

## **CHAPTER SIX: ASSESSING STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES**

### *Characteristics of Excellence:*

In this chapter Trinity demonstrates compliance with these Middle States Standards:

- Standard 6: Integrity
- Standard 9: Student Support Services
- Standard 11: Educational Offerings

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Consistent with Middle States Standard 9, Student Support Services at Trinity extend across all student populations, include advising and academic support as well as co-curricular services, and extend through virtually all academic and administrative departments. The chief offices responsible for specific delivery of students services are the Divisions of Academic Support and Career Services, the Dean of Student Services, Student Financial Services, Registration Services, and the deans offices of the respective schools. Other operational areas also provide student services, including Technology Services, Facilities, Food Service and the Bookstore.

Because the broad network of student services is too large to include in this self-study, the reports from many of the large departments will be available in the Document Room. This chapter focuses on the services delivered through the Office of Academic Support and Career Services, and the Office of the Dean of Student Services.

Student support services are shaped not only by Trinity's mission, but also by the needs of Trinity's changing student population. As discussed in Chapter One, Trinity's embrace of the paradigm shift has resulted in a student profile that reflects the demographics of the Washington metropolitan community. This profile means that Trinity students often face barriers to success in higher education. Many have limited income, insufficient preparation for college level work, and no family history of higher educational attainment. A significant minority of students also contend with learning and physical disabilities. Furthermore, Trinity enrolls many students who have limited command of English. Trinity is committed to providing appropriate support for every one of its students. They are admitted because Trinity believes in their potential. It is Trinity's responsibility to ensure they have every chance to realize that potential.

As the paradigm shift has produced more diversity in the ages, academic preparation levels, and life circumstances of Trinity students, Trinity has responded by expanding and diversifying its student support services. Virtually all faculty and staff members at Trinity deliver student services every day. On a formal level, student support services at Trinity are delivered through these major departments:

- *Academic Support and Career Services*, headed by the Associate Dean for Academic Advising, offers academic advising, learning skills support, services to students with

disabilities and international students, tutoring and Writing Center support, and career services.

- *The Division of Student Services*, headed by the Dean of Student Services, includes the functions of Residence Life, Health Services, Campus Ministry, and student clubs and organizations. It also works in close cooperation with the Athletics Program, managed through the Trinity Center for Women and Girls in Sports.
- *Academic Deans* and the offices of the Schools of Education and Professional Studies also deliver advising and other student services.

The Division of Student Services, as well as Academic Support and Career Services, have evolved significantly in response to the paradigm shift. To address students' changing needs both proactively and responsively, they have established new programming and new departments, separated student services into several distinct offices, and hired new professionals with specialization in areas of student development, student services and student support. Over the past two years, Academic Support and Career Services has grown from three to seven professionals, and the services have expanded to include International Student services, Disability Support services and the Writing Center. Meanwhile, the Division of Student Services has recently hired additional mental health professionals, residential directors and mentors, and athletic directors. Together, the Division of Student Services along with Academic Support and Career Services offer comprehensive, integrated services to meet the academic and developmental needs of all Trinity students.

## **II. ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND CAREER SERVICES**

Reporting to the vice president for academic affairs, the Academic Support and Career Services (ASCS) offices serve students from all three Trinity academic units. Responding to the challenges presented by increased enrollment and the changing demographics of Trinity's student population, each department (Academic Advising, Career Services, Disability Support Services, Future Focus Programming, International Student Service Programming, Tutorial Services and the Writing Center) has developed student-centered programming that is consistent with Trinity's Strategic Plan goals for enrollment, retention, and student performance.

### **A. Academic Advising**

#### **1. Advising Models and Goals**

Trinity's three schools have responded to the paradigm shift by implementing advising models tailored to the specific needs of their evolving student populations. Although each model is distinctive, they all share fundamental goals. For example, advising in all three schools emphasizes access; delivery modes and mechanisms have been designed to facilitate students' consultation with advisors on a regular, convenient basis. Advising also emphasizes individual student development; close contact between students and their advisors ensures that students receive the individual attention they need for success. Academic advisors play key roles in

developing students' academic plans and assessing their progress. Thus, academic advising is critical to student development, retention and success.

The School of Professional Studies assigns its undergraduates, who are primarily adult learners, to professional advisors with whom they will work throughout their academic careers. Adult learners have benefited greatly from the professional advisor model, and rely on the ability to contact their advisors at hours that are most convenient for their schedules.

Graduate students in the School of Professional Studies have faculty advisors in their academic programs. This model works well because it allows graduate students to work with scholars in their chosen fields. Graduate advisors focus on evaluating students' goals and helping each student tailor the program to meet her or his expectations. For example, advisors encourage students who wish to enter academia to submit outstanding papers to journals or conferences. For students seeking career advancement or change, advisors help students tailor course selection, projects, and paper topics to their specific career aspirations.

In the School of Education, entering graduate students have faculty advisors according to the students' area of specialty. The School of Education does not perform primary advising functions for undergraduates. Undergraduates who declare a major or minor in education maintain their primary advisor in their "home" school (CAS or SPS), and receive a secondary advisor in the School of Education, who advises on matters pertaining to the education program. Once students have passed PRAXIS I, they become official candidates in the School of Education although they still retain their primary advisor in CAS or SPS. The success of this model is based on collaboration between primary and secondary advisors to ensure that students meet both CAS/SPS and EDU requirements.

In the College of Arts and Sciences, all faculty members serve as advisors to undergraduate students. The CAS advising model is a two-phase approach designed to provide intensive academic and retention support for students in their first year, and focused discipline-based advising to students as they progress into their major field of study. First year and new transfer students receive advising services from a specially-trained team of faculty members. Once students have declared majors, department chairpersons identify faculty advisors in their majors.

CAS advising for first year students aims to provide a strong connection to the college and an effective first year foundation. Retention research shows that first year students are more likely to be successful in college if they have connected with the institution, find that it is a good match, and meet faculty early in their academic careers. To help students connect with the institution and with faculty, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and the Associate Dean for Academic Advising carefully select the members of the first year and new transfer advising team from among Trinity's more experienced faculty. All members of the advising team receive training that focuses on helping students navigate the first year experience. In addition, first year faculty advising loads have recently been reduced (10-15 students per advisor) to ensure that students receive sufficient attention and support.

## 2. Assessment and Improvement of Advising

Trinity evaluates the effectiveness of its advising services through student and faculty surveys. In a 2004 survey of first year faculty advisors, returning advisors indicated that the advising loads were more manageable than they had been in the past, allowing the advisors to spend more time with their students and get to know them better. New advisors also indicated that advising loads were manageable. In addition, the 2004 survey asked faculty advisors to report contact hours for each student. Of the 10 of 15 advisors who reported their contact hours for the fall semester, all met with each student at least once. 60% of the students who entered in fall 2004 saw their advisors more than once.

Trinity also evaluates the effectiveness of advising by monitoring student requests for change in advisors. No first year students changed advisors and two transfer students changed advisors from fall 2004 to spring 2005. The positive responses from faculty concerning advising loads and the small number of advisor change requests among first year students suggest that the smaller advising loads have been beneficial for both faculty and students. Advising loads are more manageable, and faculty advisors are more available for the students.

Student surveys provide another measure of advising effectiveness. In a 2005 survey of all Trinity students, over 83% of respondents indicated that their advising needs were adequately, more than adequately, or exceptionally well met (see Document Room report for results.)

Student and faculty surveys have revealed areas for improvement as well as indicators of success. For example, first year faculty advisors reported concern that they did not meet their new advisees during summer orientation, before the start of the fall semester. Meanwhile, students' responses suggested that transfer students with advanced academic standing prefer being assigned advisors in their major. Students also expressed concerns about advisor availability and advising staff turnover, particularly in the School of Professional Studies.

Trinity is committed to using the results of assessment to improve its advising services. For example, the College of Arts and Sciences addressed the concerns expressed in the 2004 – 2005 surveys of faculty and students by connecting faculty advisors with first year students during summer orientation. In the summer 2005 orientations, faculty advisors offered advising and registration sessions. All entering students were also assigned advising appointments with their advisors on the day before school began. Assessment of the 2005 – 2006 advising period will show whether these changes positively affected advisor/student relationships.

## B. Entrance Assessment

### 1. Goals and Design of Entrance Assessment

Chapter 2 discusses the results of entrance assessment from the academic assessment perspective. This discussion focuses on the process of entrance assessment, which ASCS administers. Along with advising, entrance assessment is a crucial tool for guiding undergraduates to make appropriate academic choices in their first year. The ultimate goal of entrance assessment is to help students succeed academically and continue in their studies. For

entrance assessment to contribute to student retention and success, several conditions must be satisfied. First, assessment instruments must measure student skill levels accurately. Second, students must be counseled effectively to ensure they enroll in courses that match their skill levels. Finally, students must successfully complete the courses into which they are placed, so that they can advance to their next level of study.

Trinity requires all entering undergraduates to take placement assessments in math and English (unless students are transferring in credits to meet their composition and mathematics requirements). The majority of students who take placement exams do so as part of their orientation in the fall. After their exams are scored, students meet with Office of Academic Support staff, who advise them for which courses to register based on their placement results. Assessment exams are also offered in the spring. Undergraduates who transfer or are new to the institution take the assessment exams in January. Results are communicated to students and their advisors, who assist them in the course selection and registration process. In 2004-5, 183 of the 217 students who participated in placement exams did so in the fall semester (84%).

## 2. Evaluation of Entrance Assessment

Analysis of exam results and enrollment patterns reveals that most students immediately register for the math and English courses that their scores indicate are appropriate to their skill level. This suggests that the entrance assessment process generally works quickly and effectively to place students in the right courses to build their skills and foster their academic progress. However, a significant minority of students do not immediately enroll in the courses they are advised to take, deferring their foundational math and/or English coursework. Finally, a small percentage of students take courses other than those in which their exam results placed them.

For example, 79% of students who took assessment exams in Fall 2004 registered for the specific math course that their exam scores indicated would be most suitable. 18% did not register for any math course. Only 4% of students registered for a math course in which they did not place. Similarly, 84% of students who took assessment exams in Fall 2004 registered for the English composition course that their exam scores placed them into. 12% of students did not register for any English course, and 4% registered for an English course in which they did not place.

As noted above, far fewer students took assessment exams in the spring 2005 semester. But of those students who did take part in spring 2005 assessments, a larger percentage did not register for courses after being placed (37% did not register for a math course and 52% did not register for an English course).

The fact that a small number of students enroll in math and English composition courses other than those into which they place is not an indication of problems in the assessment and placement process. Instead, it demonstrates Trinity's flexibility and attentiveness to the needs of individual students. Occasionally, students and their advisors decide--based on the student's transcript and/or intended major--that the best class to register for may be different from the one in which they placed. Students are not encouraged to register for a class more advanced than the one in which they placed, but they can work with their advisor to identify a class that will provide a 'parallel' experience.

However, the fact that a sizeable number of students do not enroll in any math and/or English classes after taking their assessment exams may, in some cases, be a cause for concern. Deferring foundational math and English composition courses can present problems if students delay taking needed courses for several semesters. It is imperative for the Office of Academic Support and advisors to track students who do not enroll in these courses after taking their assessments, in order to remind those students to complete their foundational math and composition coursework in a timely manner.

Another important indicator of the effectiveness of entrance assessment is student performance. The office of Academic Support tracks students' progress by compiling information on the grades they receive in their entry-level math and English composition classes. This information indicates that the assessment process accurately places students into the courses most appropriate to their incoming skill levels. Upon preliminary review, for example, student grades in English composition in Fall 2004 indicate that they were accurately placed. Of the 76 students who enrolled, based on assessment results, into ENGL 105, 63 (82%) received grades in the range of A, B's and C's in the course. Twelve ENGL 105 students earned grades lower than a C-.

### C. Tutorial and Learning Support Services

While advising and assessment services can ensure student placement in appropriate courses, additional support services are needed to ensure student success in their coursework. At Trinity, one of the most important support services is tutoring. The office of Academic Support provides free, one-on-one peer tutoring in most subjects offered at Trinity. All students are eligible to receive tutoring services, whether through individual requests or faculty referral. The majority of tutoring requests involve math, science and foreign languages. Tutors are undergraduate students who excel in academics, and who are trained and supervised by full-time professional staff. Peer tutors provide a unique and invaluable service for students who are struggling to comprehend difficult material or seeking clarification on specific subjects. By learning to navigate the material with their peers, students gain confidence and develop their own academic and study skills.

During the 2004-2005 academic year, Academic Support Services provided a total of 366 tutoring sessions. Nine tutors worked in the fall semester, and five tutors during the spring semester. 87% of students who utilized tutoring services were CAS students; 13% were SPS students.

Based on its assessment of the demand for tutoring, the Office of Academic Support has recently made changes to its tutoring schedule. To meet growing student requests for tutoring services, and to better serve students from the School of Professional Studies, the office has extended tutoring hours to evenings and weekends. The Office of Academic Support has also collaborated with advisors in the School of Professional Studies and the School of Education to increase outreach to their students by providing learning skills workshops and academic success programs at times when students are available. A continuing priority for Academic Support Services is to expand programming that will address the needs of students who have requested academic assistance, but who have not been able to take advantage of services during the traditional 9:00 – 5:00 hours. This priority strengthens Trinity's compliance with Middle States Standard 9, which

calls on institutions to deliver student support services in flexible ways that meet the needs of diverse student populations, such as older students and students with disabilities.

#### D. Disability Services

##### 1. Responding to Growing Need

Trinity's paradigm shift has presented significant challenges in the area of disability support services, as Trinity has experienced a tremendous increase in the number of students who self-identify as needing accommodations for disabilities. For example, requests for accommodation rose from 11 students in 1998 to 55 students in 2005. Between Spring 2004 and Spring 2005, there was a 120% increase in the number of students who self-identified with the DSS office, and a 29% increase in students actually receiving accommodations (see Document Room for more detailed information). To respond to rising student need, Trinity hired a disability support services coordinator in 2004 and established a separate office of Disability Support Services.

Disability Support Services provides support to all enrolled students. Of students receiving accommodations during the Spring 2005 semester, 65% were CAS students, 22% were SPS students, and 13% were students in the School of Education. Students receiving accommodations have been diagnosed with a broad array of disabilities. Students with learning disabilities constituted the single largest group of students with identified disabilities, followed by students with physical disabilities (see Document Room for details). Several students are receiving accommodations for multiple diagnoses.

As with Academic Advising, facilitating student access is a top priority for Disability Support Services. The office promotes access by encouraging students to contact the Coordinator through means, and at times, that work best for the students. The Coordinator consults with individual students through phone, email, and face to face meetings, and utilizes a distribution list to provide relevant information for all students with disabilities. Disability Support Services made a total of 588 contacts during the Spring 2005 semester, including both direct contacts with students and discussions with professors, health care professionals, parents, and others as needed. (See the report in the Document Room for detailed data about contacts).

##### 2. Assessing and Improving Disability Support

Surveys provide an important mechanism for assessing student satisfaction with Disability Support Services and identifying areas for improvement. The most recent survey was administered to students with disabilities in Fall 2004 and Spring 2005. Although the response rate was modest (less than 50%), the survey results indicate that students with disabilities are pleased with Trinity as a whole and with the services offered through the DSS office. Students also identified specific areas of concern that they wished to see addressed. The full report of this survey is available in the Document Room.

In addition to student satisfaction, student performance is another important indicator of the effectiveness of Disability Support Services. Although student success is not measured solely by

GPA, tracking students' GPA provides one signifier of performance. Preliminary results are encouraging. At the end of the Spring 2005 semester, students receiving DSS services reported strong growth in cumulative grade point averages over the course of one year. In particular, undergraduate students showed a 7% increase in cumulative grade point average from Fall 2004 to Spring 2005. A complete report is available in the Document Room.

### E. Future Focus

#### 1. Program Design and Goals

Trinity's paradigm shift, and the accompanying increase in the number of academically disadvantaged students it serves, has necessitated the development of more comprehensive support programs for these students. Trinity initiated the Future Focus program in 1999 to offer structured, intensive academic support to students whose academic and economic profiles put them at risk of dropping out. The program aimed to reduce high attrition rates of first year students, and to increase success rates of academically challenged students.

The Future Focus program is a full year academic bridge program for first year students in CAS whose pre-collegiate academic profiles indicate need for academic support. Guided by a director who is professionally trained in academic support services and student development, the Future Focus program addresses the cognitive, behavioral and affective needs of the first-year student. Future Focus students are provisionally admitted to Trinity for one year. Full admission is based upon completion of the program requirements in the first year.

Connecting with the college and fellow students, building relationships with faculty and professional staff, and academic skill development are crucial components of successful first year programming. The Future Focus program integrates these components through mentoring, tutoring, study hall, individual appointments with the director, skill-building courses, co-curricular activities, and leadership development programming.

#### 2. Program Assessment and Improvement

Every semester, the Future Focus program conducts assessment to identify areas of programmatic strength and weakness, diagnose student needs and concerns, and develop modifications and new initiatives to improve student success and retention. Each component of the program is evaluated in the Quality Scale/Student Satisfaction Survey. Ongoing assessment has allowed the program to target its curricular content to better address students' academic deficits; to strengthen its mentoring services; and to enrich its leadership development offerings.

Future Focus curricular revisions have focused on improving students' mastery of foundational study and academic skills, while also preparing them for advanced study. In 2001, for example, the required skills course was changed from a two-credit course concentrating on study skills to a three-credit course concentrating on reading across disciplines, writing analytically, and thinking critically. This shift aimed to provide students with more intensive preparation for success in courses beyond the first year. Shortly thereafter, in Fall 2002, the College of Arts and Sciences dropped its requirement that all first-year students take an Academic Success Seminar. This



requirement may have been unnecessary for stronger first-year students, but it remained important for Future Focus students, who needed additional assistance with the transition to college. The Future Focus program's analysis revealed that retention of Future Focus students decreased after this course was cancelled. As a result, in Fall 2004, the Future Focus program reinstated the Academic Success Seminar for Future Focus students only.

The Future Focus program has also focused on helping students achieve in areas beyond coursework. For example, in keeping with the mission of Trinity, the Future Focus program has recently emphasized leadership development. It has collaborated with faculty who specialize in leadership studies to strengthen the leadership development portion of the Future Focus program.

Another improvement arising from assessment involves Future Focus mentoring. The mentors are former Future Focus students; they provide support and assistance to current Future Focus students through weekly meetings. After assessing mentor services in 2002, the Future Focus program determined that more formal training would be beneficial to the mentors and to the students they serve. In Fall 2004, a peer mentoring course was added to the curriculum, and is required for all prospective mentors.

Recent student satisfaction surveys, grade analyses, and retention figures highlight areas of Future Focus success. Among the strongest components of Future Focus are academic advising and support, mentoring, and study hall. The Student Satisfaction Survey administered in Fall 2004 indicates that more than two thirds of Future Focus students felt their advisors were helpful. Furthermore, Future Focus student exit interviews from Spring 2005 reveal that mentoring is one of the most appreciated components of the program. These exit interviews also reveal that 83% of Future Focus "graduates" were satisfied with the availability of academic support, while 63% indicated that if they had to re-select a college, they would definitely attend Trinity. Finally, data from Fall 2004 indicate that study hall may be an important contributor to Future Focus student success. Of the 25 students using study hall in Fall 2004, only 2 were subsequently placed on academic probation. Analysis of the Fall 2005 – Spring 2006 study hall use will reveal whether this relationship can be effectively drawn. (All reports available in the Document Room.)

Student satisfaction surveys and retention figures also reveal shortcomings to be addressed in the Future Focus program. For example, the Fall 2004 student survey indicates that only 43% of students felt Future Focus prepared them to be successful; an equal percentage believed they were receiving a good education at Trinity. Furthermore, while the Future Focus student retention rate for 1<sup>st</sup> to second semester (Fall 2004-Spring 2005) was an extremely impressive 86%, retention slipped between the first and second year. The retention rate for first to second year (Fall 2004-Fall 2005) was 67% (28 students out of 42), lower than Trinity's goal of 90%.

## F. Career Services

### 1. Goals and Programs

Career preparation is integral to Trinity's mission and central to the work of student support services at Trinity. In recent years, the career development needs and expectations of Trinity students have expanded greatly. To meet growing needs, to improve outreach to graduate

and SPS undergraduate students, and to offer more professional career development services, the Office of Career Services was separated from the Office of Academic Support Services in 2004. A new Director of Career Services assumed his position in March 2005. Since then, the office has pursued a steady trajectory of expansion and diversification.

Today, the Office of Career Services supports the mission of the University by providing wide-ranging opportunities for students to develop and achieve their academic and professional aspirations. From programming designed for first year students, to workshops for seniors and graduate students, to portfolio management for alumni, it offers comprehensive career development services to all Trinity students. It aims to be an integral component of the Trinity experience by serving as a premier, high-visibility source of information and resources for all members of the Trinity community. It also aims for recognition as a premier source for employers and recruiters. To achieve these goals, Career Services is committed to maintaining a highly effective, professional, and cohesive staff.

## 2. Results and Improvements

One of the greatest accomplishments of Career Services in recent years has been an enrichment in the range and extent of its career development programming. For example, Career Services grew from providing 99 career services contacts and 156 career fair visits in 2002 – 2003, to 160 individual contacts, 114 online contacts, and 181 career fair visits in 2003 - 2004. In April 2005, Trinity held its largest career fair ever. With 32 employers represented at the fair, the Office of Career Services increased opportunities and improved employment offers for Trinity students who were graduating, seeking summer employment and/or internships, or seeking part time employment. The Director has further enlarged career opportunities for Trinity students by re-establishing on campus interviews with the State Department. He has also increased the number of workshops designed to prepare students for graduate and professional schools. Emphasizing early planning and preparation, he has been able to reach students who are considering graduate and professional school as well as those who had not previously thought graduate or professional school was within their grasp.

Another important improvement has been strengthening outreach to students in the School of Professional Studies and in graduate programs. Through offering extended weekday and weekend hours, by providing evening workshops, and by collaborating with faculty in the School of Education to develop services for their students, the Office of Career Services has become more inclusive and flexible in its programming. Student responses to these changes in career services indicate that they have benefited students from all three schools.

## III. DIVISION OF STUDENT SERVICES

The division of Student Services comprises four departments: Health and Wellness, Student Activities, Residence Life, and Campus Ministry. These departments support the mission of the university by improving retention and student engagement through meaningful contributions to the emotional, physical, and intellectual development of Trinity students. With special attention to access and success, the division of Student Services provides services and programs that facilitate students' academic and social acclimation. Since many Trinity students are

academically challenged first-generation college attendees with heavy family and work responsibilities, the risk of culture shock and alienation on campus is high. If students find that their preconceptions of college were inaccurate, they can suffer a loss of confidence in their academic prospects. Therefore, a focus on fostering student connection to Trinity is critical to the mission of Student Services.

While each department in Student Services articulates its own objectives, they all share core goals, which include: contributing to Trinity's tradition of spiritual enrichment and diversity; safeguarding and strengthening students' mental and physical health; offering co-curricular programming that promotes life-long learning and civic responsibility and empowers students to become confident leaders; and assessing student satisfaction and learning as part of a continuous effort to improve student success.

The Division of Student Services recognizes that these goals are best pursued through establishing partnerships with other units within the university. The work of Student Services supports, and is supported by, the work of Trinity faculty, academic deans, and academic offices. For example, the Student Services team works with faculty and staff to identify and support students who are experiencing academic difficulties. Particularly intensive support is provided for first year students. At the first sign of academic difficulties, the Student Services team intervenes to remind students of their responsibilities and to help them surmount their problems. After receiving mid-term grades, for instance, Student Services institutes mandatory study hall for poorly-performing students to assist them with study skills.

The Division of Student Services and the Offices of Academic Support and Career Services have complementary goals and missions. Therefore, they collaborate continuously to promote student retention, academic success, and professional and personal development. For example, the Dean of Student Services works with the Office of Academic Support to ensure that all students receive a full introduction to both Academic and Student Services on campus. During orientation, Student Services works closely with Academic Support Services to help students navigate the process of taking entrance assessment exams, create class schedules based on assessment scores, and learn to adjust to University life.

## A. Health and Wellness

### 1. Goals and Programs

The department of Health and Wellness supports the academic achievement of Trinity students by working to ensure their mental and physical health. Recognizing that students perform best academically when they are physically and psychologically well, Health and Wellness offers medical and mental health services, health education, health promotion and disease prevention services. Its programs include stress management, healthy eating, and fitness, and it directs campus-wide initiatives such as flu vaccination, Breast Cancer Awareness, Sexual Assault Awareness, Alcohol Awareness, and Depression Screening. In keeping with Middle States Standard 9, all providers of care are appropriately licensed and the facility meets standards established by local and national bodies such as the National Committee on Quality Assurance.

Like other student support services, Health and Wellness strives to strengthen its impact through expanding student access and through collaboration with other Trinity offices. Its services are available 5 days per week, and evening hours have recently been added to serve evening and weekend students. The increased availability of services has contributed to a 400% increase in visits to the Health Center over the past three years.

Health and Wellness programming is integrated with many other campus constituencies. Programs are offered with faculty when appropriate to the course content. Co-sponsorship of programs with student organizations offers greater outreach capacity. The Health Center works with the Trinity Center and food service staff to promote fitness and healthy eating as part of the “Healthy Campus 2010” initiative. In addition, Health and Wellness staff is regularly consult with other departments such as Residence Life, Disability Services, and Academic Support to identify and reach out to students whose academic performance may be negatively impacted by health issues.

## 2. Assessment and Results

The department of Health and Wellness evaluates its programming through tracking student visits, analyzing student diagnosis patterns, and surveying student satisfaction levels. The knowledge gained by tracking visits and analyzing diagnoses has helped the department target key areas for service development. Beyond the usual medical conditions, depression and anxiety, relationship problems, and eating dysfunctions have emerged as the top student health issues. This knowledge allows Health and Wellness to build its education and promotion activities around the areas that put students at most risk, physically, emotionally and academically. For example, to address the prevalent problem of depression, HC staff have met with staff and faculty to raise awareness of signs and symptoms, as well as treatment options.

Students at Trinity have complex social, family, and cultural histories that contribute to their health issues. These complexities might be lost in a larger academic setting, but the Trinity community encourages students to seek and find resources to support them. Student surveys conducted during the last three years indicate that a large percentage of students make behavior changes based on what they learn from staff and at programs.

### B. Residence Life and Student Activities

Residence Life and Student Activities work with students in pursuit of the goals of building leaders, creating community with peers and staff, enhancing academic experiences, and preparing students for life beyond their university experiences. Student Activities focuses on fostering students’ personal development, leadership skills, and civic and community engagement. The main avenues for pursuing these goals are through campus organizations, student government, and Trinity traditions such as Cap and Gown weekend and class ceremonies. Student Activities assesses results through tracking student participation and leadership in campus organizations and Trinity traditions.

Meanwhile, Residence Life works with residential students with the objectives of fostering communication, collaboration, and leadership skills as well as the values of responsibility and

self-esteem. Many students arrive at Trinity with the need to develop their social skills and life skills, and some bring with them personal and emotional problems that the Residence Life team must help them learn to work through. The Dean of Student Services and her staff realize that many Trinity students come to Trinity for the individual attention and nurturing that Trinity is known for. They strive to provide that attention and nurturing while simultaneously developing students' self-confidence, self-reliance, and problem-solving abilities. Through creating an environment that is supportive and confidence-building, Residence Life contributes to students' success at Trinity and beyond.

The learning begins during orientation, when Residence Life staff meet new students from exceptionally diverse family and cultural backgrounds and help them communicate with, understand and respect each other. For example, when students attend Residence Life programs about roommate relations, including concerns such as borrowing clothing, confidentiality of conversations, sleeping hours, and visitation rules, they learn about the challenges and compromises involved in living with others in a community setting. Residence Life also encourages new students to get involved in co-curricular activities as an avenue for strengthening their sense of community and their ability to work together toward shared goals.

### C. Campus Ministry

While Trinity is a Catholic university, much of its identity flows from the identities of its students, faculty, and staff, in which case Trinity is Catholic, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, and Bahai. This rich diversity informs the mission and goals of Campus Ministry. Campus Ministry seeks to nurture and deepen the spiritual life of Trinity community members; to enrich their appreciation of other religious traditions; and to help them express their faith through civic engagement, leadership, and the search for justice.

Campus Ministry embraces and sustains Trinity's heritage, which is rooted in the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur and the Catholic tradition. Trinity welcomes persons of all faiths in the pursuit of the larger purposes of learning and the human search for meaning and fulfillment. As Campus Ministry promotes growth within one's own religious tradition, it also seeks to understand the religious traditions of others. For example, Campus Ministry helps organize Iftar celebrations with Muslim students during Ramadan and discussions of Seder during Passover with Jewish faculty and staff. The Trinity Choir is another example of inter-faith enrichment. The choir is made up of Catholics, other Christians and non-Christians who come together with a love of music and a desire to praise God. Rehearsals give Choir members the opportunity to talk about styles of music, forms of prayer, and denominational worship. Beyond singing at mass, the choir contributes to campus wide celebrations and Trinity Traditions. These experiences expand understanding and foster appreciation of the breadth of religious traditions at Trinity.

Grounded in Catholic social teaching, the work of Campus Ministry promotes justice, human dignity, and solidarity with those in need. The Catholic Bishops believe that "Campus Ministry is called to be a consistent and vigorous advocate for justice, peace and the reverence for all life." (*Empowered by the Spirit* #73) Campus Ministry pursues this mission through collaboration with faculty and partnerships with community organizations. For instance, Campus Ministry works with faculty teaching the First Year Seminar to identify community

partners for the community-based learning component of the seminar. The First Year Seminar helps students understand the causes of injustice, and explore possible remedies, through hands-on experience and community service. Campus Ministry also works with community partners to provide other service learning opportunities for students, such as the Sr. Seton Cunneen Summer Service Fellowship.

One of the challenges Campus Ministry faces is equipping students with foundations for success. Since some students come to Trinity with limited experience and opportunities, they often lack basic work skills. For example, many students who work in the Office of Campus Ministry reveal that this is their first job. So Campus Ministry trains these students in effective work habits, including timeliness, reliability, courtesy in interpersonal communication, and giving and receiving constructive feedback. Just as importantly, Campus Ministry helps many students, whose prior opportunities and expectations have been limited, to imagine their own potential. Campus Ministry works with these students to identify strategies to realize their dreams, including educational planning and creative pursuit of experience.

Campus Ministry regularly assesses its programs with the goal of finding ways to strengthen student engagement and spiritual growth. For example, it tracks the religious traditions present on campus, and uses this information to develop new inter-faith programming. It also monitors student participation in, and leadership of, its programs. This helps Campus Ministry develop programming which is reflective of students' spiritual needs and interests. It also allows Campus Ministry to nurture students' leadership potential, and to encourage students to explore connections between their spiritual values and their leadership. Furthermore, Campus Ministry monitors its service partnerships with community organizations, with the goal of developing new opportunities for student service as a way of addressing injustice and promoting civic responsibility.

#### D. Athletics

The intercollegiate Athletics Program (Division III) aims to support the educational and lifelong goals of Trinity students through focusing on health and wellness, development of specific sport skill sets, and general life skills such as teamwork and discipline, healthy competitiveness and the ability to handle wins and losses gracefully. The Athletics Program is organized and supervised through the Trinity Center for Women and Girls in Sports, in close cooperation with the Dean of Student Services. Varsity sports include soccer, basketball, tennis, lacrosse, softball and volleyball.

A report on the Athletics Program is available in the Document Room.

#### E. Student Government, Co-Curricular Programming, Student Handbook

Trinity supports a range of co-curricular programming, and the Student Government works with the Dean's office to implement student activities and various special projects. Each academic unit has some form of student government, ranging from a fully-developed representative model in CAS, to student committees in SPS and EDU.

The full report of the Office of Student Services includes more detail on Student Government, clubs and organizations, student activities and co-curricular programming.

The Document Room also includes the Student Handbook and reports on judicial proceedings.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Trinity will build upon the work begun with this self-study to create more systematic data collection and stronger coordination of assessment among student support services units.
- The tremendous interconnections and interdependencies for effective student/academic support services calls for more systematic data collection and stronger coordination with and among student services, academic programs and collegiate units.
- Every effort will be made to stabilize the advising staff and program in the School of Professional Studies for greater effectiveness with and access by adult students.
- Trinity will conduct a thorough review of its entrance placement program to create an easily accessible and effective assessment program for adult students in the School of Professional Studies.
- Serious consideration will be given to curricular design and sequencing for all first year students. Different models should translate this for CAS students and for adult students in SPS. Interaction with faculty and student support staff is crucial for a fully informed approach.
- The Future Focus Academic Success Seminar that emphasizes reading across disciplines, writing analytically and thinking critically, which replaced a study skills course in 2002, will be given serious consideration as a retention improving course model for all of CAS students.
- More systematic assessment and data collection for all components of Student Services, including Residence Life, Campus Ministry, Health Services, and the related area of Athletics, will be part of future assessment planning.