

Category 6:
Supporting Institutional Operations

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6C1 - Key student and administrative support service processes

Eastern Michigan University is committed to a University-wide focus on learning as its core mission. EMU maximizes educational opportunities and personal and professional growth for students from diverse backgrounds through its array of programs in a student-focused learning environment that extends beyond the University boundaries. EMU's dedication to excellence in academics requires a commitment to high-quality support service processes. Six key processes support student learning, student achievement, and student and stakeholder success. These process areas are defined as:

- *Teaching and Learning*, which embraces learning communities and emphasizes learning outcomes, commitment to retention, and higher graduation rates.
- *Student Experiences*, which encourages engagement of on- and off-campus students through

programs and services, emphasizing EMU's hallmark of human diversity.

- *Information Technology and University Infrastructure*, which focuses on improving teaching and learning through information technology, emphasizing high-quality support systems and processes.
- *Enrollment*, which focuses on increasing enrollments, emphasizing institution-wide retention.
- *Community Engagement and Public Service*, which focuses on public service through regional partnerships and alliances, emphasizing integration of service-learning into institution-wide curricula.
- *Facilities and Grounds*, which emphasizes functionality, maintenance, and aesthetics that enhance the commitment to teaching and learning.

Within each process area are operations that support the needs of EMU's students and other stakeholders. A representative list follows (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Key Processes and Operations

Key Process Area	Operations
Teaching and Learning	Academic Advising, Academic Projects Center, Career Services, Center for Adaptive Technology and Education, Computer Labs, Continuing Education, Counseling Services, Faculty Development Center, First Year Center, Halle Library, Health Services, Holman Learning Center, Math Lab, Satellite Centers, Student Academic Support Services, Student Success Office, Writing Center
Student Experiences	Arts and Entertainment Program, Child Care Services (Children's Institute), Commuter Student Services/Commuter Central, Dining Services, Diversity Programs, Greek Life, Health Education Program, Housing, Intercollegiate Athletics, Leadership and Student Involvement, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Office, New Student and Transition Programs, Office of International Students, Ombudsman's Office, Public Safety, Recreation/Intramurals, Student Disability Services (Access Office), Student Government, Student Judicial Services, Student Media, Student Organizations, Student Success Office
Information Technology and University Infrastructure	Accounting, Bookstore, Budget Office, Cashier's Office, Computer Refresh Program, Computer Store, Continuous Improvement and Planning Office, Electronic Classroom Support, Human Resources, Institutional Research and Information Management, Legal Affairs, Mailroom, Office of Diversity and Affirmative Action, Office of Research Development, Parking, Payroll, Purchasing and Receiving, ResNet, Risk Management, Service EMU, Student Business Services, Technology Help Desk, Telecommunications, University Communications
Enrollment	Admissions, Financial Aid, Records and Registration, Retention Office, University Marketing
Community Engagement and Public Service	Alumni Relations, Charter Schools Office, Community Involvement, Convocation Center, Development Office, Eaglecrest Golf and Conference Center, Government Relations, Center for Corporate Training
Facilities and Grounds	Health and Safety Office; Physical Plant Operations (Planning, Custodial, Grounds, Maintenance)

In order to achieve EMU's mission and afford each student the optimal opportunity for success, students and other stakeholders must be provided with the appropriate support services that enhance the learning environment and reduce barriers to learning.

6C2 - Reinforcing EMU's key student and administrative support services processes and systems in Category 1 and Category 2

EMU's key student and administrative support services processes and systems identified in 6C1 are tied to the EMU Mission Statement and continuous-improvement initiatives. These support services are central to Category 1 and Category 2 through their link to the provision of a student-focused learning environment and their contribution to EMU's economic well-being. They are designed to support faculty and staff performance in ways that enhance the quality, depth, and vibrancy of student learning. Every division's support services are aligned with the primary mission of the University.

6P1 - Identifying student support service needs

Support service needs of students are identified through multiple venues using both formal and informal paths. EMU uses such national standardized assessments as the NSSE and CIRP to contribute to the identification of student support service needs. Departments and units across the University use a variety of methods ranging from surveys and focus groups to suggestion boxes and informal feedback. Most offices rely on more than one method and analyze all of the information collected to add, change, or eliminate support services. In addition, some offices have multiple years of data showing trends to inform their decisions.

Through an AQIP Project focused on high-quality service delivery, the Office of Financial Aid identified support service needs not only through surveys of students served but also through surveys of office personnel. Using this information, the Office of Financial Aid Process Improvement Team **I**dentified problems, **D**eveloped potential solutions, **E**valuated these solutions, and in appropriate cases **A**cted to change existing procedures or policies (IDEA Model, Figure 5.1).

Another approach includes placing students on key University committees and councils to allow them to express their support service needs directly. For example, the EMU Student Leader Group, which is composed of student representatives from twelve major student organizations, serves on the Student Affairs Committee of the Board of Regents. This group works to define a common student agenda and serves as an advisory group to both the Vice President for Student Affairs and the President. Group members present position papers to reflect their priorities and support needs. EMU has also included student representatives on such committees as the search for EMU's next president and the search for the Executive Director of Public Safety, providing a voice for students to share their needs. Including students on multiple, high-level University committees, task forces, and advisory boards (Appendix A) has provided the University with a direct conduit for obtaining compelling information on student support needs.

Informal feedback is also a means of identifying student needs in various offices and departments throughout the University. This typically occurs when a student is engaged for a purpose other than to identify student support needs, yet the interaction results in the presentation of a need that gets passed along to the appropriate source.

6P2 - Identifying key stakeholder administrative support service needs

Administrative support service needs of faculty, staff, and administrators, along with other key stakeholder groups, are identified by proactive, reactive, and comparative methods. Proactively, departments and units use advisory councils, committees, collaboration, and faculty/staff/student feedback. Collaboration among departments and administrative offices serves as a key method for not only identifying needs, but also incorporating the changes that address those needs. Complaints and complaint-driven surveys are reactive methods that are often used to identify administrative support service needs. Benchmarking and national standards are also used to compare the institution to other entities as a means of identifying, revising, and defining needs.

Asking multiple constituencies to define their administrative support service needs and listening

to their ideas, concerns, and recommendations have been critical to successfully providing what is required. Examples of key constituencies that provide information on an ongoing basis are such groups as the Board of Regents, President's Strategic Operations Council, Provost's Council, Faculty Council, Senior Administrators' Meetings, Alumni Association Board, AAUP, AFSCME, UAW 1975, UAW 1976, Student Affairs Strategy Council, Student Leader Group, Retention Council, and AQIP Project Teams.

In addition, EMU has used town hall meetings and open forums on a variety of issues to better understand the public's needs. For example, town hall meetings are scheduled each semester to address safety and security needs and concerns.

The Faculty Development Center, a key support service for faculty and staff, uses a multi-faceted approach to identifying needs. Every three years the Center conducts a web-based survey of all faculty, lecturers, administrators, and adjunct faculty regarding faculty development needs in teaching, research, and technology categories. The Faculty Development Center Advisory Committee solicits input from its colleagues just prior to the annual planning retreat. At the end of each of the Center-sponsored workshops, seminars, and semester-long programs, the participants also complete an evaluation that asks for other programs they would like offered. In addition, the Center staff tracks the general nature of all the individual consultations held with faculty to determine patterns among those as well. Finally, the Center receives emails weekly from faculty with suggestions and questions, which are evaluated for feasibility.

Several new methods of gathering information from EMU employees about their work-life quality and needs have been implemented by Human Resources within the past six months. They include the following:

1. Bringing in PMP Leadership Consultants to work with the executive and administrative levels of the institution. Part of that process is that each participant must complete a self-evaluation, must request that others evaluate him/her on leadership qualities, and must identify needs by evaluating the EMU work environment through a "Perception Survey" of the institution.
2. Participating, for the first time, in the National Employee Attitudes Survey (NEAS) administered yearly by Business and Labor Reports (BLR). This survey allowed employees to assess EMU on four major categories (i.e., Teamwork, Communication, the Organization, and the Employee's Personal Development). The survey was completed in April, 2008, by 660 non-academic staff, and the results will be utilized to identify training needs and other necessary changes.
3. Formalizing exit interviews with departing employees. These are now being conducted by the Office of Diversity and Affirmative Action. The results will be examined regularly to identify trends in departures and make recommendations for changes/improvements in those areas.

Figure 6.2 shows key methods used by several departments and offices across the University. These departments and offices are representative of the six key process areas identified in 6C1. As indicated in Figure 6.2, it is typical for an operation to use more than one method to determine support service needs. For example, Human Resources Department managers collaborate with the bargaining units to identify support needs of specific employee groups. Moreover, they utilize such other methods as web surveys, exit interviews, and an advisory committee.

6P3 – Managing student and administrative support service processes

EMU routinely collects data on students through benchmark studies, satisfaction surveys, and focus groups. In reviewing the data gathered during interviews with some representative departments, trends were identified that spanned the key process areas and operations (6C1). Nationally recognized surveys, such as CIRP and NSSE, as well as the University's Student Learning Evaluation (SLE), support EMU in understanding students and developing services and programs to address their needs. For example, the Department of Public Safety reviews data from surveys, focus groups, and open forums to determine trends in how safe EMU students feel on campus and uses input from student organizations in developing and refining those programs and services. Satisfaction and utilization data are most commonly employed to determine whether the needs of students and key stakeholders continue to be met.

As part of EMU's AQIP Academic Advising Project, students and advisors were surveyed separately to determine the support service needs of both students

Figure 6.2: Sample of Methods to Identify Needs

Department/ Office	Key Process Area	Methods to Identify Needs					
		Reactive Needs Survey	Complaints	Bench- marking, National Standards	Collaboration	Internal Staff Feedback	Advisory Council/ Committee
Computer Lab and Help Desk	Teaching and Learning				x	x	
Faculty Development Center	Teaching and Learning	x		x	x	x	x
Halle Library	Teaching and Learning	x		x	x		x
Human Resources	Information Technology and University Infrastructure	x	x	x	x	x	
Physical Plant/ Facilities	Facilities and Grounds		x		x		
Public Safety	Student Experience		x	x		x	
Purchasing	Information Technology and University Infrastructure		x		x	x	

and advisors. The results are being used by the EMU Retention Council to implement improvements in the delivery of academic advising from the time students enter the University through their graduation and to determine effective processes to integrate career advising. Analysis of data from the Housing and Dining Services Resident Survey (conducted annually for the past 18 years) is used to make informed decisions regarding program changes. Student satisfaction information is systematically gathered and assessed in Records/Registration, Financial Aid, Student Accounting, Freshmen Academic Advising, academic administrative units, and the academic support services in the Holman Learning Center.

Feedback from students and key stakeholders is often used to determine needs and to develop or refine processes. For example, Human Resources consultants currently rely on informal feedback from hiring authorities who use the online application system to identify their needs and concerns. Plans exist within HR to add a suggestion/comment message to the hiring authority web page, similar to that which exists on the applicant web page.

Review of best practices and adherence to national professional standards, for example, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

(NCATE), the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), and the American College Health Association (ACHA), also help to ensure that the needs of students and key constituents are being met. Many administrative departments have advisory committees that include students and faculty to provide another venue for feedback (Appendix A).

Processes are documented on the macro level in the Board of Regents Policy Manual and the University's Procedures Manual. A comprehensive review and revision of the Board Policy Manual has been ongoing since 2002. Processes and policies are also documented for students in such publications as the EMU Student Handbook and the Guide to Student Involvement. In general, most departments maintain policy manuals, procedures manuals, and/or handbooks although no system exists either to require that processes be documented or to ensure that regular review and updates occur.

Innovation, knowledge-sharing, and empowerment are encouraged through regular staff meetings, a degree of autonomy in decision making, involvement in the development and revision of processes, professional development, and networking opportunities within individual units and divisions. For example, each month a different group of

Halle Library employees prepares the agenda and conducts the staff meeting. In the Physical Plant, information sharing is enhanced by the inclusion of representatives from Public Safety and University Housing in biweekly staff meetings. A formal rotation process in the Human Resources department enables staff to attend professional-development activities on a routine basis. Such University divisions as Student Affairs and Enrollment Management utilize divisional committees at each level of their organizations (administrative, professional/technical, and clerical) to focus on information sharing and encourage new ideas. Academic Affairs holds monthly meeting of deans and department heads. Rewards and recognitions, such as the Faculty and Tutor Appreciation Awards, annual "Innovagency" grants from Student Affairs to implement innovative ideas, and the Distinguished Faculty Awards, also serve to encourage innovation.

Leadership teams at each level of the University manage key processes on a day-to-day basis, but with minimal standardization across the University. Continuous-improvement initiatives at EMU will continue to promote standardization and University-wide support service processes.

6P4 - Using information and results to improve support services

An example of the collection of utilization data and using them to support campus community needs is found in the Halle Library. When a book, journal, or monograph is requested by faculty and purchased by the library, the library tracks the usage of that resource. When the time for renewal of a journal approaches, library staff can determine whether it should be renewed or not, based upon its utilization. Processes used by the help desk include collecting data on client satisfaction, which are then used to modify help-desk-employee procedures and training.

While large quantities of data are collected, the timing of such collection is not always consistent from year to year at either an institutional level or a department level, and the data are not regularly shared with constituencies across the University. This limitation has been identified, and measures will be implemented to place more focus on retaining and trending data over time to enhance the ability to use these data more effectively for continuous improvement.

6P5 - Measures of student and administrative support services

The University analyzes a number of measures related to student and administrative support processes. Benchmarking is performed against such national surveys as NSSE and the CIRP New Freshman Study. This allows EMU to compare results with peer institutions.

The most common measures currently collected and analyzed are satisfaction and utilization data. Satisfaction data are most often collected in annual surveys of students in order to find areas of concern in services offered. Utilization data are collected annually as part of annual-review activities, and in smaller increments, such as statistics of participation in a specific program. The analysis of these data is most often performed as part of the annual-review process and is used to plan changes in services for the next year.

Most support services utilize more than one measure and collect data from several instruments. Figure 6.3 provides a sample of departments/offices from 6C1 and shows the various methods used by each to collect data. For such operations as Physical Plant and Department of Public Safety, data collected are typically in the form of responses to immediate problems rather than through a formal process conducted along a given timeframe.

6R1 - Results of student support services processes

While formal University processes for sharing and applying results have been limited, several departments, colleges, and divisions have used the data collected to review and improve student support services. As a result of the Housing and Dining Resident Survey, meal plans were changed so that students are allocated a specific number of meals depending on the plan they select. These meals can be obtained at any time during the day instead of only at specific times as in the past. Housing and Dining also conducted an analysis to determine the price points for certain services and amenities, along with the value students placed on accommodations in the residence halls. The results of this analysis were used to determine the housing-rates schedule for 2008-09, reflecting the development of several new price packages that include different amenities within each plan. The Holman Learning Center has incorporated

Figure 6.3: Sample of Measures

Department/Office	Data-Collection Method						
	Customer Surveys	Customer Comments	Focus Groups	Utilization Data	Budget Data	Accounts Receivables	Benchmarking
Academic Advising	x	x		x	x	x	x
Computer Labs				x	x		
Faculty Development Center	x	x		x	x		x
Financial Aid		x		x	x		x
Halle Library	x	x		x	x		x
Help Desk				x			
Holman Learning Center	x	x		x	x		x
Housing	x	x	x	x	x		x
Human Resources					x		x
Physical Plant					x		
Public Safety	x	x	x				
Purchasing		x		x	x		x
Student Business Services					x	x	x

utilization data, i.e., how many students request which academic support services, to guide their decisions for recruiting and hiring tutors and supplemental-instruction leaders.

An AQIP project completed in Fall 2007 focused on collecting and analyzing data from students to determine the problems they felt were inherent in the current academic-advising system. Faculty and staff who serve as academic advisors were also surveyed. These data have been utilized by the Retention Committee to recommend implementation of major processes and systems including:

- Creation of a coordinated advising center with representatives from Career Services, Financial Aid, and General Education.
- Formation of an Advising Coordination Team.
- Implementation of measures to increase the use of the Curriculum Advising and Program Plans.
- Implementation of a University-wide Academic-Advisor Training Plan.

In a second AQIP project, the Financial Aid Office used the results of a student survey on the quality of customer service to determine points of service that students rated as less than satisfactory. Finding a major concern on the response to phone inquiries,

the Financial Aid Office worked with their third-party vendor to train staff to improve the quality of their phone responses.

Numerous other student support services processes have been addressed and improved based on the results of data that have been collected and analyzed from such internal and external sources as the Department of Education. A few additional process results to note include:

- Implemented wireless technology in all classroom buildings and major facilities on campus.
- Secured additional funding to hire 1.5 FTE new mental-health counselor positions.
- Added new security cameras to various locations on campus.
- Implemented a text-message emergency-alert system campus-wide.
- Enhanced the University SEEUS safety-escort service, expanding hours of coverage.
- Developed a financial-leveraging system through Noel-Levitz for Financial Aid.
- Created the Academic Projects Center.
- Implemented an online graduation audit.
- Added Service EMU, a one-stop service center for student business-services needs housed in the Student Center.

- Revised Fast Track early orientation program from a two-a-day to a one-a-day program with added program features.

6R2 - Results of administrative support processes

EMU has utilized data to determine opportunities to create efficiencies in administrative support services. The Faculty Development Survey conducted every three years by the Faculty Development Center is one example. The 2005 survey represented all subdivisions of faculty, lecturers, and administrators. They identified the need for programs on teaching as the highest priority with an emphasis on making learning more meaningful and significant through actively engaging students. Research interests were strong, but among a smaller group of responders. These results will be compared with the results of the survey just conducted in April 2008.

The Faculty Development Advisory Committee, with input from students, department heads, and faculty/lecturers, developed the strategic plan for the Faculty Development Center. A sample of some of the Strategic Initiatives and the results are shown in Figure 6.4.

A sample of other results for improving support services includes:

- Implemented web-time entry for payroll processing.
- Implemented purchasing-card reconciliation process and card-use auditing process.
- Implemented online work-order system.
- Use of Interest-Based Bargaining for some of the union-contract negotiations.
- Replaced key locks with key-card system for after-hours entry to all major University buildings.
- Reorganized Human Resources into administrative teams of generalists and specialists assigned to specific University divisions and units.
- Developed a University branding campaign to define and market EMU to its public.
- Enhanced technology to achieve high levels of service to all stakeholders.
- Used a Computer Refresh Program for computer replacements for faculty and staff.

6R3 - Comparison of results with other higher-education institutions

Comparison with other higher-education institutions takes place through standardized surveys (3R5). One example is the benchmarking by the Halle Library for

Figure 6.4: FDC-Planned Initiatives and Progress Report

Initiative	Progress (as of April 2008)
Continue to enhance and strengthen faculty teaching programs (according to survey and national trends).	New Beginnings had 115 participants; New Faculty Orientation-27 faculty; 13 year-long Fellows; SOTL symposium- 5 seminars totaling 65 people.
Develop an overall approach and multiple forms of programs to orient and retain new faculty.	On course in August: 25 EMU participants; On course in May - 25 EMU participants. AQIP project written and accepted. Consultations and mid-term assessments increased.
Develop and implement a plan for long-term fiscal solvency and growth.	Still in discussion with Academic HR, but progress being made.
Recruit and train four additional Faculty Development Fellows who will serve with the program for an additional two years.	Plan developed; AQIP project accepted—funded at \$47,000. Additional grants currently being written; \$3 million endowment request placed in capital campaign.
Recruit and train four additional Faculty Development Fellows who will serve with the program for an additional two years.	Three new Fellows now participating. Areas of interest: Adjuncts, On-Course, and Interdisciplinarity.
Conduct a faculty/instructor/administrator survey and create a new strategic plan.	Survey completed. Strategic Plan to be completed by July 1, 2008.
Continue to create opportunities to provide collaborative events with other universities in the area.	Collaborated with WCC to co-sponsor On-Course workshops— one in 2007 and another in 2008. Invited faculty from 10 other universities.

total library expenditures per FTE student (Figure 6.5).

EMU is in the process of reviewing and updating its list of peer institutions in conjunction with the University’s strategic-planning process. The peer data will be used to benchmark and build comparative data for support service priorities that can complement the data collected by individual operations to establish need for and effectiveness of key process areas (Figure 6.1).

6I1 - Methods of improvement of current processes and systems

During the 2007-2008 academic year, the University implemented a new strategic-planning process framed in continuous improvement that is intended to support ongoing review of processes, systems, services, and policies at the unit, department, divisional, and institutional levels (8P1; Figure 8.2).

In an effort to align key University processes, five new councils have been created, which have an underlying goal of identifying and implementing changes in systems and processes to enhance student and administrative support services. These include the Institutional Strategic Budget Council, Continuous Improvement Operating Council, Enrollment Management Council, Institutional Strategic Planning Council, and Retention Council.

6I2 - Identification and communication of improvement priorities

Based on processes and results identified above, these will be addressed in future portfolios.

