



## Unit Plan Annual Narrative

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: **Financial Services**

Unit Administrator: **Craig D. Lawrence**      Date: **June 04, 2007**

### A. Unit Description

- a. Connection of the unit to the institution's role and mission:
- b. Unit Achievements:
- c. Instructional Units within your division:

(a)      The Lawson State Community College Financial Services utilize the Bookstores, Cafeterias, Mailrooms/Reproduction Centers, and Vending Services, to do be of service to students. To look specifically at the Bookstores, the unit provides books and supplies, which advance the accessibility of these and other tools for quality educational opportunities. The promotion of economic growth through workforce development is enhanced by our sales of trade books and related tools—some computerized-- in booming industries such as health services, air conditioning and refrigeration, auto mechanics, electronics and computer technologies.

(b)      As to Unit Achievements, we note the following-- Bookstore: The combined bookstore branches performed better than budgeted: the Gross Margin is much higher this fiscal year.

The Inventory audits received a 97-98% score on accuracy of counts during Examiner samplings – September 30, 2006 yearend inventory--for both Birmingham and Bessemer branches of the Lawson State Bookstore.

(c)      There are not instructional units within our division.

## **B. Unit Effectiveness**

- a. Staff Description:
- b. Instructional Effectiveness / Student Success:
- c. Support Services Connection & Resource Availability:
- d. Customer Service Ranking:

- (a) As to staff description in our unit, there are two bookstore branch managers, two bookstore clerks, one Food Services manager, circa seven Food Service employees, four employees in the Reproduction Centers/ Mailrooms.
- (b) As auxiliary educational support, since we do not formally instruct, but rather we facilitate instruction, we do not measure instructional effectiveness nor student success.
- (c) As to Support Services Connection, Financial Services provides books, supplies, food, drink and snacks, and facilitates entrance to athletic events for students.
- (d) In reference to Customer Service Ranking, to illustrate, in our Suggestions box in the Bessemer Cafeteria, we received excellent complements by a ratio of 9 to1 to negative notes. To document this customer satisfaction, we are well on our way towards the development of a survey instrument for the Food Services and the Bookstores that will even further instruct us as to be of most help to the student customers.

### C. Value Added

- a. Support of the unit to other program and units:
- b. Strengths:
- c. Areas Needing Improvement:
- d. Departmental or Unit Needs:
- e. Recommendations:

(a) In reference to support of the unit to other program and units, our Bookstore branches in Birmingham and Bessemer facilitate book and supply ordering for all instructional departments.

(b) As to strengths, our staff have worked hard to be very flexible—for example, say, in getting to the Birmingham campus books for courses taught by instructors based on the Bessemer branch (and thus who may have ordered from the Bessemer store). Another long-standing and oft-forgotten strength is to facilitate the school-wide buying of supplies (in addition to books) in bulk for instruction.

Every semester prior to the Registration Rush, we compare the price of every ISBN in one Bookstore branch with every ISBN in the other Bookstore branch. This has been developed strongly this fiscal year.

(c) As to areas needing improvement, we are attempting to make it easier for instructional areas to be able to reference the books that we have on our shelves in order to provide the information necessary to new book ordering—to do so, we want to further automate our perpetual inventory system, including the increased bundling that the industry has moved to. To that end, we are inventorying our books more frequently mid-year and mid-semester.

(d) As to department or unit needs, we would like faster point-of-sale software that would make sales processing much quicker for student customers. Even as we are working to most fully utilize the Access software for Bookstore transactions, we continue to read up on industry software for bookstores for planning and forward-thinking, proactive purposes. Last year, we mentioned the strong need for more floor space in the Birmingham branch. This year, V. P. Crews (along with Kenneth Gulley the Birmingham Bookstore manager) has been very instrumental in planning for the move to the second floor of the Student Services Building on the Birmingham campus.

(e) As to recommendations, these have been given above, along with needs listed.

## D. Projections

- a. Staff needs:
- b. Resources needs:
- c. Professional development needs:
- d. Other (if applicable):

(a) Regarding staff needs, an additional permanent employee is needed in the Birmingham branch. Sales are substantially greater in that branch, and other experienced employees have necessarily been transferred out of our Birmingham store. Certainly the two short-term employees (one part-time) in the Bookstore (in addition to the manager) are doing a very good job.

(b) In reference to resources needs, in the Bookstores, quicker, more current windows-based bookstore industry-based Point-of-Sales software is needed; this is not only for keeping the lines down during the Rush/Registration periods, but in encouraging sales by being able to provide more timely refunds to students when courses do not make. When students have to wait several weeks for refunds, many involuntarily, they may permanently take their business to other College stores in the area, on line, etc. As to Food Services, repairs to a walk-in cooler are needed in the Bessemer cafeteria: Less pressing, but nonetheless important, is a superior grill for Bessemer.

(c) Regarding professional development needs, bookstore and cafeteria managers need to be able to attend statewide industry meetings. Vision statements regarding what was learned are prepared subsequent to the conferences and these concepts shared and worked, specifically between both Bookstore managers and the Director of Financial Services.

(d) Major needs have been listed above.

Lawson State  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Department/Unit: Financial Services

Unit Administrator: Craig D. Lawrence

Date: June 19, 2008

**A. Unit Description**

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

b. Unit Achievements:

c. Instructional Units within your division:

(a) The Lawson State Community College Financial Services utilize the Bookstores, Cafeterias, Mailrooms/Reproduction Centers, and Vending Services, to do be of service to students. To look specifically at the Bookstores, the unit provides books and supplies, which advance the accessibility of these and other tools for quality educational opportunities. The promotion of economic growth through workforce development is enhanced by our sales of trade books and related tools—some computerized-- in booming industries such as health services, air conditioning and refrigeration, auto mechanics, electronics and computer technologies.

(b) As to Unit Achievements, we note the following-- Bookstore: The combined bookstore branches performed better than budgeted: the Gross Margin is higher this fiscal year (netting 24.83 percent FY 9-30-07).

The Inventory audits received a 97-98% score on accuracy of counts during Examiner samplings – September 30, 2007 yearend inventory--for both Birmingham and Bessemer branches of the Lawson State Bookstore.

(c) There are not instructional units within our division.

## **B. Unit Effectiveness**

- a. Staff Description:
- b. Instructional Effectiveness / Student Success:
- c. Support Services Connection & Resource Availability:
- d. Customer Service Ranking:

- (a) As to staff description in our unit, there are two bookstore branch managers, two bookstore clerks, one Food Services manager, circa seven Food Service employees, four employees in the Reproduction Centers/ Mailrooms.
- (b) As auxiliary educational support, since we do not formally instruct, but rather we facilitate instruction, we do not measure instructional effectiveness nor student success, as such, though we are in the process of articulating Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs). We have first-hand exposure to students' abilities to carry out business exchanges and trading in a professional, informed and courteous, effective manner.
- (c) As to Support Services Connection, Financial Services provides books, supplies, food, drink and snacks, and facilitates entrance to athletic events for students.
- (d) In reference to Customer Service Ranking, to illustrate, In June 2008, the Director heard a strong compliment at a statewide AEA function, in which the individual was extravagant in her praise of the Bessemer Bookstore for providing such good customer service for this individual's nephew, who had been transplanted from the Gulf Area in the wake of the Katrina natural disaster. In addition, we are well on our way towards the development of a survey instrument for the Food Services and the Bookstores that will further instruct us as to be of most help to the student customers. Previously, in our Suggestions box in the Bessemer Cafeteria, we received excellent complements by a ratio of 9 to1 to negative notes.

### C. Value Added

- a. Support of the unit to other program and units:
- b. Strengths:
- c. Areas Needing Improvement:
- d. Departmental or Unit Needs:
- e. Recommendations:

(a) In reference to support of the unit to other program and units, our Bookstore branches in Birmingham and Bessemer facilitate book and supply ordering for all instructional departments.

(b) As to strengths, our staff have worked hard to be very flexible—for example, say, in getting to the Birmingham campus books for courses taught by instructors based on the Bessemer branch (and thus who may have ordered from the Bessemer store). Another long-standing and oft-forgotten strength is to facilitate the school-wide buying of supplies (in addition to books) in bulk for instruction.

Every semester prior to the Registration Rush, we compare the price of every ISBN in one Bookstore branch with every ISBN in the other Bookstore branch. This has been developed strongly this fiscal year.

(c) As to areas needing improvement, we are attempting to make it easier for instructional areas to be able to reference the books that we have on our shelves in order to provide the information necessary to new book ordering—to do so, we want to further automate our perpetual inventory system, including the increased bundling that the industry has moved to. To that end, we are inventorying our books more frequently mid-year and mid-semester.

(d) As to department or unit needs, we would like faster point-of-sale software that would make sales processing much quicker for student customers. Even as we are working to most fully utilize the Access software for Bookstore transactions, we continue to study industry-standard Point-of-Sale software for bookstores for planning and forward-thinking, proactive purposes; we realize that future software needs to incorporate the needs of all of the College divisions. Last year, we mentioned the strong need for more floor space in the Birmingham branch. This year, with Vice President Sharon Crews at the helm, Kenneth Gulley, Birmingham Bookstore Manager and others, together with the Director of Financial Services, have together facilitated the opening of the new, much larger Bookstore on the second floor of the Student Services Building on the Birmingham campus.

**C. Value Added**

- a. Support of the unit to other program and units:
- b. Strengths:
- c. Areas Needing Improvement:
- d. Departmental or Unit Needs:
- e. Recommendations:

(e) As to recommendations, these have been given above, along with needs listed.

#### D. Projections

- a. Staff needs:
- b. Resources needs:
- c. Professional development needs:
- d. Other (if applicable):

(a) Our employees are doing a very good job. For a part of the year, on the Birmingham campus, only two members were available, due to the termination of one employee; this problem has been largely temporarily ameliorated by the addition of one short-term worker.

(b) In reference to resources needs, in the Bookstores, quicker, more current windows-based bookstore industry-based Point-of-Sales software is needed; this is not only for keeping the lines down during the Rush/Registration periods, but in encouraging sales by being able to provide more timely refunds to students when courses do not make. When students have to wait several weeks for refunds, many involuntarily, they may permanently take their business to other College stores in the area, on line, etc. As to Food Services, repairs to a walk-in cooler are needed in the Bessemer cafeteria. Even more pressing now is a superior **second deep fryer** for Bessemer, with the strong demand/ volume required and dependence upon fried food selections.

(c) Regarding professional development needs, bookstore and cafeteria managers need to be able to attend statewide industry meetings. **Required and discussed vision statements regarding the application of what was learned are prepared subsequent to the conferences** and these concepts shared and worked, specifically between both Bookstore managers and the Director of Financial Services. Copies of the same have been tendered to Vice President Sharon Crews.

(d) Major needs have been listed above.

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**Department/Unit:** Student Services

**Unit Administrator:** Dr. Cynthia Anthony

**Date:** June 16, 2008

**A. Unit Description**

The mission of the Student Services division is to provide an educational environment that maximizes the opportunity for student achievement by establishing provisions for personal, social, and intellectual growth collaboratively with the instructional division. Student Services emphasizes a student-centered approach to individual student success and offers comprehensive and diverse opportunities that enable students to attain stated goals.

The Student Services unit is comprised of the following functions and responsibilities: Admissions, Advising Services for Students, Counseling Services, Financial Aid, Records/Registration, Counseling/Services for Students with Disabilities, Student Recruitment, Student Support Services, Assessment Services, Upward Bound, and Upward Bound Math and Science.

Coordinated by the Dean of Students, these functions serve the students and complement classroom instruction by insuring that each student has the opportunity for success. The goal of Student Services is to offer comprehensive and diverse opportunities that facilitate individual student growth and development while maximizing student success and goal attainment.

Major achievements within the unit during this planning cycle include:

- Full implementation and integration of a document imaging system throughout Admissions and Records offices in conjunction with the college's student information system (ACCESS)
- Increased utilization of on-line applications, forms, and other processes/functions available through the college's web based student information system
- Began development of the Student Persistence through Assistance and Collaborative Efforts (SPACE) Center as a comprehensive venue for providing supportive services that enhance persistence, student learning, and overall student success. The center will provide a structured way to ensure that students are aware of and utilize the services and assistance provided
- Began the process of implementing and integrating a document imaging system in the Office of Student Financial Services in conjunction with the college's student information system (ACCESS)
- Continued to conduct a very successful financial aid initiative/partnership with Birmingham City Schools whereby LSCC personnel provided all seniors with financial aid information and assistance with completing the Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA).

- Hired an additional full-time College Recruiter
- Expanded the college's recruiting and marketing area and promoted the "recruiting team" concept to include administrators, faculty, staff, student ambassadors, and others in the recruiting effort
- The Recruiting Department along with Counseling Services hosted the Annual Counselor's Day Informational Workshop and Luncheon. The department enhanced the new program format which was introduced last year. Survey results indicated that Counselors are pleased with the information provided and the format utilized.
- Additionally, Student Services staff participated in local in-service training sessions on the use of technologies, software programs, and other appropriate resources that enhance the quality of services to students as well as state and national professional development opportunities.

## **B. Unit Effectiveness**

The Student Services division emphasizes a student centered approach to promoting individual student success. Student Services offices are operated under the guiding principle of showing dignity and respect for all students and co-workers. Staff is charged with the responsibility of creating a student environment which fosters interactions, provides support and respect, and challenges growth. A cooperative and integrated system is utilized to assist students with their needs. Successful linkages benefit students by providing a working alliance among all student services professionals and other programs/units at Lawson State Community College.

One of the major goals of the Student Services unit is to provide outstanding customer-driven services that meet the needs of students and provide opportunities for them to achieve their stated goals. College surveys indicate that 91% of students indicated an overall satisfaction with the level of customer service received in Student Services offices.

## **C. Value Added**

The Student Services unit supports the instructional units of the college through its service to students by complementing classroom instruction to insure that each student has the opportunity for success. The strength of the unit lies in its commitment to student success. The following critical values are fundamental to the overall operation of Student Services: Integrity, Respect, Collegiality, Professionalism, Dependability, Customer Service.

Though much progress has been made as a merged unit, the Students Services will continually strive to make improvements in the areas of student recruitment and retention, student advising (in collaboration with the instructional division), providing additional financial assistance for students, and enhanced customer service.

## **D. Projections**

Increasing enrollment and student persistence continue to be primary goals for the Student Services Division. Effective recruitment and retention of students are the vehicles through which this goal will be accomplished. The establishment of the SPACE Center will aid tremendously in these efforts.

The hiring of additional staff throughout Student Services in order to better provide quality, efficient service and to meet the overall needs of students and the college is viewed as the primary need of the unit. Resources to support professional development for all staff are continually needed. There is also a need to increase the availability of computers, kiosks, and other self-service technologies for student use in student services locations and common areas on both campuses.