One Vision: Improving Military and Veteran Student Success Through Integrated Planning

Sheri Jones, Senior Vice President, Strategy & University Services

Jacquie Furtado, Associate Vice President, Strategy Management & Engagement

Heather Albin, Strategy Manager, Military & Veteran Services

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INTRODUCTIONS

Ashford University is an online university with approximately 42,000 students enrolled.

Combined we have:
- 35+ years in higher education
- Expertise in all university departments
- 12+ years of strategic planning
- Prior experience working with military entities
- Associate faculty member

Total Enrollment by Military - Fall 2015

- Military (27%)
- Non-Military (73%)

http://assessment.ashford.edu/behind-numbers
In 2013, Ashford University needed to move from silos to a singular plan.
MILITARY VETERAN STUDENT TASKFORCE

STRUCTURE:
- Admissions
- Academic Affairs
- Career & Alumni Services
- Military Education Outreach
- Student Affairs
- Student Services

MISSION:
The mission of the Military and Veteran Student Taskforce is to serve our military and veteran students and their families through collaborative implementation of innovative initiatives, policies and community partnerships to help these students achieve their educational goals.

Though everyone was working towards goals, we needed to refresh and align efforts.
STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK
BALANCED SCORECARD

STEP 1  DEVELOP THE STRATEGY

STEP 2  TRANSLATE THE STRATEGY

STEP 3  ALIGN THE ORGANIZATION

STEP 4  PLAN OPERATIONS

STEP 5  MONITOR & LEARN

STEP 6  TEST & ADAPT
WHY BALANCED SCORECARD

PROS

Provides a balanced approach with focus on employees and internal processes to drive student success.

Better illustrates cause and effect between goals.

Allows for easy alignment.

Creates a culture of continuous improvement.
HIGH LEVEL GOALS:
- Enhance the student experience
- Build and maintain strong external partnerships
- Improve flexibility of operating processes
- Enable and require continuous learning opportunities among staff and faculty

VISION:
To be recognized within the higher education community as a military friendly institution.
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE MILITARY FRIENDLY?

In order to measure the vision we had to look externally.

In particular, we reviewed surveys like Military Times' Best for Vets.

Additionally, we turned to co-curricular program review using the Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) self-assessment guide.
A BIT MORE ON THE CAS SELF ASSESSMENT

Founded in 1979, the Council for Advancement for Standards in Higher Education is the preeminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs.

1. Mission
2. Program
3. Organization & Leadership
4. Human Resources
5. Ethics
6. Law, Policy & Governance
7. Diversity, Equity & Access
8. Institutional & External Relations
9. Financial Resources
10. Technology
11. Facilities & Equipment
12. Assessment & Evaluation

http://www.cas.edu/
INCORPORATING BENCHMARKING INTO PLANNING

1. DEFINE A MISSION, VISION AND SUPPORTING GOALS → 2. DETERMINE EXTERNAL BENCHMARK SOURCES → 3. COMPLETE REVIEW AGAINST CURRENT STRATEGY

4. DEFINE EXISTING GAPS → 5. EVOLVE YOUR STRATEGY
LESSONS LEARNED

#1 Remember you are already doing great work!

#2 Have all the key players in the room.

#3 Maintain focus on what you can control.
A FEW SUCCESSES OF ALIGNED PLANNING

Establishing an onsite testing center for our students and community

Increased engagement within the University's Student Veteran Organization

Signed the 8 Keys to Veteran Success

 Ranked for the first time on the 2015 Best for Vets Survey
Balanced scorecard

Using the Balanced Scorecard as a Strategic Management System (HBR Bestseller)

CAS Self-Assessment Guide
Veterans and Military Programs and Services
August 2012

Part 1. MISSION

The primary mission of Veterans and Military Programs and Services (VMPS) must be to provide, facilitate, or coordinate programs and services for student veterans, military service members, and their family members. VMPS must identify student veterans and military service members and establish a community that connects and supports this population.

Family members include veterans’ and service members’ spouses/partners and children as well as survivors of veterans.

VMPS must develop, disseminate, implement, and regularly review their missions. The mission must be consistent with the mission of the institution and with professional standards. The mission must be appropriate for the institution’s student populations and community settings. Mission statements must reference student learning and development.

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Part 1. Mission Overview Questions

A. What is the program mission?

B. How does the mission embrace student learning and development?
QUESTION AND ANSWERS