Specialized Support Services Program Review

Lane Community College Board of Education Report
September 19, 2012

Background

In 2011, Vice President Sonya Christian commissioned a cohort of college operations and enterprise units to begin development of a Program Review process and structure for Lane, as part of our ongoing work in developing strategy- , evidence-, and outcome-driven planning, operating and evaluation systems throughout the college.

Program Review Objectives:

- Align department work with the mission and strategic directions of the college
- Build shared vision for department staff; clearly articulate team and individual role in mission fulfillment and student success
- Develop and refine planning tools and processes; weave into ongoing operations
- Develop business intelligence, common language, and key performance indicators
- Understand and adapt to operating environments, strategic issues and opportunities
- Communicate department strategies and performance with campus constituencies

Program Review Development Process:

The cohort began by researching other academic program review structures, existing planning and review processes at Lane, and national best practices in strategic planning and performance measurement. We then designed a draft template and developed tools and processes for department directors to use in engaging their teams in the program review work. During monthly cohort meetings, directors shared progress, best practices and lessons learned.

Review documents and experiences will be presented and published during fall term, with first year cohort members serving as peer mentors to department directors coming on board with the process this year. All college operations and enterprise units will have created a review by June 2014. Departments will provide annual reports on strategic initiatives and performance indicators, with a complete review renewal conducted every three years on a rotating basis amongst departments.

Illustration: Specialized Support Services:

Specialized Support Services, part of our first year cohort, has been deeply engaged in the program review process over the 2011-2012 year and found enormous value in the structure and rigor it has brought to their strategic planning and process improvement work, highlighted in the following sections.

Department Overview

Specialized Support Services (S3) provides vocational training and services to individuals with developmental disabilities. The program was established in 1971 as the "Activity Center," part of Lane's Adult Basic Education Program serving 15 students in remedial academics with two part-time staff and an annual budget of $25,000. The program has grown steadily over the years, with an expansion of services and an increasing emphasis on vocational training. Today, S3 serves 85 students, with 13 full-time and 42 part-time staff and an annual operating budget of $1.3 MM.

> *Our Mission*
>
> *Specialized Support Services is committed to a high quality learning experience that provides employment, community participation and socially integrated activities. We assist students who require intensive or unique supports in order to meet their education goals.*

S3's service model as illustrated in Figure 1 is unique in that our students are integrated within the campus community, working and learning side by side with the general college population. S3 student workers develop vocational skills through modularized curriculum, employment in work sites throughout campus, and co-curricular activities and supports such as a weekly Job Club for students preparing to enter the job market.

Figure 1

Strategic Directions

S3 programs provide an integral service to our college and local community. Our work exemplifies the college's core values of learning, diversity, innovation, collaboration and partnership, integrity, accessibility and sustainability, and directly supports Lane's strategic directions as described below.

- **A Liberal Education Approach for Student Learning**

  S3 curriculum, training and support services are intentionally designed to provide students with the communication and problem-solving skills, civic and personal responsibility, and information literacy needed for them to successfully and independently navigate our complex and dynamic world. S3's liberal education crossover courses include Workplace Ethics, Managing Stress/Self Control, Personal Health and Wellness and the Art of Communication.

- **Optimal Student Preparation, Progression and Completion**

  Each S3 student has an individual development plan that supports their preparation, progression and completion, beginning with assessment and individual coaching and continuing through to maximum productivity and community placement. Progression is measured twice annually through course completion and a productivity measurement system, with completion defined on an individual student by student basis.

- **A Sustainable Learning and Working Environment**

  S3 student workers play an integral role in sustainability efforts at Lane, staffing waste management, composting, and recycling operations throughout campus in partnership with facilities management and planning and the sustainability office.

- **A Diverse and Inclusive Learning and Working Environment**

    S3 student workers allow Lane to demonstrate the impact of diversity by integrating all types of learners into the college community. The immersion of S3 students in classrooms and worksites across campus is a powerful illustration of inclusion and respect.

- **A Safe Learning and Working Environment**

    S3 adheres to Department of Human Services safety standards, which include employee background checks, detailed safety planning for each student, mandatory incident reporting and extensive and ongoing staff training in CPR, first aid, blood borne pathogens and disability-specific topics.

Trends & Operating Environment

Funding for S3 is based on revenue from several sources. The program receives payment from the State of Oregon to provide support services to student workers. The structure of this revenue changed from monthly to daily payments in October 2011. Thanks to our above-average attendance rate, S3 funding has not been adversely impacted by the change. A more significant and potentially impactful change currently under implementation is a transition to tiered payments that tie service funding to the level of functioning of each student in the program. The effect of this tiered funding system will become evident in the next year; we plan to mitigate any potentially negative effects by continuing to closely manage development plans for each student and growing service contract revenue.

Additional revenue is generated through contracts with external customers and agreements with departments within the college. Examples of external contracts include laundry services for the University of Oregon and assembly contracts with Quantum Inc. Internally, S3 provides services to Facilities, Food Services, Titan Bookstore, Physical Education, the Lane Foundation and Printing and Graphics. We plan to continue to expand service contract services and revenue both internally and externally.

S3 receives college general fund support to cover the salary and OPE of the director and administrative specialist, who also oversee the college laundry, and to subsidize internal service contracts for S3 student workers. Due to sustained pressures on the college general fund budget, and as a quasi-enterprise unit, S3 has been charged with developing a financially self-sufficient operating model. This work began in fiscal year 2012, with detailed service cost analyses, rationalization of internal service contract fees, expansion of and the program review process to include development of key performance indicators, financial reports, and growth strategies. Fiscal sustainability will continue to be a primary focus for the coming fiscal year.

Changes in the service delivery model include a new national focus on competitive employment outcomes. This national movement continues to steer the program toward a more formalized system of preparing students for competitive employment. Participation in a statewide effort, *Employment First*, is helping guide the program's efforts to find and facilitate employment opportunities for those student workers who are ready to transition to a more independent work setting with the necessary supports to ensure success. S3 is adapting to this shift by strengthening curriculum learning outcomes that measure academic progression, increasing our job development and placement capacity, and expanding our culture beyond participation to include meaningful progression and completion.

Demand for services in Lane County continues to grow. The waiting list for S3 services ranges from 2 to 10 individuals at any given time. The demand is the result of both an increasing number of individuals accessing Developmental Disabilities services and a limited number of campus and community work sites.

Economic Conditions most directly impact the program's growth in the area of successful employment in the community. With limited job opportunities in general, our challenge is compounded when presenting a person with a disability to an employer. Efforts to offset those challenges include support services, tax benefits and continuous follow along services for the individuals served by the program.

Key Performance Indicators

S3's program review work led us to identify four key success factors that are essential to our ongoing success: student productivity and placement, strategic growth and innovation, staff training and development, and operational efficiency. Our key performance indicators shown in Table 1 will enable us to assess our progress and performance in these factors and to focus our strategies and efforts accordingly.
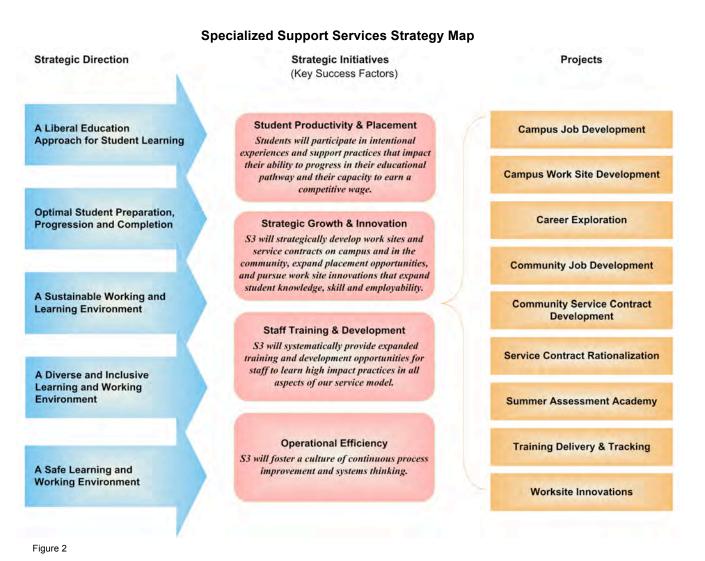
Success Factor	Indicator	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
Productivity & Placement	Average Wage *This is a factor of prevailing wage, student worker productivity, and turnover/completion rates. In general we want to see this indicator trend upward toward prevailing wage, indicating full productivity.*	$3.65	$5.21	$5.32	$5.16
Productivity & Placement	Job Placements *This indicates the number of competitive job placements for S3 student workers, a primary measure of quality, progression and completion and something that will be a primary focus moving forward. We expect to see significant growth in this indicator starting in FY13.*	--	4	3	4
Productivity & Placement	Assessments Completed *This indicates a new service and revenue stream for the program for which we plan to see sustained double-digit growth over the next several years.*	--	--	8	21
Success Factor	**Indicator**	**FY09**	**FY10**	**FY11**	**FY12**
Growth & Innovation	Student FTE *This measures our FTE contribution to the college through our non-credit vocational curriculum; we expect slow and steady growth of this indicator as we expand our program.* ** In FY09, S3 curriculum went through a significant redesign that resulted in decreased contact hours per term; this change went into effect in FY10.* ****	94	76[*]	81	86 *(est.)*
Staff Training &	Training Hours	These are new performance			

Development	*This indicator measures our quality, safety, and licensure training and development effort, which have not been consistently tracked in prior years. We will establish a baseline in FY13 and targets for subsequent years.*	indicators identified during our FY12 program review process. We will be compiling baseline data in FY13, target data for ensuing years, and prior year/historical data as available.
Operational Efficiency	Personnel Services/Revenue *This will indicate our efficiency and effectiveness in managing, training and scheduling contracted and part-time staff, with direct impact on our financial sustainability. We will establish a baseline in FY13 and targets for subsequent years.*	
Operational Efficiency	Materials & Services/Revenue *This will indicate our effectiveness and cost control in non-personnel expenditures, with direct impact on our financial sustainability. We will establish a baseline in FY13 and targets for subsequent years.*	
Operational Efficiency	% General Funding *This measures our ability to operate self-sufficiently and is dependent upon internal service contract rationalization. Our target, indicating self-sufficiency is 0%. We will establish a baseline in FY13 with incremental annual goals for subsequent years.*	
--Data not available.		

Table 1

Strategic Projects & Initiatives

By engaging the S3 team in the program review process over the past year, we have been able to bring clarity, focus and commitment to our strategic projects and initiatives for the 2012-2013 academic year, as illustrated in Figure 2 and described below.

Specialized Support Services Strategy Map

Strategic Direction	Strategic Initiatives (Key Success Factors)	Projects
A Liberal Education Approach for Student Learning	**Student Productivity & Placement** — *Students will participate in intentional experiences and support practices that impact their ability to progress in their educational pathway and their capacity to earn a competitive wage.*	Campus Job Development
Optimal Student Preparation, Progression and Completion	**Strategic Growth & Innovation** — *S3 will strategically develop work sites and service contracts on campus and in the community, expand placement opportunities, and pursue work site innovations that expand student knowledge, skill and employability.*	Campus Work Site Development / Career Exploration / Community Job Development
A Sustainable Working and Learning Environment		Community Service Contract Development
A Diverse and Inclusive Learning and Working Environment	**Staff Training & Development** — *S3 will systematically provide expanded training and development opportunities for staff to learn high impact practices in all aspects of our service model.*	Service Contract Rationalization / Summer Assessment Academy
A Safe Learning and Working Environment	**Operational Efficiency** — *S3 will foster a culture of continuous process improvement and systems thinking.*	Training Delivery & Tracking / Worksite Innovations

Figure 2

Campus Job Development supports our increasing focus in assisting participants in securing competitive employment. S3 student workers who learn the skills necessary to qualify for positions at the college can apply and compete for positions at the college. With ongoing training and supports from S3, our graduates can be valuable, productive members of the campus workforce and extraordinary examples of student success.

Campus Work Site Development is a multi-year project designed to increase S3 services to the campus in several key areas including recycling and housekeeping, increasing both productivity and training opportunities for S3 students, and enhancing capacity for campus departments while freeing department staff to focus on higher level activities.

Career Exploration is an outgrowth of the need to introduce S3 participants to opportunities beyond those typically presented to workers with developmental disabilities. Twice monthly, student workers accompanied by S3 staff, visit employer sites. Recent visits have included Bring Recycling, Albertson's, Marriott/Courtyard Hotel, and Good Samaritan Retirement/Assisted Living Center. During their visits, employers are asked questions about work requirements, tasks, and general employment related questions.

Community Job Development is an essential element of our ongoing success. With a national focus on competitive employment for individuals with disabilities as well as a local push with "Employment First," S3 is doubling its efforts to partner with state agencies to reach new milestones in the area of employment. Recent successes indicate a change in the local job market, with successful placements at Papa's Pizza, InnSight Hotel Management and Kellerman Bergensons Services at Sears and Macy's.

Community Service Contract Development is focused on deepening and expanding our relationships and service contracts with external businesses and organizations. S3 currently provides services via several external contracts. Contracts include assembly, packaging and mail preparation services. Further development in this area will create more opportunities for individuals served by S3, particularly those who need more focused training and attention.

Service Contract Rationalization involves developing standardized practices, procedures and agreements for S3 worksite service contracts on campus, which are essential to program financial self-sufficiency. We recently completed a detailed cost/benefit analysis and service contract in partnership with facilities management and planning for our sustainability program work that can serve as a basis for standardized practices moving forward.

The **Summer Assessment Academy** provides opportunity for students with developmental disabilities who are transitioning from high school to spend eight weeks at Lane Community College. During their time at Lane, they are assessed on their work skills and behaviors, their ability to follow directions, display appropriate work habits and demonstrate appropriate social interactions. Job sites include various work sites on campus in addition to other worksites based on individual interest. Summer academy students also attend a job club to learn appropriate interview skills, how to build a resume, and form connections with other departments at Lane Community College. Discussions about additional training for vocational goals also occur. With the success of the inaugural Summer Academy, S3 anticipates a growing demand for this valuable service, along with increased revenue from the delivery of this annual program.

Training Delivery and Tracking will enable us to systematically plan, schedule and track our training and development efforts.   S3 is licensed to provide vocational services by the State of Oregon and is funded through Medicaid dollars. As a result, training requirements for staff are quite stringent. Although the program consistently meets our training and licensure obligations, we have identified the need and opportunity to add structure to the process.

Worksite Innovations represent our efforts to increase productivity and opportunities for our student workers. By streamlining worksite processes, student workers have greater opportunities to learn relevant and competitive work skills. Most recently, innovations to the college's paper sorting and shredding worksites are producing higher productivity rates and more efficient service. Changes in the processing of cans and bottles for recycling are being developed at this time with the same anticipated outcomes. Innovations in our manufacturing/processing area are also being developed.

Looking Ahead

Through this process of program review, Specialized Support Services has begun to shift our focus from participation to progression and completion, utilizing strategy mapping and key performance indicator development to engage our staff in strategic planning, systems thinking, and program evaluation. Through the process, we have uncovered opportunities for improvement and further development, and developed a shared vision, language and culture of success. Developing, refining and analyzing our key performance indicators will increase S3's business intelligence and acumen, and will provide a strong foundation for growth in every aspect of the program. Particular attention will be paid to developing more formalized systems for measuring and tracking in several areas including staff training, job development, and program completion.

In addition to the direct and obvious benefits of program evaluation for S3, our experience will create the opportunity to provide mentoring to departments throughout the college who are about to embark on the Program Review process.

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S3 Students in Action