Project: Student Service Unit Centralization

Description:
Centralizing three separate divisions related to student enrollment, services, and success. The centralization process creates a new division under the leadership of one Vice President. The centralization should reduce the student run-around; improve enrollment, retention, and graduation rates.

Centralization of enrollment management, student affairs, student success, and other key enrollment or student service areas provides the opportunity for a unified approach to student service. The newly formed division will have a mission, vision, and strategic plan that supports the University’s mission, vision, and strategic plan. Cross training, and information sharing will enable the newly formed division to work cohesively to support student enrollment, engagement, and retention.

Actions:
1. Create a core committee to launch centralization project. The committee should include members from University Administration/Leadership, Human Resources, Budget Managers, Service Unit Directors, etc.
2. Review all university or student service units for centralization consideration.
3. Create a name or title for the newly formed division that is indicative of student-centered services and enrollment.
4. Create a staffing model based upon best practice to support cohesive operations; the staffing model should include a flexible work environment to move staff to units where additional assistance is needed during peak time service and processing.
5. If possible, create virtual workspaces to provide employees flexibility with work schedules.
6. Create a cohesive transition plan for multi-unit centralization:
   a. Transition plans include leadership and staffing review, budget review/alignment, training plans, communication plans, etc.
   b. Update job descriptions, reporting structures, organizational charts, etc.

Milestones:
1. Establish 5-10 peer institutions who have centralized units, to serve as a model for WSU
2. Create a unified division mission, vision, and strategic plan that supports University’s mission, vision, and strategic plan.
3. Hire a vice president that has experience in enrollment, student engagement/affairs, and student success to lead the newly developed division.
4. Streamlined processes, policies, and procedures to aid enrollment, engagement, activities, and student success
5. Cross-train staff for enrollment, advising, engagement, and student success functions.
Metrics:
Indicators for success include:
- Improved enrollment and student retention (quantitative data),
- Better student service outcomes (qualitative),
- Resources are shared efficiently (quantitative data),
- Less student run-around (qualitative)
- Better student engagement at university-sponsored events (qualitative and quantitative),
- Increased participation in student organizations (qualitative and quantitative),
- Improved participation in student wellness and recreational activities (qualitative and quantitative).

Timeline:
This project could take upwards of one year to complete due to the actions required to centralize multiple units into one cohesive service unit. The core committee will create a timeline for implementation based upon service units selected for centralization.

Resources:
- Funding and support for potential office relocations.
- Funding to travel to peer institutions to review and discuss their centralization process, best practices, and pitfalls.
- Ongoing staffing and operational budget resources for all units to be right-sized to support operations. Annual evaluation of staffing and budget must occur.
- Ongoing funding and release time to support professional development and training for staff.
- Other resources may be needed upon completion of transition plan for involved units.

Critical Success Factors:
- All units involved in the centralization process must fully embrace the change.
- Unit leadership must provide opportunities for staff to learn additional tasks or skills to support new operational environment.

Suggested Ownership:
University Administration/Leadership should coordinate all centralization/realignment projects with support from faculty and staff.