

Indiana State University

2004 - 2005 Administrative Annual Report

Student Financial Aid

Year in Review

Achievements

As you have heard, increasing public awareness of Indiana State University's accomplishments is crucial to building student enrollment, influencing policy makers, and developing a place of pre-eminence in the Midwest. What do you consider to be your department's accomplishments for the 2006-07 year that will contribute to this effort? (Please list in priority order and limit to no more than 8.)

1. We delivered \$10,000,000 more in on-time aid by the first day of fall 2004 compared to the year before. Our production was nearly \$7,000,000 higher than in any of the past five years. This is a major accomplishment which best demonstrates the exciting change in direction of our department. Everyone won in this effort as the student's need for timely funding was fulfilled; the department staff bonded during the process and complaints about lines, frustrations and challenges were virtually eliminated for the first time. 2. Great effort was expended to put the financial liability problems of past Satisfactory Academic Progress digressions behind us as a university. Countless hours were committed by our staff in research, compilation and preparation of needed documents for the SAP Appeal. This effort continues still as new questions concerning events from two to four years ago still rise while the final review is pending. To ensure a more compliant future, we created a new Satisfactory Academic Progress policy which was approved by the Board of Trustees at the start of the fall 2004 term. 3. We encouraged students to maximize their aid potential through an integrated marketing push for filing the FAFSA this February. Based upon advertising designs developed with the assistance of the ISU Marketing Department, we used a variety of media options to reach students. Advertisements in The Statesman, interviews by the director on local television stations, and counseling seminars were complimented by table toppers in the residence halls, fliers, personal phone calls, letters, emails, and candy distribution at the Union. The effectiveness was strongly demonstrated as over 1,000 more active and potential students submitted timely FAFSA forms this year over last. This will help more ISU students to receive state of Indiana grant money in the coming academic year. 4. A totally new web site was revealed this year for our department. Every word on 80 screens was created or substantially revised to give information in a more easily understood, effective manner. Compliments have come in from students and campus employees about the improvements. Some key new focal points include the comprehensive line-by-line FAFSA instructions, current scholarship offerings, a host of free scholarship search links, and fund profiles which explain options in a consistent format. 5. Restructuring of some staff positions allowed us to increase the number of counselors by 50%. This gives more timely access to knowledgeable professionals for student aid applicants. We also replaced our full-time temporary staff with graduate students. Although the number of worker hours decreased in this change, it is believed the graduate students are able to relate well with our student body. We are attempting to strategically set their work hours for peak need times. 6. Outreach has become an important activity for our department this year. In 2003-2004 office staff conduct

Action Steps

In light of the new [strategic direction](#) of the University can you modify your action steps or develop new action steps that will aid in the implementation of the University's Strategic Indicators?

Assessment

What are two ways in which you evaluated the quality or effectiveness in your area last year? What changes did you make based on those assessments?

A primary measure of the effectiveness for our department is the amount of money delivered on-time for our students. Never before has so much funding been available when needed by ISU students. The dynamic decrease in complaints was a tangible measure of the quality of our work effort. We are very proud of the accomplishments this year and look forward to continued success in the academic year to come. We also had strong success in our training series. Although a direct testing method was not feasible due to timing at the end of the fall term, student comments about inconsistent information have declined. This was a primary goal of the training series. It was also designed to help staff build upon their knowledge base to make them more effective in service to our students. As such, four staff members have demonstrated the abilities needed to be promoted to higher positions within the office this year. When the training series continues later this year a more quantitative testing method will likely be employed

Future Goals

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Please describe the progress you have made on these action steps.

EM: Our renewal of student focus made a very positive impact on our student body this year. Many students have noticed the difference and are recognizing the progressive effort we are offering to help them. Although some upperclassmen still hold firm to the memories of traumatic treatment they have received in the past, students who are only familiar with the New Office of Student Financial Aid see a group of people committed to their success. We will continue to build on this initial success in the coming year. CE: We are reaching out. Contrary to past efforts, this year we have visited more high schools, traveled with Admissions and Alumni Affairs and made our helping presence known to a variety of audiences. This also included information sharing in The Indianapolis Star, WTHI television, WTWO television and The Statesman newspaper. Our director and a counselor, Janis Coopridier, were trainers on financial aid issues for regional high school counselors. We plan to continue developing into a proactive information source for our community on higher education access. TCH: Progress has been unfortunately slow this year on the electronic communication initiatives. The amount of time necessary to address past problems like the Satisfactory Academic Progress Appeal, older audit reviews and conducting training intent on bringing all staff into understanding of basic compliance issues has strained our ability to move proactively forward in electronic initiatives. It is hoped this will change in the coming year, but older issues still require additional attention to bring them to conclusion. Assistance from Information Technology will be key in determining our ability to address desired electronic communication options.