

Building a Culture of Student Success

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS PLAN—2006-08 October 19, 2006

“Empowering our students to succeed” is the dominant theme of our planning for 2006 through 2008. Student success and, concomitantly, faculty and staff success are essential to the vitality of our University.

Priorities

The University’s priorities for the next two years, as identified by the WMU Board of Trustees and President Diether Haenicke, are to enroll more undergraduate and graduate students and to retain the students we admit. This focus does not preclude continuing our research mission and achievements. In fact, our research mission promotes graduation by engaging students who work along with faculty and staff in the scholarship, research, and creative activities that are WMU’s hallmarks.

Goals

Our goals for fall 2007 are to

- Retain 85% of the fall 2006 full-time freshmen
- Increase the yield rate for admitted freshmen to 40% and the yield rate for admitted transfer students to 67%, which constitutes a 5% increase in the yield rate for both groups
- Increase the number of new graduate students
- Increase the number of new international students
- Halt the enrollment decline in Extended University Programs

Process

These fall 2007 goals must be incorporated into the broader programmatic plans and strategies developed by each college. Taken collectively, they will constitute the major part of the Academic Affairs Plan for 2006-08.

Two major planning activities must be implemented immediately to reach our fall 2007 goals.

1. The Interim Campaign proposed by Simpson/Scarborough must be implemented. The campaign will focus on **recruitment and retention**. Priority retention and recruitment strategies at the department, college, and University levels must be identified and implemented to affect significantly the fall 2007 enrollment. Colleges and other appropriate units must incorporate this short-term campaign into the regular planning that is already successfully underway. The plans for this campaign will be in place by October 20. A coordinator will be appointed to oversee implementation of this effort and assist in the establishment of mutually agreed upon retention and enrollment targets.

- a. To **increase enrollments in all classifications of students** with emphasis on increasing our yield of applicants, the Interim Campaign will bring together strategies developed by the Office of Enrollment Management with those identified by the academic units. To improve our enrollment for fall 2007, we will:

• **increase enrollments in select programs** which have the capacity for additional students or in programs where the prudent investment of new resources will readily yield more students. The campaign coordinator, with the assistance of the vice provost for budget and personnel, will work directly with deans and chairs to identify potential targets. They will develop a proposal for expansion, identifying the anticipated total number of new students and the attendant costs. By no later than November 20, 2006, the final proposal will be made by the campaign coordinator to the provost, who will brief the president. The authorized plan will be posted on a campaign Web page linked to the provost's Web site.

• **coordinate and enhance the recruitment efforts** of the Office of Admissions and the colleges. The substantial recommendations of the Simpson/Scarborough report must be considered for incorporation into an integrated, effective plan for recruitment. The task of coordinating our efforts is the responsibility of the newly formed Universitywide committee, the Admissions Coordinating Council, under the leadership of the director of the office of admissions. The campaign coordinator will be an ex officio member of this recruitment planning team. The team will provide the campaign coordinator with weekly updates of progress which he/she will present to the provost, who will brief the president. Weekly reports will be posted on the campaign Web page.

b. **Retaining our students** is essential to stabilizing our enrollments. Retention provides immediate and cost effective results. To increase retention rates, colleges (faculty and advisors) and other units such as University Curriculum must accelerate the planning and implementation of creative strategies to identify and address the needs of students who are at risk of withdrawing from the University or failing. The recommendations to enhance retention in the Simpson/Scarborough preliminary report must be considered by all. Many units have already begun to implement retention strategies. The Interim Campaign will bring together the retention plans of all academic and student affairs units to share insights and to achieve efficiencies where appropriate. The retention plans of all academic units will be submitted to the campaign coordinator by October 23, 2006. A small support team will be appointed to assist colleges and other units to integrate and implement strategies and to assess their results. It will also help to coordinate the Office of Academic Affairs retention efforts with those of the Office of Student Affairs and the Division of Intercollegiate Athletics. This "retentionNOW" team, led by the campaign coordinator, will include at least one college advisor, a chair, a student affairs staff member, and a student. Monies may be allocated for retention efforts that are judged to be the most immediate, significant, and promising by the "retentionNOW" team. Weekly reports must be made by the team through the overall campaign leader to the provost, who will brief the president. These reports will be posted on the Interim Campaign Web page.

2. A comprehensive University Enrollment Management Plan will be developed. This plan will incorporate the Interim Campaign and a comprehensive, long-term effort.

The development of the comprehensive University Enrollment Management Plan (UEMP) will be the responsibility of a broadly representative committee. This committee will be led by an executive team consisting of an academic dean who will serve as chair, the Vice Provost for Enrollment Management, the Interim Campaign Coordinator, and representatives from the Division of Student Affairs, Intercollegiate Athletics, and a director of advising. The remaining committee members will include representatives from the offices of Admissions, Financial Aid and Scholarships, Registration, Graduate Studies, International Student Admissions, Student Academic and Institutional Research, University Relations, Finance and Business, academic chairs/directors, the faculty bargaining unit, and the Faculty Senate. The colleges' enrollment management efforts will continue to be an integral part of their annual planning efforts and must inform those of the UEMP and vice versa. Reports of the committee's work will be posted on the campaign Web page.

The first meeting of the Enrollment Management Planning committee will be held no later than October 31, 2006. By November 30, 2006, a draft plan will be submitted by the UEMP committee to the provost, who will distribute the plan for review by the University vice presidents and the president.

Broader Planning Issues

Undergraduate Education: In June 2006, the scheduled comprehensive Undergraduate Program Review (UPR) was postponed. Given the urgency of remedying the University's enrollment issues, the UPR will be replaced with the college-centered information gathering and review necessary to establish plans and strategies to meet our critical goals for fall 2007. The college plans regarding undergraduate programs will focus, therefore, on recruitment, retention, and curriculum accessibility. Any curricular changes resulting from a department or college plan must be submitted for review through the established University Curriculum Review procedure.

Graduate Education: In keeping with the University's goals, the areas of focus for graduate education planning in each college will be recruitment and retention. Regarding the role of the Graduate Program Review (GPR) reports, the following should be noted. The significant insights and information gained from the various levels of review of graduate programs provide an important resource for 2006 through 2008 planning. Program faculty should fully consider their GPR self-study, along with the reports of their deans and the faculty review teams.

The decisions made by the president and/or the Board of Trustees in July 2006 regarding deleted or suspended programs remain in effect. Consideration of new degree programs and significant reorganization projects suggested in the May 11, 2006 Academic Affairs report, "Graduate Education at Western Michigan University: Our First Fifty Years and Strategic Priorities for the Future", should be incorporated, if deemed appropriate by a college, into its future planning. From this May 2006 report, other recommendations having direct relevance to the achievement of the University's primary goals may be considered by departments more immediately as part of their regular planning processes. As noted above, all curricular changes proposed by departments/colleges must pass through the established University Curriculum Review process.

The Academic Program Planning process established in January 2002 will commence again in 2009-2010, with a calendar adjusted to accommodate program accreditation time lines.

Creating and implementing these plans will require that we participate and work together in harmony. This implies the blending of differences to yield a desirable effect. Thus, while we may well have our differences as we create and implement our plans, what is important is the achievement of this desirable effect—that is, an academic community committed to student success.

Interim Campaign Revised Timetable

October 20	Implementation of Interim Campaign (retention and recruitment) begins and coordinator is appointed
October 23	Academic units submit retention plans to Interim Campaign coordinator
November 20	Provost receives Interim Campaign coordinator's final proposal for targeted program enrollments

University Enrollment Management Planning Committee (UEMP)

October 31	Last date for first meeting of the University Enrollment Management Planning Committee
November 30	Provost receives draft enrollment management plan from UEMP