EXAMPLE

Winthrop University
Administrative Unit Continuous Improvement Plan 2019-20

Name of Unit: Admission Office

Contact Person: XX

Date Submitted: 2018-19 academic year

Winthrop University's Mission Statement: Winthrop University provides personalized and challenging undergraduate, graduate, and continuing professional education programs of national caliber within a context dedicated to public service to the State of South Carolina…The values of service, excellence, diversity, community, and leadership provide the foundation of Winthrop's continuing development and shape Winthrop's continuing success…Winthrop students acquire and develop knowledge, skills, capabilities, and values that enrich their lives and prepare them to meet the needs and challenges of the contemporary world, including the ability to communicate effectively, appreciate diversity, work collaboratively, synthesize knowledge, solve complex problem, and adapt to change. [Full mission statement: https://www.winthrop.edu/president/default.aspx?id=1620]

Stakeholders

Unit Name

Primary Purpose

Unit's Mission Statement or Statement of Purpose: The mission of the Admission Office is to recruit best-fit students for the university. Through collaboration with constituents across campus, the office conducts on-campus events and high school visits that allow the campus community to build relationships with prospective students and their families. This mission aligns with the institutional mission in that best-fit students can fully embrace the educational opportunities and values of the university.

Primary Activities

Mission Alignment

Outcome #1: Maximize recruitment resources to align with best-fit students.
Alignment of outcome with the Winthrop Plan (Goal and Strategic Initiative): Goal 1 – Enrollment growth
Alignment of outcome with the Division's Strategic Plan: Goal 2 – Strategic use of resources
Alignment of outcome with the University Learning Competencies (ULCs), if applicable: N/A
Summary Statement of Assessment-based Accomplishments and Improvements: (summary statement based on prior year's Continuous Improvement Action Plan) This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. It is the summary of changes made in 2019-20 and the impact they had on the office. This section will be completed at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.
Activities: The activities being conducted in 2019-20 are clearly described. They align with the Continuous Improvement Action Plan described in the 2018-19 Continuous Improvement Report (based on the data gathered in 2018-19).

This outcome is carried over from 2018-19 because it is central to the office.

These alignments indicate the relationship between the unit, division, and university.

As identified in the Action Plan for 2019-20 (from our 2018-19 Report), the office will engage in the following activities to increase the identification of and resources allocated to best-fit students for the institution. Advanced work with the enrollment consultant, enhanced outreach initiatives by both Student Ambassadors and Alumni Affinity Groups, and recruitment of best-fit transfer students are the focus of our activities in 2019-20.

1. Having worked with the enrollment consultant for three enrollment cycles, we are comfortable with the parameters set for the predictive analytics used for rating prospective students as to best-fit for the institution. We will continue to use the services of the consultant for this purpose, but this part of their work is becoming standard operating procedure. It will be included in our assessment methods and results in 2019-20, and assuming we again meet or surpass the targets, we will not report this data in subsequent Continuous Improvement Reports. We will request weekly rather than biweekly reports from the consultant during our busy time (i.e., spring) and work with them to accommodate multi-year updates to our upcoming student recruiting pools. We will focus most of our consultant work on developing predictive models for identifying best-fit transfer students. We have already had preliminary discussions with the consultant and they will use 2019-20 to lay the foundational work and provide a possible analytic prediction for our use. We recognize that this will not be a fully functioning model for 2019-20, but important steps are to be taken in identifying and tweaking the model. As was done with the first-year student model, theoretical modeling, followed by testing with previous data sets, will be an important component of this year's work. The Admission Office sees this work aligning with the anticipated uptick in transfer student enrollments based on the newly developed articulation agreements with Leo Community College and Murphy Technical College. (1 – ERA Contract, amended)

   Includes reference to documentation. The documentation will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

2. Engaging prospective students with current students (i.e., Student Ambassadors) will continue to be a priority for the Admission Office in 2019-20. Building on the success we had with this outreach initiative in 2018-19, we will continue to use Tuesday and Thursday evenings (7-10pm) as our primary call nights, but will add Sunday evening as another call night. This will not only provide our Student Ambassadors with a third evening to contact hard to reach prospective students, but will allow fewer Ambassadors to be in the building on each of the three evenings. This provides our Ambassadors with more flexibility in making their weekly calls. Through the generosity of a donor, Admissions will purchase ten additional cell phones, thus increasing available cell phones to 30 for use by the Student Ambassadors. This acquisition supports the 2018-19 data indicating texting was the most common mode of communicating with prospective students. The cell phones will be available for usage by Student Ambassadors in August, when they return for the 2019-20 academic year. The Admission Office will continue to strengthen the training of the Student Ambassadors on contacting applicants/admits. We have asked our Campus Visit consultant to enrich this type of training when they are on campus in August and provide examples of good communication strategies.

Refers back to 2018-19 data.

3. Among the best resources for recruitment activities are alumni. Based on the positive results of our 2018-19 pilot letter-writing campaign, we would like to increase the number of alumni writing a welcome letter to admitted students. The Coordinator of Alumni Affairs will work with the Alumni Affinity Groups during summer and fall 2019 to organize an expanded alumni

network for letter writing. As we learned in 2018-19, the best results come from alumni who actively volunteer to engage with this initiative. Following the process used in 2018-19, each alumni volunteer is asked to write a letter to five admitted students. This is a welcome letter, congratulating the student on their acceptance to the institution, sharing why the alum selected the institution, and the impact of that decision. The Coordinator of Admissions will work closely with the Coordinator of Alumni Affairs to work through the details of the letter writing process. This initiative will commence in spring 2020 and continue through summer 2020, as students still "shop" for a college. Additionally, the Admission Office and Alumni Office will add the agenda item – enhancing the alumni contribution to recruitment – to the monthly agendas for our fall meetings. We are hoping to explore additional ways to engage alumni in recruitment activities beyond letter writing campaigns and send-off parties, such as attending more recruiting events and identifying prospective students.

This section will be updated to reflect the details of the process at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

4. With two articulation agreements signed in 2018-19 (i.e., Leo Community College and Murphy Technical College), we are reassigning responsibilities among our admission counselors to identify a single admission counselor to coordinate transfer student recruitment. This counselor will have in-depth knowledge of the transfer articulation agreements, especially course equivalencies for general education and major courses. The admission counselor will hold regular weekly "office hours" on our partner campuses, beginning the first week of the 2019-20 academic year. We are still working through the details, but are hoping that this admission counselor can host a session during the fall and spring orientations at the 2-year partner colleges. This session outlines the "academic path" a student should follow in order to transfer to the institution at the end of two years. Working in conjunction with the Provost Office, Admissions will develop *Major Guides and Pathways* to guide two-year college students to an on-time graduation with a four-year degree. Print copies will be available to students at Orientation and in the admission counselor's office. The document will also be posted to the Admission and Academic Affairs websites. We plan to have this resource available to transfer students by the end of the fall 2019 semester. Additionally, we will continue our work with administration at Drake Technical College to finalize the draft articulation agreement. We also hope to resume articulation agreement discussions with Madison Community College in 2019-20.

This section will be updated to reflect the status of this request at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Direct measure of assessment.

Assessment Method #1:

Clear identification of tool and discussion of how the tool supports the outcome.

We measure the effectiveness of the prospective student rating system and recruitment by comparing the prospect rating against actual applicants and the applicant rating against actual deposits. This rating system is a good assessment method for this outcome since it is based on predictive analytics and incorporates prior years' data and results into the protocol.

Data collection process is clearly described.

The Admission Office has retained an enrollment consultant, ERA, for the past three years. One aspect of the consultant's work has been to assign rating codes for prospects and applicants to aid recruiters with efficiently prioritizing work. The recruiters focus on students based on their prospect rating, with those students receiving a rating of "1," as the best-fit students for the institution. This is a work in progress and has been perfected each year, based on experiences from the prior year.

Reports provided by the consultant are generated bi-weekly during slow times and weekly during busy times. They are shared with the Vice President of Enrollment Management and the Director of Admissions, who discuss these reports regularly with the consultants, once every two weeks in non-busy times and weekly during busy times. Meetings are generally conducted via phone, with an in-person meeting at least twice each semester. These are regularly scheduled meetings, however, many emails and phone calls are exchanged frequently with the consultants.

Data distribution process is clearly explained.

Based on the rating system, the Office is able to allocate the time of recruiters, staff members and Student Ambassadors to prioritize their work and maximize their efforts. Rating spreadsheets are shared with recruiters and the Coordinator of Admissions (responsible for the Student Ambassadors' work) at weekly staff meetings. Many of our recruiters are on the road and call into the meetings, receiving their spreadsheet electronically. This information is used to discuss student priority and expectations for the week.

As appropriate, biweekly during busy times and monthly during slower times, the aggregated data are shared with all staff and discussed at staff meetings. This is also an agenda item at our annual office retreat, during which we further discuss the data, its impact, and how to improve our efforts for the subsequent recruiting cycle. The consultant is present for this discussion.

Target:

The targets for converting interest to applications by prospect rating are included in the table below. A prospective rating of "1" represents the best-fit students.

Rating	Percent of Applications
Prospect Rating 1	18.5%
Prospect Rating 2	3.5%
Prospect Rating 3	2.0%

Clearly states the desired results.

The targets for converting applications to deposits by deposit rating are included in the table below. A deposit rating of "1" represents the best-fit students.

Rating	Yield
Deposit Rating 1	30.0%
Deposit Rating 2	15.5%
Deposit Rating 3	5.0%

Provides sound reasoning for the established target and links to last year's performance.

These targets are set in collaboration with the consultants and are based on last year's performance and the predictive model being used. Based on this analysis, Prospect Rating 1 target is up 3.5 percentage points, Prospect Rating 2 target is up 0.5 percentage point, and Prospect Rating 3 target remains at the 2018-19 level. Deposit Rating 1 and Deposit Rating 3 targets remain at 2018-19 levels, Deposit Rating 2 is up 0.5 percentage point.

Assessment Results:

This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. Assessment results will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Discussion of Assessment Results:

This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. Discussion of assessment results will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Assessment Method #2:

Note the inclusion of an additional assessment method in 2019-20 based on the new activity of predictive modeling for best-fit transfer students.

The enrollment consultant's predictive model for best-fit transfer students serves as a good assessment for this outcome since it is theoretically based and tested on previous transfer student data sets.

Clear identification of tool and discussion of how the tool supports the outcome.

Simulating the work they did in developing the first-year student model, theoretical modeling and testing on previous transfer student data sets will be the foundational work. We recognize that this is a time consuming process, thus recognize that we will not have a fully functional model for 2019-20 usage. The consultant will provide status updates on a regular basis – based on their work with the first-year model, this is generally every three to four weeks. We anticipate applying the model for an actual test run during the spring 2020 semester.

The process is clearly described.

Target:

Clear expectation.

The target is to have a functional best-fit transfer student predictive model by the end of the fall 2019 semester. This target is based on the time needed to complete the first-year best-fit student model and current consultant discussions on time-to-completion.

Justification for target.

Assessment Results:

This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. Assessment results will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Discussion of Assessment Results:

This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. Discussion of assessment results will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Assessment Method #3:

Clear identification of tool and alignment of tool with the outcome.

The Admission Office maintains two spreadsheets that document the outreach to perspective and admitted students by Student Ambassadors and volunteers from Alumni Affinity Groups. These spreadsheets are a good assessment for this outcome since they help the office track outreach efforts, thus maximizing the use of our resources. This organized approach to our assessment efforts allows the office to use the time and expertise of our Student Ambassadors and alumni volunteers efficiently.

The data collection process for Student Ambassadors is clearly described.

One spreadsheet identifies each Student Ambassador, their assigned applied or admitted students, and a log of their activity. Ambassadors receive updated assignments on a bi-weekly basis, reflective of the applicant and admit status of prospective students. Their assignment is to contact via email/text/phone each of their assigned students in an effort to add a personal student connection to the admission process. Call nights are held every Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday evening from 7-10pm in the Admission Office. Student Ambassadors use the office phones and computers to contact their assigned students, updating the spreadsheet as to date/time/type of contact, brief summary of discussion, and any items that an admission counselor would need to follow-up on. The Coordinator of Admissions works with the ambassadors and the admission counselors, alerting the counselors to flagged items identified during the ambassador's email/text/phone call with prospective/admitted students.

The data collection process for alumni is clearly described.

A second spreadsheet identifies alumni volunteers and each of those alumni's five assigned admitted students, including name and address. Each volunteer alumni sends a welcome letter to their assigned students, noting why the alumni selected the institution, and describing how their college experience impacted them. The alumni may include their email address and/or phone number, depending on their level of comfort in doing so, to allow admitted students to contact them with questions or concerns. Alumni notify either the Coordinator of Admissions or the Coordinator of Alumni Affairs as to the date when letters are sent and identify any items that an admission counselor would need to follow-up on with an admitted student. This letter writing campaign occurs from early spring through mid-summer, in an attempt to engage students who are still "shopping" during orientations. The Coordinator of Admissions works with the Coordinator of Alumni Affairs in managing this pilot project. (2 – Sample alumni letter to admitted student)

Includes reference to documentation.

Both spreadsheets are reviewed regularly (i.e., weekly) by the Coordinator of Admissions and the Director of Admissions. As appropriate, information is shared with Student Ambassadors and the Coordinator of Alumni Affairs. The spreadsheets are a regular item on the monthly meeting agenda with the Vice President of Enrollment Management. (3 – Sample meeting agenda with VP)

Data sharing explained.

Target:

Clearly stated expectations.

At least 65% of students who apply (Prospect Rating 1) and 100% of admitted students are contacted by a Student Ambassador and 90% of selected admitted students are contacted by an alumni.

These targets are based on 2018-19 performance, since that was our baseline year. We have increased the Prospect Rating 1 contacts target from 50% to 65%, even though only 46% were contacted in 2018-19. By analyzing the 2018-19 data and assuming the number of Prospect Rating 1 students remains at about the same level for 2019-20, each Student Ambassador would need to contact on average 22 more students than they did in 2018-19 to attain the 65% target. With additional phones and an extra call evening, we feel Student Ambassadors should be equipped to meet this elevated target.

Justification for targets.

We are keeping the 2018-19 target of 100% of admitted students are contacted by a Student Ambassador. This target was attained in 2018-19 and is a performance expectation of the Student Ambassadors. The Admission Office has an expectation that all admitted students are able to perceive the institution through the eyes of current students (i.e., Student Ambassadors).

We are maintaining the alumni target at 90% of assigned admitted students contacted because it was achieved in 2018-19. The number of alumni involved in the letter-writing initiative is increasing in 2019-20, however, we are only engaging those alumni who volunteer for this activity, so anticipate them following-through. We are not increasing the target due to the desired large increase in alumni volunteers.

Assessment Results:

This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. Assessment results will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Discussion of Assessment Results:

This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. Discussion of assessment results will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Assessment Method #4:

Note that the assessment method for recruiting transfer students has changed from 2018-19, which was the development of articulation agreements with 2-year colleges. The 2019-20 assessment method reflects the next stage of assessment for transfer student recruitment.

Clear identification of tool and alignment of tool with the outcome.

Transfer student interest, applications, and deposits – This information will be particular interest in regard to recently established articulation agreements with Leo Community College and Murphy Technical College. Transfer student statistics are a good assessment method for this outcome since they represent the impact of our recent work – articulation agreements with two 2-year colleges, continued efforts to secure two additional articulation agreements, and the identification of, placement of, and associated work of a transfer student admission counselor in the 2-year colleges.

We are advancing our assessment method beyond merely establishing more articulation agreements and counting/reporting on the activities of the transfer admission counselor to looking at true impact of our efforts. Formative assessment will be taking place, of course, in regard to activies related to the recruitment of transfer students, but the really story is the summative assessment of how many transfer students actually enroll for 2020-21, as the result of our work in 2019-20.

Process is clearly explained.

As we do for our first-year student recruitment, transfer student interest (e.g., website inquiry, direct email, attendance at informational sessions, meeting with the transfer student admission counselor), applications, and deposits are recorded in the database. The predictive model that is to be completed by our consultants for initial use in spring 2020, will be tested and, if possible, transfer Student Ambassadors will provide outreach to prospective and applied transfer students during spring and summer 2020. Once a predictive model is in place, data reports will be shared in the fashion described in Assessment Method #1 with staff and senior leadership.

Clear expectation.

Target:

30 transfer students accepted and deposited for the 2020-21 academic year. We have not set targets in the past for transfer student enrollment, as we did not have an organized recruitment strategy for these students. We have averaged approximately 15 transfer students each year for the past five years. With the two articulation agreements and a dedicated transfer student admission counselor, we are confident that we can double the number of transfer students for 2020-21.

Justification for target.

Assessment Results:

This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. Assessment results will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Discussion of Assessment Results:

This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. Discussion of assessment results will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Assessment Method #5:

Note the inclusion of an additional assessment method in 2019-20 based on the desire to obtain student perception data regarding the new initiatives implemented by the Admission Office over the past year.

Indirect method of assessment.

Clear identification of tool and alignment of tool with the outcome.

The Division of Enrollment Management (i.e., admissions and financial aid) and the Division of Student Affairs have collaborated for the past three years on a New Student Survey (i.e., first-year and transfer students) that addresses recruitment, move-in, transition, and college experience to date. To further understand the impact of several new efforts within the Admission Office – outreach by Student Ambassadors, outreach by alumni, articulation agreements, transfer admission counselor – we will add a few questions to this survey. These questions will be forced-choice with one open-ended item. The survey is a good assessment method for this outcome since it addresses our new recruitment initiatives and provides the student perspective. This assessment will supplement our spreadsheet data obtained in Assessment Method #3. (4 – New Student Survey)

Note that the existing survey has been expanded to assess the new activities and initiatives. The specific questions will be added here at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Includes reference to documentation.

The survey link is jointly sent to new students (i.e., first-years and transfers) via an email from the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Vice President of Enrollment Management during the second week of the fall semester. The invitation email encourages students to complete the survey and cites improvement and considerations that the two Divisions have addressed based on information gathered from the survey in previous years. Two reminder emails are sent, with flyers posted in the residence halls and commuter lounge encouraging survey participation.

The data collection and distribution processes are clearly described.

The administrative assistant of the Vice President of Student Affairs extracts and distributes the survey data. Enrollment Management receives the aggregated data and the data for questions specific to our division. The data are shared and discussed with the Enrollment Management staff during the mid-semester half-day retreat in mid-October.

Target:

Clear expectation.

At least 80% positive response rating (“strongly agree” or “agree” survey responses) on the new survey questions. This target reflects the expectation we set last year (2018-19) for the other questions on the New Student Survey that relate to enrollment management.

Justification for target.

Assessment Results:

This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. Assessment results will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Discussion of Assessment Results:

This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. Discussion of assessment results will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Continuous Improvement Action Plan for next year:

This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. The Continuous Improvement Action Plan will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.

Supporting Documentation

This section will not be completed in the 2019-20 Plan. Documentation will be added at the end of the 2019-20 assessment cycle.