Step 1: Creating an Organizational Profile

Your unit’s self study begins with a description of your organization, including key information about the factors that affect how you operate and the major challenges you face. **Provide a short narrative in response to each item and, where appropriate, include documentation in the self-study report appendices to further inform the reader.**

1. Explain your unit’s mission, key goals, and key functions.

2. Highlight your unit’s core programs and services and the methods used to deliver them to students and other clientele. Identify the primary and secondary student user groups, other clientele, and/or market segments your unit attracts and serves.

3. Explain your unit’s organizational structure, including reporting relationships, distribution of responsibilities/authority, formal and informal lines of communication, and use of management and/or cross-functional work teams.

4. Describe the major technologies, equipment, and facilities that support your unit’s operation.

5. Describe the key collaborative relationships (within and beyond The Office of Student Life) that your unit is involved in and explain how these partnerships strengthen its capacity to: 1) advance student learning; 2) enhance the quality of services and programs provided; and/or 3) create greater operational efficiencies for the unit.

6. Describe your unit’s staff profile. Include a breakdown of the unit’s workforce by position type and staff diversity within each position category. In the self-study report appendices list the qualifications required for the various position categories. Describe staffing changes over the past five years and future anticipated changes. Explain the circumstances that brought about these changes and how these changes have/will affect your unit’s operations and services.

7. In the appendices showcase the contributions individual staff members make to the University’s academic enterprise (teaching, university committee work, etc.) and to their respective professions (publications, presentations, leadership roles in professional associations, etc.)

8. Provide a financial overview of your unit. Describe resource changes over the past five years and future anticipated changes. Explain what circumstances prompted these changes and how these changes have/will affect your unit’s operations and services.

9. Discuss the key program/service, operational, resource, and campus environment challenges your unit faces and explain how these conditions are and/or will be affecting unit performance.

10. Describe the overall approach your unit uses to maintain focus on organizational improvement.
Step 2: Gauging Unit Performance

The Office of Student Life is comprised of a diverse group of units that vary in size, funding structure, student/clientele focus, and function. Acknowledging these differences is essential in considering each unit’s role and the contributions they make to the Office of Student Life and the University’s success. However, regardless of the nature of a unit’s purpose and focus, there exists a fundamental set of organizational requirements that are necessary for performance excellence and the attainment of desired/valued added results. These criteria are presented here and will be used to gauge your unit’s performance relative to standards of practice.

Category 1. Unit Mission and Strategic Position

1. How does your unit uniquely contribute to and advance the University’s goals and objectives, and more specifically the Office of Student Life’s overarching goals and strategic plan initiatives?

2. What are the primary strengths of your unit, and how have these changed over time? Identify the principal factors that determine your success. What innovative programs/services/practices has your unit instituted that puts it out front in the “best practices” category? How, using existing resources, can your unit maintain and build on these strengths?

3. What aspects of your unit need the most improvement and how have these changed over time? What needs to occur, primarily within existing resources, to successfully make these improvements?

Category 2. Strategic Planning

1. What overall planning methods does your unit use to prepare for the future? Who are your key participants in these planning activities? What are your short and long term planning time horizons?

2. How does your unit collect and analyze relevant data and use this information in its planning and decision-making?

3. What are your unit’s key strategic goals and timetable for accomplishing them? How do these planned objectives address the challenges you identified in Item 9 of your Organizational Profile?

4. How do you develop and carry out action plans to achieve your key strategic objectives? How do you make decisions about the allocation/reallocation of resources to make certain that your action plans are accomplished?

Category 3. Leadership

1. What leadership practices are used to establish and promote your unit’s values, short and long term directions, and performance expectations? How are employees helped to understand how their work contributes to the success of the Office of Student Life?
2. How does unit leadership promote a work culture that encourages staff empowerment, innovation, risk taking, and organizational agility to more effectively meet the needs of students and other clientele?

3. How does unit leadership encourage organizational and staff learning?

4. How does unit leadership address individual, organizational, and environmental conditions that inhibit goal achievement?

Category 4. Programs and Services

1. What are your unit’s key program/service performance goals or targets?

2. How do your programs and services interface and support related activities/functions on the regional campuses?

3. How does your unit determine program/service requirements, expectations, and preferences of our primary/secondary student user groups and other clientele? How effective is your unit in using this information for purposes of planning, improving, and developing new programs and services?

4. How do you establish and maintain communication with students and other stakeholders? What key methods are used to assist students and/or other clientele in getting information about your unit’s program and service offerings? Where appropriate, how do you help students and/or other clientele connect who have similar interests?

5. What procedures/communication mechanisms do students/other clientele use to make a complaint? How do you ensure that complaints are resolved effectively and promptly? How are complaints aggregated and analyzed for use in improvement throughout your unit?

6. Are there any new program/service functions being planned by your unit based upon users’ current or anticipated needs? What is the rationale for initiating these programs/services? How will these new program/service functions change current unit operations? How will these new initiatives be funded/operationally supported?

7. Do any programs/service functions exist that should be deleted from your unit’s responsibilities? If so, how would such cuts be determined and how would their removal affect current operations?

8. Is there any overlap or duplication of programs/service functions with other units of the University? If so, why do these similar programs/service functions exist/what makes them different enough to justify both being sustained? Is there any place where unnecessary overlap occurs, and if so how could this be reduced?
Category 5. Diversity

1. How does your unit advance the University’s/Student Life’s diversity agenda specific to:
   - Program/service offerings
   - Recruiting, hiring, retaining, and promoting staff
   - Student learning and development
   - Staff training and development
   - Outreach and engagement activities
   - Campus and work environments

2. In the recruitment, hiring, and retention of employees, how do you ensure that staff and student employees represent the diverse ideas, cultures, and thinking of the campus community? What evidence suggests that diverse viewpoints are nurtured and valued?

Category 6. Measurement, Analysis, and Information Management

1. How do you obtain and use comparative/benchmark data to stay current with your peers and/or competitors delivering similar programs/services? What does this information tell you about your unit’s performance relative to your peers and/or competitors?

2. How do you determine students’ and/or other clienteles’ satisfaction and dissatisfaction with your unit’s performance? How do you use this information for improvement?

3. What student learning and development outcomes are associated with your unit’s program/service goals? What assessment methods are used to determine whether students have achieved these learning outcomes? What assessment information and data are gathered? What do they say about the extent to which learning outcomes are achieved? How has the assessment of these outcomes contributed to program/service improvements?

4. What specific business and/or service outcomes are associated with your unit’s operation? What assessment methods are used to determine whether these outcomes are being achieved? What assessment information and data are gathered? What do they say about the success of your operations? How has the assessment of these outcomes contributed to program/service improvements?

5. What measures and methods does your unit use to assess whether its diversity goals are being achieved?

6. How does your unit monitor compliance with the laws/other regulatory requirements that apply to your unit’s program and service responsibilities?

7. What formal and informal assessment methods and measures do you use to determine staff well being, satisfaction, and motivation? How do you use assessment findings to improve the work environment? How has your unit incorporated findings and recommendations from Work/Life Quality Report into your workplace policies and culture?
8. How does your unit make needed data and information available to faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders, as appropriate?

**Category 7. Human Resources**

_When responding to these questions the term “staff” can refer to full time, part time, and/or student employees._

1. What criterion does your unit use to accurately determine the correct number of personnel that are needed to effectively fulfill its mission and meet the needs of those it serves?

2. How do the current qualifications and number of staff facilitate or impede your ability to be a high performing unit? If your unit is understaffed, what strategies do you use to deal with these shortages and continue to meet program/service demands?

3. What strategies do you use to recruit, hire, and retain staff?

4. How are staff performance expectations established, effectively communicated, and understood? How is staff performance evaluated? How is your staff being trained and developed to keep current with changes in service delivery, technology, and user expectations?

5. How does your unit reinforce high-performance and a student and/or other clientele focus?

6. How do you manage appropriate career progression for staff throughout your organization?

**Category 8. Financial Resources**

1. What is the funding model for your unit? How has your funding structure/level changed over the past 5 years? What factors have influenced these changes? Do you anticipate adjustments in this funding model based on the challenges you have identified in Item 9 of your Organizational Profile? If so, how will your funding strategy change? What are the anticipated effects of this new funding plan on program/service delivery?

2. How are budget allocation/reallocation decisions made in your unit? What factors influence priority use of these resources?

3. How does your unit determine “value” and “value added” in your programs, services, and key functions using such indicators as:
   - The ratio between cost and quality;
   - Productivity/efficiency measures;
   - The availability of substitute services with equal or greater value;
   - An effective system of financial control and accountability within the unit;
   - Percentage of program/service funds derived from the General Fund;
The unit’s financial contribution (income generating potential) to the University and its own operating costs; and Cost comparisons (based on comparable performance standards) with other units providing similar services

Category 9. Facilities, Technology, and Equipment

1. How effectively do your unit’s current facilities/space and equipment support the work of your unit? How well do the related the Office of Student Life and/or other campus maintenance services support the work of your unit? How must these requirements change in order to keep pace with the future needs and expectations of students and/or other clientele? What strategies will you use to institute these changes?

2. How has technology been integrated into the program, service, and operating functions of your unit? How successful have these efforts been? How have you kept pace with the development of hardware, software, maintenance, and training support? What are your projected technology needs for the future? What strategies will you use to address these needs?

Category 10. Outreach and Engagement

1. What strategies does your unit use to establish, maintain, and promote positive/collaborative relations with relevant campus and external individuals and agencies? How do these initiatives benefit the surrounding community and the state of Ohio?

2. What short and long-term goals has your unit set for itself in strengthening these types of relationships?

Category 11. Legal and Ethical Responsibility

1. How do you ensure non-discriminatory, fair, and equitable treatment of staff and constituents your unit serves?

2. What is your unit’s policy/strategy for managing student/other clientele and staff member confidentiality issues? How are students/other clientele and staff members informed of these practices?

3. How is staff trained to ensure that they are knowledgeable about the laws and regulations, and professional ethics that apply to their respective job responsibilities?

4. What processes are in place for managing risks (regulatory, safety, legal) associated with your programs, services, and operations?

5. What program and service changes have occurred in your unit as a result of new laws/legal mandates? What cost/staffing/technology/facility implications have they imposed? How have these changes affected how your unit operates?
Step 3: Major Findings and Recommendations

Based on this self-assessment provide a summary of your major findings. Include in this write-up a candid evaluation of your unit's current performance, future directions, and a description of what you believe your unit needs to do to improve and be innovative in its thinking and actions. Based on this analysis, make recommendations on how your unit can best accomplish desired results.
Suggested List of Supporting Documents for Inclusion in a Unit Self-Study Report

Mission, Vision, and Values document

Organization Chart

Strategic Plan

Previous Annual Reports (past 3 years)

Previous Annual Budget Reports (past 3 years)

Cost/revenue data (past 3 years)

Assessment results/reports including:
  - Customer service surveys
  - Benchmark data
  - Data that measures progress of performance goals
  - Student learning outcomes data
  - Business/service outcomes data

Position Descriptions of Unit Staff

Summary of staff contributions to the University’s academic enterprise and their respective professions