Strategic Planning Process at Plattsburgh State
Student Life Interest Group

Introductory Statement: The issues addressed in this document encompass the complete range of experiences that a student has during his/her tenure at Plattsburgh State. There is considerable overlap with other Interest Groups, specifically Facilities, Enrollment and Technology. The first section following the introduction highlights two strategic frameworks/ideas that the Student Life Interest Group would like to propose for consideration. The remaining sections of the document consist of the information/ideas gathered from students and colleagues related to the overall topic of “Student Life.” These specific ideas will be important to explore once the overall strategic plan is set for the campus. Information was gathered at four separate forums – a) a general session for the campus on Friday, February 13 at which 33 students, faculty and staff attended; b) a meeting with 11 Presidents from the different Residence Hall Councils; c) a Student Association Senate meeting which had approximately 45 students in attendance; and d) a second general session for the campus on Friday, March 26 at which 8 faculty and staff members were present.

Proposed Strategic Frameworks/Ideas

A) The Plattsburgh Experience – phase in an experiential component to each student’s academic program (choices may include: internship/co-op, research with faculty, clinical/field experience, study abroad experience, significant leadership experience, significant community service experience, senior project, etc.). This “Experience” required of all students will create a niche in the market place for Plattsburgh State.

B) Student Empowerment/Advocacy on behalf of students – The focus of this framework is on “student success.” Create a mechanism/function on campus that encourages students to be engaged (at their chosen level), and to voice their ideas/issues/concerns, create change, etc. Be vigilant and creative in keeping students informed and involving them on matters that affect their lives, e.g., fee increases, policy changes, etc. Identify a position (faculty or staff) on campus to serve as an advocate/ombudsman for students.

Ideas Generated at the Student Life Forums

A) Ideas affecting the overall experience of students at Plattsburgh – with the objective of student retention and providing quality experiences:
* Student/Faculty/Staff engagement – provide structured opportunities/spaces that facilitate these interactions; create a seamless living learning environment by incorporating the academic experience with student space (go to the students – e.g., residence halls).
* Create a structured first year experience for new students with the goal of “student success” – learning communities, housing options, coordinated services/experiences, common experiences, coordinated individual support.
* Common experiences for all students – communicate and take pride in our history, as well as establish new traditions that engage both new and returning students (e.g., academic ceremonies that are student oriented – not faculty oriented; students interested in hiring a commencement speaker with name recognition, social activities that bring students together in a safe and appropriate manner, change current programs to entice more student involvement – Homecoming, athletic events).
* Communicate high expectations for students in all aspects of their experiences (e.g., academic excellence, academic honesty, residence hall standards, civility, commitment to service, etc.).
* Recognize, support, and create new efforts in the Art/Music/Theatre programs to enhance the concept of Plattsburgh State being the “Cultural Center” of the larger community. Create new opportunities for students to engage in these efforts (e.g., summer programs)
* Create housing options that meet the needs and interests of the following groups: traditional age students, older students, graduate students, students with similar academic/social interests, married students, etc.
* Respond to student concerns related to daily living (e.g., parking, food service, laundry facilities, bathroom facilities, etc.)
* Enhance/support the Greek Organizations on campus – elevate the profile by actively supporting (faculty, staff, community) these groups/student members.
* Create a “Leadership” minor for students to enroll in that builds off the existing programs being offered in the Center for Greek Affairs and Leadership Development.
* Coordinate course offerings based on demand for seats (i.e., enough courses and seats that meet the needs of our current and incoming students) – work with Registrar, Deans, Dept. Chairs.
* Create new programs and course offerings that meet the interests of current and prospective students. Review current course offerings (especially non-major) to see if they have outlived their usefulness.
* Create a pool of scholarship money that students can apply for once they are here – e.g., for students who get into Honor Societies, for “most improved” students – in terms of g.p.a. increase, etc.
* Hold cost of education (including all fees, room, board, etc.) constant for the four years. Only raise fees/cost for the incoming group of new students.

**B) Ideas relating to services and facilities engaged/experienced by students:**
* Coordinate greater information sharing between offices so that proper referrals are made to students (e.g., being able to inform students which office takes care of which matters).
* Continue to update and create services that provide greater access and flexibility for the end user (e.g., virtual services, flexible office hours) so that the College meets the demands of all the different groups of students (i.e., adult students, students with child care concerns, underprepared students, etc.)
* Continue to take pride in the care and attention given to individual students – even as we try to increase effectiveness of services we cannot lose sight of the importance of human connections.
* Create and provide a comprehensive career development component to every student’s experience. Career development needs to be an ongoing, multi-year (i.e., length of the student’s time here) process that involves advisors, faculty, and the appropriate support services (including the latest technological expertise/software). Provide greater networking to connect graduating students with employers.
* Coordinate comprehensive services/outreach to graduate students (e.g., assistantships, orientation, activities).
* Coordinate comprehensive services/outreach to International Students.
* Enhance recreation opportunities for all students. Provide appropriate access for non-intercollegiate athletes to facilities. Update existing or create new facilities to provide recreation opportunities (e.g., lighted fields behind Memorial, a climbing wall, indoor tennis, using kayaks in the pool, a skate park, etc.). Expand/enhance opportunities for students through the “Adirondack Experience” program.
* Maintain a campus environment (i.e., facilities and grounds) that fosters a sense of pride in our campus. The following examples were provided: crumbling brickwork in certain buildings, desks and tables in bad repair in classrooms, grass in need of being planted, flower beds needing attention, etc.

**C) Ideas relating to the role of Faculty/Staff:**
* Create a comprehensive and on-going orientation and training program for all faculty and staff. This is needed in order to raise awareness of existing and new services/programs (both academic and non-academic) offered to students on campus. This will enhance services delivered and academic advising to students, as well as dispel misperceptions and assumptions that exist within any organization. This should be incorporated into yearly planning days or offered at the beginning of each academic year.
* Utilize on-going planning and assessment efforts on campus, work toward creating a campus wide agreed-upon level of “quality services” delivered to students. Clear priorities need to be communicated to all personnel who work with students.
* Create and communicate a consistent statement/message that sets a high level of expectation for all around performance when working with students. Provide training to managers and supervisors on the importance of modeling a high level of performance.
* Create and fund both faculty development and staff development programs and opportunities for all personnel with the goals of professional growth and providing better services/experiences for students.