

Lawson State COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Unit Plan Annual Narrative (2006-2007)

Directions: Use the "Unit Plan Narrative Guide Sheet" to complete this planning form. Be sure that under each section, you write a narrative which discusses all elements listed under each heading. If a particular element does not apply to your area, note that within your narrative. Again, this form should be completed as a narrative, not bulleted.

Department/Unit: Office of Admissions

Unit Administrator: Jeff Shelley, Director of Admissions Date: June 17, 2007
Darren Allen, Assistant Dean

A. Unit Description

a. Connection of the unit to the institution's role and mission:

Lawson State Community College is a comprehensive, public, two-year, multi-campus college, which seeks to provide accessible quality educational opportunities, promote economic growth and enhance the quality of life for people in its service area. The College is dedicated to providing affordable and accessible lifelong learning opportunities in order to prepare students for employment or career advancement enable students to transfer to senior colleges and universities, and provide customized training needs for business and industry. The mission of the Office of Admissions within the college is to provide for students' access to a college education and to assist with the students' transition to the college learning environment. In section 3.4.3, page 23, of The Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Principles of Accreditation Foundations for Quality Enhancement, a standard is noted relative to institutional mission, governance, and effectiveness in that the institution must publish admissions policies consistent with its mission. Policies are delineated and administered for entering or re-entering students through the Office of Admissions.

b. Unit Achievements:

The following achievements were reached within the Office of Admissions during phase II.

Because service demands are unequal and staffing between offices unbalances, application / processing flow is monitored weekly and work distributed between office locations to ensure resources are maximized. Administrative functions across campuses include admission application processing, data entry, batch scanning / indexing documents into the imaging system, etc.

Admissions letters are generated by extracting data from ACCESS using internally written queries. Queries target specific types of data to enable the production and dissemination of tailored letters that address applicants' unique needs. In addition, letters are now generated through batches rather than individually. The extraction / merging process is less time consuming and enables us to broaden types of letters we provide. Data for admissions letters & enrollment management extracted via queries may now be transferred to the Windows environment. This enables us to manipulate data and use tools in ways previously unavailable. Customized letters have been created and distributed to address specific student needs relative to their situations or stage in the enrollment process. Such letters include CPAT notification letters, special admit letters for current high school seniors, residency notification, Strategic enrollment management data mining and tracking will occur relative to yield and conversion rates by stage (i.e.- prospect, applicant, admit, enrollment). The use of a new function within the admissions menu of ACCESS has been implemented. Now, each record required to complete an admissions file is individually listed using tracking codes based on application data. In addition, special codes have been created to provide customized responses to individual needs relative to admission file completion. Also, registration holds are automatically placed as required rather than manually placed due to incomplete admission documentation.

Other technological achievements occurred. Compass scores are being imported into ACCESS after being exported from the ACT database. Queries are prepared to selectively extract assessment data by variables such as session date, date intervals, score ranges, etc. Data from previous Compass software versions such as Windows 3.2 may also be exported / imported. Protocols were created and implemented. Protocols include topics such as tracking / saving imported data, error control, importation schedules, etc. This process saves untold resources, both human and material in addition to helping us better serve students.

An operations manual was developed for staff use and includes an array of information that may be accessed via the computer network. This information is presented as an Adobe file and individual topics are indexed alphabetically and bookmarked for easy retrieval. Regardless of one's physical location, information about our student information system, testing, admissions policies & procedures, catalogs, external resources and other documents may be accessed via this admissions archive. This document is not a policy and procedures manual but does include it. Rather, it serves as a departmental information catalog / archive and is updated regularly. Archived items include an Alabama High School Graduation Exam guide, LSCC catalog, Compass guides, Alabama College System policies / guidelines, ACCESS training resources & internal admissions menu procedures, archived policy emails, etc.

The recruiting menu within ACCESS has been activated and implemented for prospective student data tracking and processing. Protocols have been established for downloading data to prepare direct mail for prospective students. Tracking codes have been established to define lead sources and recruitment history for individual prospects. Upon the installation of ACCESS release 29, ACT score report data will be electronically imported and unilaterally available to recruiters after its receipt each test cycle. Telephone inquiries through the Office of Admissions are also tracked using the tracking code system in ACCESS. The implementation of the recruiting menu has quickened our ability to respond to leads and thus, should lead to greater yields. Institutional packets are pre-stuffed and prepared bi-weekly after personalized response letters have been prepared using the ACCESS system data. This data is shared with the Recruiting Office weekly. Packets include college view books, applications, catalog information, Compass testing information and preparation resources, financial aid information, etc. As possible, specific departmental information, such as nursing education brochures or automotive brochures are also included. We critically need fact sheets on each program so that packets may be customized to meet prospective student expectations. As requested and available, CDs are included. Prior to the implementation of this functionality, Microsoft ACCESS databases were created and provided to all recruiters so that leads may be tracked and recorded during the interim. Multiple databases will be merged into the new system and thus, prospect data will be centralized.

The ACCESS on-line application for admission was, at best, problematic and so, a new, Adobe fill in form application was developed and posted on the website. Prospective students have the option of printing applications for direct mail or they may submit the data electronically via email. On-line applicants are required to provide application verification forms containing their signatures. To date, over 250 applications have been received electronically. Students automatically receive replies to their submissions via email. The replies include information about advising, registration and important dates as well as additional contact information.

As applications are received, acknowledgement post cards are mailed daily. The acknowledgement post cards notify applicants that their applications have been received and are in processing. They also provide students information about important remaining steps in the enrollment process.

High school seniors of 2006 were conditionally accepted in spring of 2006 as their applications were received. Thus, most were processed before summer term began and this provided faster notification to current high school seniors. Letters provided information to ensure seamless transition into summer or fall terms. Prior to pre-registration or registration, post cards are prepared and mailed to all entering or reentering students. After the beginning of each term, lists of those admitted but not enrolled are forwarded to the Recruitment Office for follow up contact to capture them in contiguous terms. On regular intervals, ISIR data is derived from the Office of Student Financial Services to compare those who send financial aid data to the college with those who have applied for admission and non-applicants are canvassed. Data has been provided to instructional departments on a regular basis and assistance has been rendered to specific instructional departments during direct mail preparation.

The document / application file processing flow has been established and mapped to coordinate information processing between the student information system (ACCESS) and the document imaging system. Protocols were established relative to hard copy document storage, retrieval, and destruction. On-line applications are imported directly into the imaging system electronically. Hard copy ACT score reports are also scanned and indexed.

c. Instructional Units within your division: N/A

Init Effectiveness

a. Staff description within unit- In the Birmingham Office, one full time staff person is associated with admissions. In the Bessemer Office, three full time staff persons are associated with admissions.

d. Customer Service / Satisfaction- No available recent survey data suggests that less than 85% of respondents were dissatisfied or strongly dissatisfied with the services received. However, additional, on-going survey instruments are being used to collect relevant data to evaluate more current perceptions, including "suggestions" boxes within the offices and we will continue using traditional survey instruments such as the "Student Services Registration Survey" to collect survey data relative to student perceptions about admissions.

C. Recommendations

a. New / revised policies & procedures-

The required records menu in ACCESS is now used to record / communicate documents required to complete files and data is migrated into admission letters. Special, customized letters are produced to address specific needs within specific student populations. such as CPAT notification letters, CPAT acceptance letters, residency notification letters, high school senior acceptance letters, etc. The document imaging system is fully integrated into file processing workflow and ACCESS data maintenance. Admissions letters are batch generated rather than being produced individually. Data entry / admission file processing work flow has been re-distributed across campuses based on demand / staff availability. Acknowledgement post cards are mailed to applicants upon receipt of applications. Inquiries are distributed to recruiting staff on a regular, periodic basis, usually weekly. The majority of transfer credit is posted during admission file processing if transcripts are present. Applications may be received on line. Compass scores are sorted electronically rather than individually input. Inquiry response packets are pre-prepared and customized to meet individual needs but are also uniform in that they include pre-determined types of information. Notification post cards are mailed to entering or re-entering students regarding registration and to currently enrolled students.

D. Projections

a. Staff needs:

Should staff openings occur, positions should be filled immediately. The office cannot effectively endure losing another position. An imbalance exists between staffing in the Birmingham Office and the Bessemer Office. An estimated seventy-five percent of the service demands exist on the Birmingham campus yet, only one staff person is assigned full time to the admissions office. To date, work flow has been maintained via sharing responsibilities across campuses and involves transporting documents between locations. Some staff members are shared between offices and thus, we are able to maintain adequate services in terms of response times to students via written communication, personal contact, etc. Some staff members are assigned duties not directly related to the office such as switchboard operations. Regardless, time on task is diminished and it has been difficult to remain current in our work flow.

b. Resources needs:

The department has been well funded in terms of supplies and equipment. One physical resource desperately needed on the Birmingham campus is space. Two additional professional staff maintains weekly office hours on the Birmingham campus yet neither has adequate work spaces including desks and telephones. Space could be created by outsourcing records imaging and using the file storage area as additional space for small work stations. Often, student conferences must occur and now, no space exists to meet confidentially in an individual office or a conference room.

In addition, our yield will be enhanced by producing departmental fact sheets for our admissions packets. A majority of those who inquire state no preferred program of study and conversion rates are disproportional to the overall number of inquires received. This could be due to prospects inability to gain specific information about programs of study. Cataloged information is fully dependent upon prospects' computer access.

c. Professional development needs:

Continued participation in state or regional level associations such as the Alabama Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers or the Southern Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers.

d. Other (if applicable):

None.