Strategic Enrollment Planning
Research and Data Sub-Committee

Committee Charge and Membership:

Membership:
Michael Butcher, Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students/Title IX Coordinator, Student Affairs
Kimberly Burgess, Admissions Counselor, Admissions
Amy Clines, Assistant Vice President for Recruitment and Admissions, Enrollment Management
Michelle Ham, Assistant Vice President for Budget and Finance/Comptroller, Business Affairs
Ron Harding, Senior Research Associate, Institutional Effectiveness
Diana Leal (Chair), Enterprise Applications Specialist, Technology Services
Alan Ours, Chief Information Officer, Technology Services
Jason Umfress, Vice President for Student Affairs and Enrollment Management, Student Affairs
German Vargas, Assistant Vice President for Academic Student Engagement, Academic Affairs

The Research and Data sub-committee was charged with providing the necessary data and analysis to aid the Strategic Enrollment Planning (SEP) Steering Committee, as well as the five sub-committees during the strategic enrollment planning process. Additionally, the committee was charged with identifying any initiatives specifically related to data management and research that could affect the success of the strategic enrollment plan.

Process:

Step One: Review of Admissions Processes
During the early stages of the strategic enrollment planning process, it was determined that some of the admissions processes presented challenges. Admissions and Technology Services discussed those processes in detail to find areas where technology improvements could generate significant efficiencies.

First, Admissions and Technology Services implemented an auto-admit process for students meeting certain criteria. Although the beta implementation included only a very limited group of traditional freshman students, after the process was successful, the Admissions department has expanded the criteria. Currently, the auto-admit process is used for traditional freshmen, dual enrollment, transient, and non-degree seeking students who meet admission standards and are exempt from Learning Support (LS). The rules have also been expanded to incorporate new SAT scores and Accuplacer scores (for dual enrollees).

Second, Admissions identified issues related to the calculation and data entry of the English Placement Index (EPI) and the Math Placement Index (MPI). After significant research and testing, Admissions and Technology Services implemented a USG-provided Banner process to calculate EPIs and MPIs in bulk for applicants who fall under certain criteria.

Third, Technology Services facilitated a process mapping session for the Admissions department. During that session the group documented all the steps needed to convert an application from submission, through admission. This exercise pointed to several process areas where improvements were easily achievable through reporting. Among those, an Argos report was created to simplify the application review process for the admissions counselors. The counselors originally generated these forms manually, obtaining the data by visiting several Banner screens one student at a time. With the new Argos forms, counselors generate the completed pdf forms directly from Argos for one or several students at a time. In addition to improvements in the review process, the communication process after admittance has been enhanced through Argos-generated acceptance letters. Before the review, the letters were generated through a mail-merge process using Crystal Reports. This process has been replaced and now Argos

automatically generates pdfs of all the acceptance letters. Additionally, several Argos reports were created to prioritize articulation work.

The implementation of these three solutions has resulted in a significant reduction in the admissions processing time, as well as improvements for advisors who use the EPI and MPI for English and math placement. For instance, processing an application by hand usually takes somewhere between 2-10 minutes per student. With the implementation of the auto-admit process approximately 1000 students will be processed in batches in a process that takes approximately 1 minute per batch.

Step Two: Review of Key Performance Indicators

A list of suggested Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) was generated and reviewed by the SEP Steering Committee. The Research Sub-committee reviewed and discussed the suggested KPIs focusing on several important points. First, the group focused on the definitions for each indicator. Second, the group compared the suggested KPIs with those commonly reported by the USG as well as the Department of Education to ensure consistency in internal and external reporting. The resulting list of KPIs was shared with the rest of the sub-committees as well as the SEP Steering Committee.

Step Three: Review of Data

Next, based on a 2% growth year-to-year, estimates were generated for spring, summer and fall using census numbers for 2017 as baseline. The sub-committee shared these estimates with the rest of the sub-committees and the information was used during their group discussions.

Additionally, National Clearinghouse data was obtained to analyze trends in the enrollment of admitted students who decide to enroll in other institutions. Once again, this information was shared with other committees as it provides great insight into the academic offerings that attract some of our applicants.

Step Four: Development of Retention Model

A recommendation from the consulting process was to develop or implement a retention model. This would allow the institution to simulate enrollment counts based on different scenarios. Originally, a sample retention model produced by Ruffalo Noel Levitz was reviewed. Although this particular model proved too complex for adoption, the concepts used in the model helped the group in the development of a home-grown retention model that better aligns with the particulars of our student population and needs, which in turn would result in a much more tractable model than one designed to satisfy a broader array of institutions.

For the first iteration, the retention model is dependent on retention rates from previous years by classification. However, adjustments to the model could be made as testing continues.

Step Five: Provide Data for Sub-committees

To ensure that all sub-committees had access to the data needed to conduct their respective analyses and produce recommendations, at least one member of the Research Sub-Committee attended the discussions held by the other sub-committees. Through that integration, our group was able to answer important questions, prepare additional ad-hoc reports for review by the other sub-committees, and generate different Argos reports that were added to the existing repository of available reports.

Specifically, as a request from the Academic Sub-Committee, a new Argos dashboard has been created to display retention rates by school and major. Additionally, two new dashboards were created to review courses by type of delivery, and a student profile by type of delivery.

Recommendations

1. Creation of a Research and Data Analysis Standing Committee: During the sub-committee's discussions, it was clear that some of the progress achieved through reporting and analysis was still limited to the area who requested the analysis or report. We recommend that the work of this committee continues after the SEP process is finished. This will ensure that needs and solutions that are specific to data management and research are shared across campus so they can be utilized broadly.

2. National Clearinghouse Reports: As part of this initiative, several reports were generated by using data obtained from the National Clearinghouse. Our recommendation is to continue producing these reports on a semester basis.

3. Implementation of a Data Warehouse: Although we have made great progress in the reporting area, most of the data is obtained directly from our live instance of Banner. As a result, historical reporting is limited to census data collected by the USG. Additionally, integration of Banner data with data from other systems is generally performed manually. The implementation of a data warehouse would be an important step to ensure that decision makers have access to current and historical data from multiple sources for planning and reporting purposes.

