

Executive Summary-Student Volunteer Services

Strengths:

Strengths included the support and advocacy by the Vice President for assessment and program evaluation. Staffing is moving in the right direction with the intention to hire a full-time professional in the role of Director of Volunteer Services. Present staff (grads and interns) are diverse in gender and ethnicity. The staff selection process is within the spirit and intent of equal opportunity and in-service training is good. The programs operate within allocated resources and fiscal guidelines.

Areas Needing Improvement:

The following statements briefly address areas needing improvement. A written mission statement to provide a basis for planning and prioritizing program initiatives needs to be developed. The lack of formal assessment activities results in anecdotal outcome assumptions, which presently direct future programs. Additionally, the lack of demographic data on volunteers impacts the effectiveness of recruitment plans. A full time staff member with an earned master's degree should supervise interns receiving academic credit. Consistently the results of the assessment showed a need for a full time professional staff member to serve as the Center's Director to provide: 1) consistency in services delivered, 2) a level of expertise in risk management, program development, office management, and administration and 3) closer day-to-day supervision of graduate assistants. It is also evident that there is a need for establishing policies, procedures, and program requirements. Funding should be committed and not based upon individual programs. The Student Volunteer Center should be located in a high student traffic area and staffed consistently. Program benefits will be derived from increasing the frequency and depth of interaction with agencies and faculty. The failure to consistently provide post experience reflection by volunteers may reinforce rather than dispel stereotypes and "isms". Volunteer and agency files are relatively insecure with no policy concerning access or record retention in place.

Inhibiting factors:

Lack of a specialized CAS instrument for "Volunteer Services" likely limited the depth and specificity of our assessment for this area by not having established standards of performance to grade ourselves against.

Recommendations

Program Compliance:

- 1) Develop a mission statement and goals for the SVC grounded in the values of Educating Illinois and reflecting the relationship of service to learning. Ball all policies, procedures, forms, marketing, and programs on mission and goals.
- 2) Develop assessment instruments in conjunction with the University Assessment Office to address participant reaction and learning, and use consistently.
- 3) Hire qualified personnel to oversee Student Volunteer Center and supervise graduate assistants and interns working for course credit.
- 4) Increase accessibility and visibility of SVC.
- 5) Seek committed funding to replace or supplement annual soft money allocation.

Program Enhancement:

- 1) Develop electronic files and databases.
- 2) Expand assessment program to include "behavior change" and "attainment of planned outcomes".
- 3) Increase number of full-time staff.
- 4) Seek formal ongoing institutional commitment to "Volunteer Services".