Best Practices in Adult Studies Administration

Facilitator: Jerri Sapp

How often do you review and update curriculum or program offerings?

What methods do you use to determine the need and accomplish the task?

1. Focus groups of faculty & student evaluations

What are your greatest challenges in vision-casting for your program?

1. Communicating/providing information to address concerns, solutions for change and individual contribution.
2. Connecting traditional/non-traditional faculty to promote common vision
3. Eliminate perception of programs in terms of income for vision-casting

Other comments:

1. when the infrastructure has roots in traditional, the paradigm of strategic initiatives is usually also traditional
2. Getting CFO to not see DCP as "Cash-Cow"
3. Realigning & dealing with resulting insecurities
4. Number 1 challenge is having staff see the vision without being overwhelmed by the workload it might create. To address this I talk from the beginning about the additional resources that would be required to meet the vision. Make sure that staff is a part of that conversation from the beginning.

Integrating (working together) nontraditional & traditional Admin?

1. Commitment for integration of Adult Student Service must come from the top down.
2. Carefully select faculty/admin who you believe with exposure to the adult student will become advocates.
3. Collaboration—sharing the vision (Success stories, case studies, research data)

Other Comments:

1. Top administration must lead the way—set the agenda
2. The “leader” of the non-trad program is an associate VP of the university—reporting directly to the VP—AA.
3. Share success stories between both sides. Be encouraging and offer to help out with projects that they need manpower to do (i.e. large enrollment sessions, etc.)
4. Equal committee responsibilities. Chairs from both traditional & nontraditional staff.
5. Attempt to manage relationships at the admin (dean) level but have separate autonomous units.
6. We are using parallel offices, i.e. admin, people with focus on adult needs in Financial Aid, Registrar issues, Business Office issues. These specialists then represent adult students’ needs on behalf of the above offices.
7. Faculty chairs from traditional side are carefully selected for openness to non-trad needs & methodology
8. Communication with support staff & Admin
9. Publish value to entire school of non-trad side

Do your start dates and enrollment numbers “mesh”? What if anticipated enrollment is not reached? What is an optimum class size? How does this number compare with income and expenses?

1. Best size 12-18.
2. We are moving to a linear tracking of course offerings..away from the “cohort” concept of starting a new group each term.
3. Optimal class size is 8-15 students in most courses. Average need 5-6 to make a seated course pay faculty.
4. Usually need 7 to start but for high cost programs need greater numbers. Optimum 12-24.
5. We wait for enrollment to be at the optimum over 20 students often. 10-20% attrition rate. Consider student’s time constraints when starting and will start below the target number if we will lose students.
6. We make a decision about whether or not to start a group based on a set minimum enrollment number for the group (12 for undergrad, 10 for grad). If we don’t meet the minimum, we don’t start the group.

How do you respond to faculty who are great instructors but not good at classroom management?

1. Create both expectation and environment for facilitating curriculum, fiscal environment
2. Mentoring/shadowing

3. Evaluation (Director of Faculty sits in.)

Other Comments:

1. Training sessions on "adult learners"
2. Faculty Mentor Program—Link instructors with Master Faculty to develop needed skills.
3. Addressed during faculty orientation. Train at in-service throughout year. Adjuncts shadow a lead instructor. Faculty Director sits in on first few classes and gives feedback & suggestions.
4. Encourage faculty to act as a facilitator rather than lecturer. Students are more likely to learn and succeed when they are engaged in the learning process. Also suggest professional development and literature to have a more effective classroom environment.
5. We provide the opportunity for adjuncts to observe other teachers with effective skills so positive modeling can occur.
6. Better than theory!
7. Meet with such instructor and match them with 203 others who have shown good management. They meet for a self-determined number of discussion/fellowship times to deal with the issues. Sharing ideas and successes.
8. One on one mentoring with Profs who have content expertise but not educational theory or expertise.

What is the best way to encourage attendance at faculty meetings or training? (adjunct/associate faculty)

1. Food/give-aways/stipend
2. Take suggestions/feedback from faculty regarding topics
3. Use time wisely and break up into areas of expertise

Other Comments:

1. Condense into two hour sessions
2. Make session upbeat and pertinent. Give small gifts.
3. Food (free, of course!) Door prizes. Productive Agenda created from feedback and suggestions gathered in advance from faculty members.
4. Mandatory attendance tied in with rehiring
5. Interesting topics
6. Attendance liked to promotion
7. Gently remind that continued professional development is important to continued instructing.
8. We often poll the faculty on what they would like to discuss for the next "in-service."
9. Give adjuncts a stipend for attendance
10. Do important housekeeping items during development time.

11. Break up groups and session by specialties and have adjuncts build with key lead instructors.
12. Give adjunct faculty tools they can immediately apply in faculty in-service by asking them what they need.

Is your budget adequate? In what area(s) is additional funding needed? How do you obtain development funds? Does your institution feed back funds into your program? How does this work?

1. Build visibility
2. Support everything with data
3. Use a consultant

Other comments:

1. Hire a consultant from an institution that has experienced growth. You will find that you must spend to make!
2. We are a revenue source to the college and the assumption is that 35% of our tuition revenue goes back to the general fund. We live off of 65%. If I need additional funds, I use numbers to make my case.
3. Fac/staff development needs more. We "celebrate" our victories school-wide so that top administrators are willing to give extra funds when asked. Faculty publish and speak. Staff takes on campus-wide projects.

How do you respond to complaints when students say "I thought you were a Christian College?"

1. The purpose of a Christian education is to engage the culture from a Christian perspective.
2. Be sensitive to the threat that new ideas may present

Other comments:

1. If students complain that we use secular materials and resources, we remind them that they live in and must relate to a secular world. The key is --- can they think critically as Christians and use truth in all places that supports and defends a Biblical worldview.
2. Some college representatives will make themselves available to meet with the student. Usually the student does not show.
3. Listen to the student's concerns. Pray. Reason---is the issue tied to opinion, law, academics? Work to bring a collaborative resolution. Sometimes agree to disagree.

4. Yes we are, and as such, we have a responsibility to uphold the standards and polices of our university.
5. As a Christian college, we have ethical standards to uphold.
6. Start each class by explaining value/merit of the topic to those in ministry. Warn students of any illustrations used in texts that may be offensive.

A student complaint has reached your desk. How do you address the student while still supporting the professor and your institution's standards?

1. Assess the nature of the issue
2. Communicate and listen to both sides—show empathy
3. Be supportive of both sides

Other comments:

1. Assure the student that you are listening to them and that you care bout their concerns and if there is an issue that needs to be addressed, do so in a timely constructive manner.
2. First speak to the student to hear the complaint clarified. Respond with your clarifications. Commit to follow through and then do so.
3. We have listened to students in developing a grievance process that ensures that their concerns are heard but also have clear guidelines for both student and faculty responsibility.
4. Meet with both parties separately and <u>listen</u> while taking notes. Pray before and after each meeting with individuals involved.
5. Commit to follow through supporting student and faculty with positive affirmation.
6. Make sure you hear both sides. Try to bring both together for conversation, if possible. Never jump to conclusions.
7. Respond to the student; meet with the student in person or through email with information. Suggest the student contact the instructor.