

**Gustavus Adolphus College
Registrar's Office Strategic Plan
May 1, 2009**

The Registrar's Office is responsible for maintaining students' academic records, assembling and coordinating term course offerings, scheduling academic space, registering students for classes, advising and assisting students with college academic requirements and policies, verifying degree completions, athletic eligibility, and external certifications and preparing reports for both internal and external audiences. The Registrar serves *ex officio* on virtually all faculty academic committees and plays an important role in coordinating the implementation of faculty curricular decisions.

The Registrar's Office is within the administrative and budgetary oversight of the Office of the Provost. The office is staffed by five full-time employees: The Registrar (11 month contract), Assistant Registrar, and three administrative assistants (one 30 hour/week position). The staff meets regularly to review daily responsibilities, to discuss progress on long-term projects and to jointly analyze complex issues and/or dilemmas requiring decision and action.

Section 1 – Mission, Vision, Goals

Mission - The mission of the Registrar's Office is to create, maintain, verify and preserve the integrity of academic records for students, programs and courses at Gustavus Adolphus College. The office serves three distinct audiences: students, faculty/staff and alumni.

The Registrar's Office staff strive to uphold the highest ethical and professional standards of the profession and to perform their administrative responsibilities in ways that contribute to the overall institutional mission of the College, which is "to help students attain their full potential as persons, to develop in them a capacity and passion for lifelong learning, and to prepare them for fulfilling lives of leadership and service in society."

Vision – The staff of the Registrar's Office at Gustavus Adolphus College is deeply committed to the highest ethical and professional standards of the profession and to performing their administrative responsibilities in ways that contributes to the overall institutional mission of the College. We strive for excellence in offering services as efficiently, economically and collaboratively as possible giving the greatest academic service to students, faculty/staff and alumni.

Goals –

Goal 1: Insure the accuracy and efficiency of our services and process

Goal 2: Maintain exceptional quality and confidentiality of records

Goal 3: Communicate, in a timely manner, academic and related policies to the campus community and provide accurate and consistent interpretation of these policies

Goal 4: Provide quick, personalized response to requests for transcripts, advising, research data and other appropriate information

1.2 - Support Relationships – The Registrar's Office is a service office. The staff work together offering support and assistance to the entire on-and off-campus communities. Examples include:

Academic Advising Center – Advising students about degree requirements, the degree audit, transfer coursework

Administrative Information Systems/Gustavus Technology Services – Collaborating with the staff to enhance and streamline features and procedures on the Web, Datatel-Colleague and Informer

Admission Office – Working together with the Academic Advising Office to advise and register all new students each summer

The Center for International and Cultural Education - Working with the staff to assist with new international student record evaluation and with Gustavus students planning to study abroad

Institutional Research Office – Supplying information for college data files and internal/external reports

Student Financial Aid Office and Student Accounts Office – Verifying student enrollment and registration requirements

Section 2 – Strategic Review

Internal Strengths and Weaknesses –

From the Summary for the External Review in 2004: “The Office of the Registrar is a respected and trusted part of the Gustavus Adolphus community and seems well poised to continue offering a full suite of quality registrar services to faculty, staff and students on into the future. It is doing its job well. The collegial approach taken in supporting academic advising, in facilitating new student advising, in moving administrative functions to “the Web”, in handling hundreds of student requests for information and guidance, in keeping correct oversight of foreign students, veterans and athletes, and in collaborating with the Admissions Office in serving the needs of transfer students, is a positive sign of an office that cares for the campus community and works hard to make things function well.” This continues to be the case. The office staff takes pride in offering consistent service and information to its constituencies and in working closely with other offices and individuals on campus meeting the information and retention needs of the community.

In the fall of 2000, Gustavus moved to a one-time transcript fee. In the fall of 2008, this added \$74,000 to the operating budget. Moving to the fee has created tremendous goodwill with students, particularly alumni, and increased our ability to respond to transcript requests in a timely manner.

We have embraced the technology needed to run office procedures efficiently and work closely with the Administrative Information Systems staff to enhance and improve student, faculty and staff access to and interaction with Datatel, WebAdvisor and Informer, our reporting tool.

With two exceptions, we are confident that our current practices compare favorably with our own high standards and with other national liberal arts colleges. These exceptions are the incomplete computerized student record database, which only includes online student records since 1984, and the outdated and aging microfilm archival system. Neither of these areas is acceptable to us professionally, but little can be done to upgrade the deficiencies without substantial resource allocation.

We are also reviewing the use of electronic transcripts and the transcribing of study abroad credit. More and more, the electronic delivery of academic records is being requested. In order to continue to offer acceptable service, we need to move in this direction also.

Study abroad courses with clear equivalency in the Gustavus curriculum have been assigned the same department, number and title as the Gustavus course. Courses with no equivalency in the Gustavus curriculum have been assigned various generic departmental codes, depending on their

application to general education requirements. We are exploring changing our procedures and attaching actual course titles to these courses. This would be of assistance to students applying to graduate and professional schools. This is one exception to a policy of requiring transcripts from all prior colleges that graduate and professional schools are routinely willing to make.

Barriers -

Funding, in one way or another, is the barrier to overcoming our some of our challenges. Transferring our archives to a permanent form is needed to save the records and allow us access to them online. The micro film and microfiche is deteriorating. In addition, it is getting more and more difficult to maintain the equipment used to view and print copies of the film. We have solved the issue going forward by working with ImageNow, but the archives must be saved.

At the time of the external review, it was noted that housing David Wicklund outside of the Registrar's Office was difficult. We are now "under one roof", but that has created another difficulty. Mary Gunderson, Assistant Registrar, doesn't have an office and cannot meet with students, unless she uses the Registrar's Office when it is vacant. She has not been able to do student appointments which means we meet with fewer students than we did when both the Registrar and the Associate Registrar took appointments.

During a shift of responsibilities in 2006, one administrative staff position was reduced to a full-time nine-month contract. Almost immediately it was realized that this created hardships for the staff, because the other staff members had to pick up the responsibilities on top of their own tasks. Last summer, we requested that the position be returned to a twelve-month 40 hour week. That request was turned down, but we were able to change it to a twelve-month 30 hour work week. This is an improvement, but we still feel the loss of the staff member not being in the office all day, some efficiency and service is lost.

Section 3 – Strategic Initiatives & Recommendations

Goal 1: Insure the accuracy and efficiency of our services and process

Strategic Initiative 1.1 Move toward delivery and receipt of electronic transcripts –

Strategic Initiative 1.2 Transfer pre-1984 records now on microfiche and microfilm to a permanent medium

Strategic Initiative 1.3 Convert paper forms to an electronic format on WebAdvisor

Goal 2: Maintain exceptional quality and confidentiality of records

Strategic Initiative 2.1 Complete the scanning of current and most recent student records along with working toward scanning of all filmed records

Strategic Initiative 2.2 Work with the Admission Office to scan records for new students prior to file transfer

Strategic Initiative 2.3 Develop processes to list course numbers and titles for Study Abroad and Independent Study courses on transcript

Goal 3: Communicate, in a timely manner, academic and related policies to the campus community and provide accurate and consistent interpretation of these policies

Strategic Initiative 3.1 Make better use of the Registrar's Office web site as a source of information for students

Strategic Initiative 3.2 Create an important dates and deadlines page on Registrar's Office web page.

Goal 4: Provide quick, personalized response to requests for transcripts, advising, research data and other appropriate information

Strategic Initiative 4.1 Cross train staff members to create redundancies in responsibilities

Strategic Initiative 4.2 Increase the twelve-month 30 hour/week position to twelve-month 40 hour/week

Strategic Initiative 4.3 Improve personal and professional interpersonal skills of staff through professional development

Section 4 – Assessment

Assessment for all of the office's goals happens in several ways. We receive daily feedback about our services from satisfied and unsatisfied customers. Each year, the Senior Survey gives us an accounting of how successful we were in working with our students during the course of their academic career.

Periodic external and internal reviews help us measure our ability to meet the needs of our constituency and give us a direction for improving our services. The American Association of College Registrars and Admission Officers (AACRAO) provides a review process that registrar's offices can use as a self-audit or as the basis of an internal or external audit to measure their services against an industry standard. The most recent external audit was conducted in 2004.