

**Student Life Task Force
Final Recommendations
May 17, 2009**

Enhancing Student-Centered Learning

Strategic Initiative 1.2: Enhance Gustavus's strength in student-centered learning through a strong partnership between the Divisions of Student Affairs and Academic Affairs.

Student Development

Develop a guide that identifies and helps students work towards the realization of developmental goals.

This could be an expanded use of the Pathways Book developed by the Career Center to be used across campus and among all class years. The goal is to have a tool to serve as a guide to integrate students' education with their physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual health through the use of college support resources and an integrated approach to over-arching elements of student life (e.g. learning, vocational/career discernment, mentoring, and wellness). Implementation would include an ongoing communication plan to educate current and prospective students, parents, faculty, and staff about the goals and strategies.

Student/Faculty Ratio

Reduce the student/faculty ratio to 11:1.

A hallmark of a Gustavus education is the academic rigor provided by nurturing faculty. Students are best served when faculty have adequate time not only to prepare for courses and their own research, but to serve as engaged academic advisors and mentors, internship and student organization advisors, and active members of student life outside of the classroom. Continual progress should be made towards this goal over the next five years.

Interim Experience

Clarify the mission and improve way to maximize the January interim experience for the Gustavus community.

Especially support how the interim experience allows student and faculty to study off campus, participate in internships and career shadowing, do independent study courses, or engage in innovative course work.

Sophomore Initiative

Develop a comprehensive sophomore initiative.

The activities of a sophomore initiative would be to engage out sophomore students to identify their passions; connect student interests with academic and developmental strategies for college success; and reflect on service and leadership opportunities. This would be a collaboration between the Academic Affairs and Student Affairs Divisions.

Student-Study Space

Conduct an assessment of student-study spaces on campus.

Create or maintain student-study spaces across the entire campus (e.g. academic buildings, library, residence halls) to meet the needs for individual and group study as well as the flexibility to adapt to changes in technology.

Engaging Men

Mentor Gustavus men intentionally and actively for academic success, leadership, and appropriate engagement with curricular and co-curricular opportunities.

This would involve a partnership between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs and include identifying the needs of men, creating and implementing strategies and assessment measures. This initiative addresses a campus and national trend of decreasing male participation in leadership roles, community service involvement, academic motivation, and appropriate use of alcohol.

Learning/Living Communities with Academic Link

Create the plan, structure, and staffing to develop Learning/Living communities linking residence hall living and academic courses.

Learning/Living Communities provide an innovative and intentional means of creating a seamless environment that links students' learning in and out of the traditional classroom.

Study Away

Assess the feasibility, including the financial and academic support needed, to provide an off-campus study experience involving a cultural diversity component for every student for at least an Interim Experience.

Study-Away Reflection

Develop and facilitate an intentional pre-experience and re-entry initiative for students following a study-away experience.

This would require providing the appropriate staff and funding to the Center for International and Cultural Education and may include opportunities for student reflection, re-connecting with their study-away cohort, or sharing with others on campus.

Ensuring Critical Support Services

Strategic Initiative 1.5: Ensure access to the critical support services needed to ensure students have the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential.

Student Communication

Conduct a comprehensive student communication audit to determine message penetration rate and highest impact message delivery method/system.

Alcohol and Drug Education - Prevention and Education

Reduction of High Risk Behaviors

Provide the resource infrastructure to implement a comprehensive plan to support prevention, education, intervention, and assessment that results in a significant reduction of high risk behaviors over five years.

First-Year Education

Implement an education program for incoming first-year students and parents focusing on substance abuse and high risk behaviors.

This program should involve pre-orientation reading as well as a “curriculum” for campus conversations facilitated by peer leaders.

Parent Education

Assess the expected outcomes and support needed to develop an ongoing parent education initiative to inform parents with facts and appropriate ways to support students in making healthy choices.

Alcohol and Drug Education - Behavior Intervention

High Risk Identification

Develop a campus-wide training program designed to provide the campus with the knowledge needed to engage in alcohol dialogue.

This program would be for students, faculty, and staff to help identify potential high risk student drinkers; to engage these students and their affected peers in discussions; and to

direct both groups of students to available resources on and off campus. Assessment of outcomes and sustainable staff and financial support would need to be identified.

Chemical Use Assessment

Identify strategies and resources to enhance immediate assessments of chemical use (e.g. alcohol, marijuana, other drugs).

Resources may include online tools and personal meetings with Gustavus employees and/or the staff of the local state agency, C.A.R.E. (Community Addiction Recovery Enterprise).

Recovery Support

Support students recovering from substance abuse and addiction and ensure support services.

This would involve utilizing on-campus and off-campus resources to ensure reliable access to support these students and exploring the feasibility of having a “sober house” for students in recovery.

By-stander Training

Expand an interactive bystander intervention program that equips students to intervene in emergency and non-emergency situations where another’s drinking has potentially harmful consequences for the drinker and bystanders.

Training is open to all students with special emphasis on training student leaders (e.g. CFs, PAs, athletic team captains, Greek leaders) and students living off-campus.

Limited Immunity

Explore with the local law enforcement agencies the feasibility of implementing a comprehensive limited immunity program that offers no punitive ramifications for students seeking immediate crisis help in cases involving alcohol consumption.

Support of Substance Free Lifestyle

Grow the PLEDGE program into a community-oriented group that includes programming for substance-free alternatives for students living a substance-free lifestyle.

Tobacco

Assess the merit of becoming a tobacco-free campus.

Student/Alumni Career Mentoring

Enhance effective communication and relationships with alumni as mentors and resources for student vocational and career aspiration.

Building upon the partnership of the Career Center and the Alumni Office, provide staffing to utilize technology to facilitate effective relationships between alumni and students to increase the number of alumni/student connections by 50 percent. This would involve training alumni and students to maximize a mentor relationship.

Internships/Career Exploration

Expand the types of career experience options to increase the number of student participants.

The Career Center would take the lead in supporting the efforts that could include: Developing January career exploration classes; encouraging multi-site internships; providing reflection for non-credit internships. Results may include by the end of the sophomore year 50 percent of the class having some type of career exploration; expanding options for career fields with high student interests, like health care; increase to 50 percent the number of graduating students having completed multiple career experiences.

Transition to After College

Support and expand efforts of the Career Center and other departments to assist students in transitioning out of Gustavus.

This includes preparations for locating, applying, and succeeding in a first career or graduate school; development of skills to succeed in post-Gustavus work and life, including balance and managing personal finance; and career and transition support for young alumni.

Learning/Living Communities Non-Curricular

Further develop the already existing theme-based non-curricular learning spaces on campus.

This would require developing student learning outcomes, providing enhanced advisor training, increased residential life staff support, and programmatic and facilities support to make this developing program more transformational for students involved.

Civil Discourse

Nurture a campus community committed to civil discourse and skilled in its practice.

This could happen by developing a non-curricular training workshop that is transformative for participants and creating regular community discussions of timely issues (local, national, or world) led by trained civil discourse facilitators. Targeted participants include students, faculty, staff, alumni, Board of Trustees members, and the St. Peter community.

Support of Diversity

Expand the Office of Multicultural Programs and Diversity to include additional space and an assistant director position.

Explore the appropriateness, feasibility, and resources necessary to combine the Office of Multicultural Programs and Diversity and the Center for International and Cultural Education.

Increase student-focused programming that integrates traditional and emerging multicultural backgrounds and experiences while educating towards a greater understanding within the Gustavus community by 25 percent.

An independent budget line of \$50,000 should provide financial stability for proposals and the ability to extend planning time.

Counseling Assessment

Conduct a comprehensive assessment of student needs and appropriate scope of practice relating to Counseling Center services.

Counseling Outreach Plan

Explore the need for and feasibility of an outreach plan to develop broad campus collaborations, training, and proactive developmental, preventative, and consultative programming.

Due to the increasing number of students entering college with complex psychological and emotional needs, the demand for clinical services continues to rise with many more students requiring attention, intervention and case management. The time needed to maintain this case load has reduced time available for preventative programming.

Group Therapy Space

Identify space to conduct private group therapy sessions.

Simplify and Explore Disability Services

Create the means to effectively support the increased demand for disability services.

This includes disability support in light of the growing complexity of documented needs; monitoring and supporting physical and psychological medical leaves and readmissions, academic and disciplinary suspension readmissions; monitoring and supporting at-risk groups,

including first-generation college students, ELL students, and immigrant populations; support needed for students requiring special accommodations.

Health and Wellness Services

Review health and wellness services for all students.

Expansion of Health Service

Increase staff in the Health Service by 25 percent to provide extended hours, regular follow up with students being treated with ongoing mental and physical health matters, dispensing prepackaged pharmaceuticals, collaborations with the Counseling Center on medications, and travel clinic services.

Health and Wellness Office

Create and staff a Health and Wellness Office to implement a campus-wide student, faculty, and staff health and wellness program.

Lund Center

Expand Lund Center to increase availability, personal fitness equipment, training resources and health and wellness education services.

An expansion will meet the needs for increased classroom space, performance labs, expanded fitness equipment, expanded athletic training facilities, expanded weight room, expanded gym space to accommodate the demands for open gym time, club sport practices, and recreational use. Expanded services could include personal training and nutrition consultation.

Wellness Center

Create an integrated health and wellness space that would include centralized reception area, Health Services, Alcohol and Drug Education, Counseling Center, Advising Center, and a newly created Health and Wellness Office.

Athletic Funding

Address the gap for inter-collegiate athletics between institutionally-provided funds and actual costs.

Due in large part to increases in transportation, the Athletic Department currently secures 50 percent of its annual operating budget from external donors. This funding model is not unsustainable.

Athletic Department Restructure

Restructure the Athletic Department to create staffing, office space, and program support for both Intercollegiate Athletics and Fitness.

Intercollegiate Athletics staff would support these teams whose responsibilities would focus on coaching and student recruitment. Fitness staff would support the athletic and fitness facilities, health and wellness programs, club sports, intramurals and affiliated athletic programs.

Club Sports

Develop a plan to manage and fund the increasing demands of club sports and affiliated athletics teams (e.g. staff support, coaches training and support, team travel expenses, tournament support).

Currently there are ten official club sports and affiliated athletic teams of cheerleading and dance line. With limited financial resources available from the Athletic Department for travel and uniforms, these groups must apply annually to Student Senate to receive additional funds.

Sexual Assault/Harassment/Biased Incidents

Enhance effective responses to victims and perpetrators of sexual assault, sexual harassment, and biased incidents by providing counseling and the ability to be effective when the response is both proactive and reactive.

Worship Space

Create a multi-use, non-denominational space to accommodate gatherings, worship, meditation, and prayer.

Performing Arts Venue

Build a 2000-seat performing arts venue to be used for major concerts and lectures.

Campus Drive Path

Create a paved path around Campus Drive.

A path would address the safety concerns of the growing numbers of pedestrians, in-line skaters and bicyclists who currently must use the perimeter road.

Student Social Spaces

Conduct a usability study to enhance alternative social spaces, including the Dive, for student use.

Residence Halls

Create a fifteen-year plan addressing new construction and renovation of existing residence halls.

Developing an Integrated Leadership Program

Strategic Initiative 1.6: Develop a distinctive Integrated Leadership program that combines rigorous academic study with relevant field experience for the development of students' leadership skills and competencies.

Building on the work of the campus-wide Leadership Working Group during the 2007-2008 academic year, the Student Life Task Force strongly recommends that the Gustavus Leadership Initiative continue to move forward with a sense of urgency and purpose. Accordingly, we put forward the following specific recommendations:

- 1. Adopt the definition of leadership and core capacities identified in the Leadership Working Group report as foundational to the Gustavus Leadership Initiative.**
- 2. Advance the College-wide exploration, learning, and practice of core leadership capacities.**
- 3. Secure an endowment of \$1 million to support the comprehensive leadership initiatives.**
- 4. Develop a robust academic program of leadership studies within the next three years.**

Such a program should include course development, student-faculty research, study abroad, and internships. Also included in this recommendation is the need to acquire scholarly material in the library and academic departments to advance the study and practice of leadership learning.

- 5. Develop and institute a Leadership Center.**

This would include hiring of key personnel such as a full-time director to strategically link curricular and co-curricular learning; connect alumni and community partners to on-campus learning; and to develop and infuse experiential learning pedagogy into classes, programs, trainings, and workshops.

- 6. Develop, advance, and implement a co-curricular leadership development initiatives.**

This effort should include leadership program support, training for staff and advisors of student organizations, and the implementation of adventure and expedition components of experiential leadership education.

7. **Recognize and immediately develop ways to utilize alumni and parents in leadership development for Gustavus students.**
8. **Provide continuing education and lifelong leadership learning for alumni, parents, faculty, staff, and regional professionals.**
9. **Develop and implement a robust professional leadership development program for staff, administrators, and faculty of the College to equip them to work more effectively as mentors, advisors, teachers, and role models for students.**
10. **Create and fund an annual leadership conference featuring alumni and other external resources for present and future students.**

This event will foster student development by increasing students' knowledge of the variety of leadership opportunities that come out of a liberal arts education and encouraging networking with successful alumni in a variety of career paths. In addition, the conference will attract prospective students to Gustavus, recognize the success of alumni, and reinforce their connection to the College.

11. **Develop an ad hoc committee to review and create strategies to leverage student learning through student employment.**

This could result in a proactive campus philosophy based more on student learning, enhanced common training for students and supervisors, and/or improved common skill development and learning outcomes (e.g. communication, work etiquette, evaluation, supervisor relations).

Parent Engagement

Develop and staff a parent relations program focused on meaningful and appropriate parent engagement and education relating to student development issues during the time of their student's enrollment.

This could be accomplished by increased utilization of technology to communicate and educate parents (currently *Staying Connected* email newsletter/blog); enhanced programming during parent visit times (e.g. new student registration, orientation, Family Weekend); and including parents in campus engagement, similar to the ways alumni can be engaged (e.g. career mentoring, internship site hosts, Admission recruitment).