

Best Practices of Small College Registrars

AACRAO 2007

Session: 285

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Best Practices

- Best Practices – who knows what that is; tipping points and fast pace have changed profession and type of service we provide
- *Defined: **Best Practice** is a management idea which asserts that there is a technique, method, process, activity, incentive or reward that is more effective at delivering a particular outcome than any other technique, method, process, etc. The idea is that with proper processes, checks, and testing, a project can be rolled out and completed with fewer problems and unforeseen complications. (Wikipedia.org)*

Catalog

- When to update?
- Who's responsible?
- Deadlines?
- How often?
- Web only, paper only, or both? If web only, update once per year

Name Changes

- Who can make changes?
- Registrar's Office? Alumni Office.
- Shared database between Registrar/Alumni.
- Documentation required? What's acceptable.

First Year Seminar Courses

- Departmental or interdisciplinary designator?
- Number? 100?
- Double duty: seminar instructor and adviser.
- Small enrollment. Average class size?

Transfer Credits

- Do we wait for federal gov't. to tell us?
- What do you record? All or only what's needed for graduation?
- Do you record grades? If so, do they calculate into GPA.
- Do you record towards degree, or towards major?
- Do you limit the # of credits and/or AP credits that first year students can bring in?

Virtual Communities

- Does your school monitor or advise students in regards to Facebook or My Space?
- Need new ways to communicate with the net generation. Current and prospective students say e-mail is for 'old people'.
- Are you considering instant messaging or text messaging as a means to communicate with students?
- Do you have a community portal?

'Remedial' Courses

- Count toward credits for the term but not towards degree; include grades in GPA?
- For honors?
- For academic status?

Prerequisites

- If use in progress courses, do you follow up after grades are posted?
- Do you administratively drop the students?
- Require instructor approval to drop?

Registration

- Online? But still, how much by paper?
- Prerequisites? Co-requisites?
- In Progress? If monitor, how, when to drop, inform students?
- New student registration? Summer or during orientation? Online or paper?
- How do you handle math and foreign language placement?

Grades

- How to get them in by the deadline.
- What to do with missing grades.
- Incomplete grades and policies (does registrar's office track incomplete work?)
- Protocol for grade changes.
- Honors. When do you compute? Do you use GPA cut-off or percentage of the class?

Federal Compliance

- Look to AACRAO for guidelines and advice
- Military – Solomon act, proposed Leave of Absence for military service

Releasing Student Info

- Do you accept e-mail? No is common practice
- Do you accept fax? Yes is common practice if signature is included.
- Do you accept a .pdf or .jpeg with signature?
- Exceptions made when sent to student address on file or to another institution?
- ID Numbers? Per Rooker in letter to U of Illinois River Falls – directory information cannot include student ID numbers or SSN

Office Management—Whose Job is it Anyway?

- Training, development: Who is responsible for training new employees to use the SIS? IT or individual departments.
- Who is responsible for maintaining your web page?
- Who is responsible for extracting data from your SIS for standard and ad hoc reporting? Registrar? IT?
- Do you have, or are you considering creating an IT position within your office (ass't or assoc registrar)?

Assessment of Office

- What goals or services, and how do you measure achieving those outcomes?
- Factual info: number of drop/adds per term, number of major/minor changes, number of office visits by students, faculty, parents, staff
- Use facts: increase in drop/adds = how come? How to change?
- Increased transcript requests?

Professional Service

- See “Your Friendly Neighborhood Instructor” by Rob Jenkins for The Chronicle of Higher Education
- Customer Service phrase = 67.3% faculty roll eyes, 32.7% say students are not customers
- Professor is to student as _____ is to customer – server? Clerk? Greeter? Not an appropriate comparison
- It’s not service that is despised, but customer (believed by many to be an inappropriate and offensive misnomer for student), is connotation inappropriate for higher ed because the ‘customer is not always right’
The Registrar’s Guide: “...the tenets of what is considered good customer service – e.g. accessibility, efficiency, attentiveness— are essential in effectively carrying out the mission of the modern registrar’s office.” (Lauren, 2006)
- Offices provide service; identify standards of behavior acceptable.

Office Emergency Procedures

- Staff – phone numbers on file; different area code contact person
- Alternative e-mail addresses
- If time permits:
- Back up files to server and mobile/stick drive to take with you
- Shut down all electrical, unplug, cover
- Remove all work and store
- Directors - Take laptop, stationary, envelopes, directory, contact info, seal, files
- Generate and store lists of all currently enrolled and their courses, degree candidates, contact info for students, calendar info
- Have a remote meeting placed determined
- All from www.loyno.edu/emergencey/ from Michael T. Rachal, Loyola, based on Katrina experiences, to the list serve

Record Retention

- How long do you keep
 - Transcripts from other schools
 - High school transcripts.
- Students have right to review but not to copy, don't make copies of other institutional records
- International records?
- *Retention of Records: Guide for Retention and Disposal of Student Records 2000 Update.* (Member price: \$30.00)

Transcripts

- Clearly identify transfer courses
- Term headers
- Specializations, concentrations
- Releasing when money is due?
- Sealed envelope with stamp over signature received from student considered official?
Without charge; limit the number?10

Diplomas

- Walk aways who later want to graduate?
- 6 years, 7 years, 10 years
- What name – same as official/on transcript?
Legal/as in system including middle name or initial
- Commencement program and FERPA: those that are walking but not actually graduating, releasing names prior to ceremony, etc.

Registrar Support & Resources

- AACRAO
- Regional or state AACRAO organizations
- List serves (regist-I and scr-I)
- Recommended Publications
 - *FERPA Quick Guide* - 09/21/2006
 - *Gamers Go to College* - 07/27/2006
 - *Transfer Credit Practices (TCP) 2006* - 07/05/2006
 - *The Registrar's Guide: Evolving Best Practices in Records and Registration* - 04/28/2006
 - *The AACRAO 2006 FERPA Guide* - 04/14/2006
 - <http://maillists.samford.edu/mailman/listinfo/scr-I>