

Cornell College
Departmental / Program Assessment Plan
Assessment Project Progress Report

Department / Program:	Admissions and Financial Aid
Person Submitting this Form:	Todd White
Date:	June 5, 2011

Brief Overview of the Assessment Project: *(refer to original Assessment Project Outline)*

- *Outcomes you're assessing.*
- *Questions your project is attempting to answer.*

The Enrollment Services Office has identified 3 priorities for assessment: an evaluation of the Strategic Plan for its effectiveness in identifying and attracting a well rounded and diverse student body – and in particular looking at our ability to help students, parents, and counselors make an informed decision concerning the “fit” to the Cornell Community. A critical piece in this assessment is to evaluate our Campus Visit programs effectiveness in engaging prospective students and families and influencing their decisions to attend Cornell. While we have had success in a few key areas of recruitment we must evaluate the opportunities and challenges facing Cornell and identify strategies to achieve enrollment and revenue growth during the next five years and beyond.

Brief Project Update:

- *What have you accomplished on your assessment project this year?*

Cornell's enrollment services office had not completed a comprehensive Strategic Plan since 2001-2002. Much of the year was spent updating this document. While much of the work is complete there are a few project plans still being finalized. With our 2011-2012 Strategic Plan in place we are now in position to begin to systematically review the effectiveness of each major initiative within the division. This summer will be spent gathering initial data concerning Search; Prospect Conversion and Yields over an array of variables; Communications Plans; Travel initiatives; and the Recruitment of High Ability Students and Scholars, High Talent students in Athletics and Fine Arts, Students of Color, and High Ability to Pay Students. Admissions also surveys each visiting student following their visit to campus and we are in the process of redesigning our survey to capture data and information to be used during assessment about the ways in which we are engaging students and families during their visit and what decision making information are families learning during their visits. With careful review of the initial data this summer we hope to identify additional opportunities and challenges to achieve enrollment and revenue growth.

Evidence Gathered:

- *Please outline in detail the information gathered for your assessment project.*
- *This information may include student work, surveys, focus groups, existing enrollment information, etc. Include any information gathered that will inform your assessment work.*

The admissions office will gather much of their information during the summer of 2011. We plan to review detailed conversion and yield data from the past 3 years to help understand our enrollment successes (record academic quality, geographic and ethnic diversity) and perhaps more important areas that have been particularly challenging for the College (net revenue). We will evaluate geographic and ethnic diversity, academic quality, majors and interests, etc. With significant increases in the discount rate during the past 3 years we must also look carefully at our admission and financial aid awarding practices, student engagement, staff relationship development, and more effective ways to attract the desired students. The College also saw a significant decrease in inquiries from 2010 to 2011 and we must address initiatives to increase our inquiry pool so that we are able to attract the quality and breadth of students that we are interested in.

Year Three - Interpreting Evidence / Crafting a Plan:

The goal for Year Three of the College's assessment cycle is to analyze and interpret the evidence gathered for purposes of enhancing educational practice. What are your plans for the coming year? Please include plans for ongoing data collection as well as analysis, interpretation, and plans for using your assessment results.

Each summer the admissions office completes a thorough review of data related to enrollment of new students. What the College learns this summer in the initial assessment and data collection should provide additional data points to evaluate each year as we move forward. Combining these new data points with historical data (academics, sources, diversity, etc.) the College should be able to identify successful strategies for additional growth. The office may also find gaps in our communications, strategies, or policies which will provide us with additional information necessary for decision making and planning.

Not just during the 3rd year but over the next 2-3 years the enrollment division will be able to continue to evaluate, assess, and respond to this critical data that we are collecting.

Involvement:

- *Who has been involved in this project?*
- *How well informed and involved are members of the department/office?*

Todd White, Director of Admissions, has been most involved in this process this year though others will begin to play a larger role during the coming year. Jonathan Stroud, Sharon Grice, Karen Kleinsmith, and others will begin to be involved in the data collection and evaluation process.

Challenges / Assistance:

- *What challenges has your department/office encountered to date with your assessment project?*
- *What assistance/support do you need? From whom?*

The enrollment division is fortunate to have a wealth of data to review and analyze – however because of the nature of the data and our cycle – the summer is the best time to collect and evaluate this data. The summer of 2011 will be busy in the office reviewing data and we may find that additional support is needed.

As the office redesign's our survey tools for visits we will certainly need assistance in developing the key questions to best assess the visit experience for families.

Feel free to add additional comments or supporting documents to this report. Upon completion, please submit the report to Becki Elkins, Box 2628.

Your Signature

Date

Department Chair Signature

Date