical. Accounting for these deficits, the seven student development departments shown in Table 1 are left sharing \$49K as their FY21 operating budget (non-labor expenses; 2,000’s – 8,000’s) for the entire fiscal year.

Table 1. Regular Employee FTE – Student Development Departments

	FY21 FTE
Career Services Center	3.0
Dean of Students Office	5.9
Disability Support Services	6.5
Multicultural Center	2.8
Native Student Services	3.8
Residence Life	6.4
Student Life & Leadership	4.0

Recommendations

In FY19, the Student Affairs Leadership Team developed six decision-making principles and priorities. Three of those principles and priorities in particular guide me as I make the following recommendations relative to the student development departments reviewed by Dean Morton: (1) prioritize and invest in programs and services which cultivate and strengthen students’ resiliency and academic success skills, (2) preserve essential Student Affairs functions which support UAA’s mission, and, (3) strengthen our environment where

¹ Colleges that spend the most per student on student services. (2020, February 16). *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion are supported and promoted so that our students succeed, and our employees thrive.

1. Reorganize and merge the University Housing, Dining and Conference Services (UHDCS) auxiliary with the general funded Department of Residence Life into a single organization. UHDCS is currently projecting an FY20 year-end deficit of around \$0.5M due to the lower than projected housing occupancy. Realizing the estimated GF reductions will require one-time funding support while occupancy rebounds and until the reorganization plan is fully implemented.

FY21 GF Reduction: \$75K

FY22 GF Reduction: \$75K

2. Eliminate the annual operating budgets (non-labor) for the departments of Career Services, Dean of Students Office, Disability Support Services, Multicultural Center, Native Student Services, Residence Life, and Student Life and Leadership. These departments will need to pool and share salary savings to fund regular operating expenses. Departments with UA Foundation funds will need to use those funds first. The Student Health and Counseling Center's fund balance can be accessed by these departments for wellness programming approved by the Dean of Students. While this is a drastic measure, it is intended to preserve the limited number of FTE's in these departments that are necessary to continue to provide the very basic and essential services to students.

FY21 GF Reduction: \$49K

3. Implement a mandatory ten-day employee furlough will provide one-time savings for the student development areas. These one-time savings will allow for a more systematic and strategic implementation of reductions, including some noted above.

FY21 GF Reduction: \$90K

FY22 GF Reduction: \$90K

Other UAA Student Affairs FY21 reductions and reallocations related to the operation and success of student development.

1. Eliminate the Assessment and Strategic Projects Director position from the Office of Student Affairs.

FY21 GF Reduction: \$75K

2. Implement a shared services approach for administrative generalist and fiscal technician positions throughout student development and enrollment services areas.

FY21 GF Reduction: \$75K

FY22 GF Reduction: \$150K

Total FY21 GF Reduction: \$364K

Total FY22 GF Reduction: \$315K

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I commend Dean Morton and his leadership team for identifying potential cost saving opportunities. I support and expect that each department director will fully explore each of these recommendations to arrive at a series of savings which makes sense for their respective areas and minimizes negative impacts on the student experience. These experiences prepare our students, and ultimately our graduates, to be global citizens through community engagement, leadership development, experiential learning, and career exploration. I am confident that each of these eight units will continue demonstrating their resilience and determination to provide student centered services aligned with UAA's institutional priorities which add to student success and degree completion.

I find that the student development departments reviewed are nearly as lean as can be while still maintaining the core services and programs students expect and the administration have determined are important for an adequate and safe student experience. If deeper cuts are required, then one or more student development departments that do not fulfill federal mandates or directly manage student safety must be closed.