

5.4 STUDENT DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Introduction

College is a time for intellectual development, but perhaps more importantly, the college experience should provide the opportunity for the student to develop as a total individual; to grow and to learn outside the formal classroom setting. Student development services are essential to the achievement of the educational goals of the institution and should contribute to the cultural, social, moral, intellectual, and physical development of students. Students at USA benefit from a variety of services and programs geared toward this goal. USA is dedicated to the notion that student development is essential and should include a wide array of student activities as well as nearly every conceivable support service a student might require. The Student Affairs Division provides the majority of student services and activities at USA. The Registrar and the Enrollment Services Division also provide valuable supplementary student services. This section of the *Self-Study Report* will focus primarily on the Student Affairs Division, which is given overall responsibility for the welfare of USA students. The Division is responsible for the part of the student's educational experience that takes place outside the formal classroom.

The University, concerned with the total growth and development of students, believes that attention should be given not only to the intellectual aspect of this growth but also to physical, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Through all of the services and programs at USA, students should acquire, along with a sound intellectual competence, a maturing sense of values (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, p. 3).

The Student Affairs Division has as its primary mission the provision of services and programs that will enhance student development. As specified in the Student Affairs Division Mission Statement, the Division seeks to achieve the following:

1. The development of an environment that assists students in successful transition to college and builds a sense of community.
2. The creation of opportunities for students to expand aesthetic and cultural development, develop autonomy, improve leadership skills, become skilled in interpersonal communications, achieve career aspirations, establish a healthy lifestyle, and develop an understanding and appreciation of ethnic, age, and gender differences.
3. Provide economical services that address the needs of the student.
4. Develop linkage between the curricular and co-curricular activities of the University.

In attaining the first portion of this mission (the development of environment and community), the Division highlighted a number of goals and objectives that further outline its overall philosophy and direction. As stated in Student Affairs Goals and Objectives, the Division seeks to achieve the following:

- Establish programs conjointly with other units of USA to (1) assist with a successful transition for freshmen and transfer students and (2) promote retention.
- Make all USA services readily available to all students at convenient times and places.

- Maintain housing facilities that are conducive to learning, the development of community, and the positive development of the student.
- Encourage and aid students in the development of social, cultural, recreational, and governance programs that expand involvement with the campus and community.
- Foster a spirit of cooperation and involvement among the various student populations.
- Implement, through programming and modeling, the spirit of the University.

To achieve the second major point of its mission statement (building well-rounded, cultured, and socially-developed students), the Student Affairs Division established these objectives:

- Provide quality entertainment and programming that meet the needs of a diverse student population and that are the result of measured needs and the principles of student development.
- Present comprehensive programming on substance abuse and other issues that relate to a healthy lifestyle.
- Develop, in collaboration with relevant academic units, a fine arts program on campus that encourages participation in and appreciation for the visual and performing arts.
- Provide opportunities for the development of leadership and fellowship among students through conferences, workshops, and speakers (Student Affairs Goals and Objectives).

In an effort to provide economical services that addresses students' needs and provides linkage between curricular and co-curricular activities (the third and fourth sections of the Student Affairs Division Mission Statement), the Division established the following goals and objectives:

- Establish retention programs that enable students to fulfill their goals.
- Encourage students to explore self-directed activities that provide opportunities for self-realization and growth in individual and group settings.
- Establish the wellness philosophy as a recreational approach.
- Develop programs and practices that enhance faculty and central administration support of the Student Services Division's mission.
- Periodically assess student needs and opinions, and disseminate these assessment results to the campus community (Student Affairs Goals and Objectives).

USA's Mission Statement contains extensive language regarding the need and mandate for student-development services. For example, the Mission Statement indicates that USA "is committed to the education of the whole person--the creative person." USA's Mission Statement further indicates that opportunities should be provided in order to (1) expand students' "cultural, physical, and emotional awareness" and (2) "encourage and foster the qualities expected of leaders such as integrity, service, stewardship, involvement, and respect for individuals, as well as an appreciation for diversity." It is clear from this and other language in the Mission Statement and objectives of the

University that student development is clearly valued and given high priority
(*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, p. 3).

This section of the *Self-Study Report* focuses on those programs and services geared to student development beyond the intellectual growth that grows out of classroom instruction.

5.4.1 Scope and Accountability

#1 of 9

Achievement of Educational Goals

(Page 59, Line 25): *Student development services **are essential** to the achievement of the educational goals of the institution and **should** contribute to the cultural, social, moral, and physical development of students.*

Clearly, USA is committed to the development of the student beyond the impact of traditional curricular programs. According to Division planning documents and such publications as the *Bulletin* (p. 20), USA's Student Affairs Division views extracurricular activities and development as a complement to traditional classroom learning and has committed considerable resources to developing an array of activities, events, organizations, programs, and other development services. The Division recognizes that students will spend much more of their time outside, rather than inside, the classroom. Thus, students' interests and problems will frequently be non-academic in nature. Among the Division's responsibilities are housing, the Student Center, the

Mitchell Center, campus recreation and intramural athletics, student organizations, student programming and traditions, disciplinary actions, disabled student services, community service, personal counseling, minority affairs, testing services, food services, the campus bookstore, and the University Police (*Bulletin*, p. 20-23).

In addition, this section will cover such programs as financial aid, career services, and international student services, which do not come under the purview of the Student Affairs Division but provide integral support to the student's development and progress. Clearly, there is a strong commitment to the cultural, social, moral, and physical development of all students at USA (*Lowdown: A Student Handbook, 2001-2002*, pp. 20-69).

As will be seen in each of the areas reviewed in this section, USA does indeed offer students a full array of activities, programs, and service through Jaguar Productions, Campus Involvement, Campus Housing, and several other units of the University that also provide numerous programs and activities for student participation. The *Lowdown* lists traditions such as the following: Homecoming, Greek Week, the African-American Student Association, Greek Show, Spring Fling, the International Spring Festival, the Miss USA Pageant, Oozeball, Tuesday Nooners, and African-American Awareness events. A review of the records of campus involvement indicates upwards of 150 student organizations, representing a wide range of interests and affinities. The diverse organizations include fraternities and sororities, the African-American Student Association, the Latin American Student Association, religious organizations (e.g.,

Baptist Campus Ministries and the Muslim Student Association), honor societies (e.g., Alpha Chi and Omicron Delta Kappa), professional groups (e.g., the Accounting Club and American Medical Association of USA), and other interest groups (e.g., USA Southerners, Circle K, Caribbean Student Association, the Film Club, Habitat for Humanity, Model United Nations, the Student Art Association, and Women's Collective). Students, therefore, are given the opportunity to become involved and active (*Lowdown*, pp. 20-69).

A recent survey of 750 randomly-selected USA students was conducted for the institutional self-study. The survey requested information regarding students' perceptions of campus life and student-support services. A notable issue involving student services at USA will always be the large proportion of non-traditional and commuting students. This demographic typically decreases the portion of any student body taking advantage of student services. In general, however, USA students perceive the offering of student activities, events, organizations, and programs to be sufficient. Seventy-nine percent of the student respondents either strongly agreed or agreed (referred to hereafter in this section as "agreed"), and only 21% either disagreed or strongly disagreed (referred to hereafter in this section as "disagreed") with the following statement: "South offers students the opportunities for an active campus life." In addition, 56% indicated that they had intended to actively participate in campus life, while 50% agreed that attending USA entertainment and cultural events was important to them as students. Clearly, there is variability in the level of involvement among the

student body, and many students never utilize campus programs (*Self-Study Student Survey, 2001*).

There was insufficient space in the survey to measure students' impressions of all campus activities and development services, but a few were singled out for feedback. For the Student Recreation Center, 68% of the respondents indicated they had used the facility; of these, 88% were satisfied with the facility's service. The Student Center--indeed the center of all student programming, activities, meetings, and services--received fairly strong ratings. Some 68% of surveyed students indicated they had used the services of this facility; of those, 86% were satisfied with the service they received. In addition, 16% of students surveyed had utilized the counseling and testing center, with 75% of the users reporting satisfaction. Finally, 43% of respondents had taken advantage of services offered by the Student Health Center; of these, 77% were satisfied with the service they received at the Health Center (*Self-Study Student Survey, 2001*).

The Principal Committee has determined that provision of student-development services is clearly a priority at USA. Given the fiscal limitations of the University and the diversity of our student body, the array of student needs and interests are being served well.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Suggestion

None.

#2 of 9

Development of Goals

*(Page 59, Line 29): To ensure effectiveness, the institution **must** develop goals for the student services program consistent with student needs and with the purpose of the institution.*

To fully attain its institutional purpose and mission, USA must provide extensive student-support services and enrichment activities. It is evident in USA's Mission Statement that the institution is dedicated to education of "the whole person--the creative person." To accomplish this goal, USA provides a "wide range of curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to expand their cultural, physical, and emotional awareness." The Mission Statement goes on to note that "the University's environment must foster the qualities expected of leaders, such as integrity, service, stewardship, involvement, and respect for individuals, as well as the appreciation of diversity." The Goals and Purposes section of the *Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002* also indicates a strong need for extracurricular student support and enrichment. Clearly, classroom and extra-classroom exchange are necessary for "a forum of free thought and discussion...to help develop an independent spirit undergirded by the moral and ethical values essential for effective participation in a free society." The Goals and Purposes go on to state that students are encouraged to become involved and participate in University decisions

involving their own welfare. “The University is conscious of its obligation to the local, state, and national communities to assist students to attain the fullest possible knowledge of themselves in relation to society, and to become enlightened participants in civic affairs” (*Bulletin*, pp. 3-4). USA is also dedicated to cooperation with local, civic, professional, and governmental organizations and the need for building effective leadership in the “social, political, and economic affairs of our society.” As mentioned in the introduction of this section of the *Self-Study Report*, the Student Affairs Division reflects the overall purpose of USA. The Division, above all, seeks to “provide services and programs that will enhance student development,” clearly called for in USA’s Mission Statement. Student Affairs exists to (1) develop an environment that assists students in successful transition to college and builds a sense of community; (2) create opportunities for students to expand aesthetic and cultural appreciation, develop autonomy, improve leadership skills, become skilled in interpersonal communications, achieve career aspirations, establish a healthy lifestyle, and develop an understanding and appreciation of ethnic, age, and gender differences; (3) provide economical services which address the needs of students; and (4) develop linkage between the curricular and co-curricular activities of the University (*Bulletin*, p. 3; Student Affairs Division Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives, Document 5.4.1: #2 of 9).

The Vice President for Student Affairs leads a planning process with representation from all departments within the Division. Each department is asked to set goals and objectives that are in keeping with the mission and objectives of the Division. Division personnel indicate that each department designs its programs and activities in keeping with the

overall goals and directives of the division, with input from students shaping the program offerings each year.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

Proposal for Excellence

To continue offering appropriate student services that meet the needs of the student-body, the Principal Committee suggests that the Vice President for Student Affairs remain vigilant in the collection and identification of current student needs and contemporary concerns.

#3 of 9

Distance Learning Programs

*(Page 59, Line 32): Appropriate student development services **must** be provided for distance learning programs as well as on-campus programs.*

SACS (Criterion 4.5) has defined distance learning as including “off-campus courses, branch campuses, external degree programs, and various programs using electronically-based instruction offered at geographically distant locations.” USA is a proponent of distance education. The committee feels that the leadership of the University, its distance

learning coordinators, and the Student Affairs Division take special care to ensure appropriate student development services in distance learning programs.

The Baldwin County Campus (USABC), which is located 31.5 miles from the main campus, has for many years offered an array of courses and programs. This branch campus employs an Assistant Director of Student Services who attends to the unique needs and interests of this group of students, mostly over the age of twenty-five with gainful employment and a family. The branch campus offers services similar to those found on the main campus: advising, registration and other registrar services, career counseling and testing, library research assistance and instruction, article and book request, computer labs and internet access, financial aid, testing and counseling, housing information, security, and entertainment. Understandably, this branch campus cannot provide the same full array of programs, services, and activities offered at the main campus. For example, the USABC campus does not offer the recreational, housing, student activity, and health programs offered on main campus (*Bulletin*, p. 116).

Over the last two years USA has invested considerable resources in the development of an extensive online instructional system. Individuals around the country and indeed around the world are currently utilizing this system. Via the Internet, students can email various departments that offer support services. The University's website provides an impressive source of information regarding USA, services available, and other important information. In addition, the University offers a website (www.usaonline.southalabama.edu) that provides extensive student service information.

Separate sites of information are maintained on advising, the bookstore, USA Libraries, the school newspaper, career services, the student union, the Registrar's Office, the Counseling Center, the student handbook (the *Lowdown*), and frequently asked questions regarding student services. Due to the nature of online programs, students who choose this type of learning simply do not and will not have the same level or type of student services readily available to them as compared to on-campus learners.

As stated by SACS, appropriate student services must be available to all distance learners. With this in mind and understanding that providing all student services is impractical if not impossible, this Principal Committee feels USA is indeed providing appropriate student services to distance learners.

Conclusions

Compliance.

Recommendations

None.

#4 of 9

Administrative Oversight

*(Page 60, Line 1): The institution **must** clearly designate an administrative unit responsible for planning and implementing student development services.*

Student-development services are a central part of the educational experience offered at USA. The Student Affairs Division is designated as the primary administrative unit

responsible for planning and implementing student development services, although the divisions of Enrollment Services, and the Registrar, are responsible for providing a variety of academic services to students. For example, International Student Services, Financial Aid, and Career Services fall under the purview of Enrollment Services. Enrollment Services and the Registrar's Office are under the authority of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. These exceptions notwithstanding, the Vice President for Student Affairs is clearly the primary holder of responsibility for ensuring an appropriate offering of student services. Eleven directors/managers serve directly under the Vice President including: Director of Auxiliary Enterprises, Director of Housing, Director of the Student Center, Manager of Campus Recreation, Manager of Special Student Services, Manager of Student Media, Director of Counseling and Testing, Manager of Minority Services, Chief of University Police, Administrative Assistant to the Vice President and Assistant to the Vice President.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#5 of 9

Policies and Procedures

*(Page 60, Line 3): Appropriate policies and procedures for student development programs and services **must** be established.*

All of the units of the Student Affairs Division and indeed all units providing student services have, through planning processes, crafted extensive policies, procedures, goals and objectives to govern and guide their operations. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) notebooks, created by each unit, contains their respective policies and procedures. (These notebooks are available in the Self-Study Office.) Students can readily find the information they need on their rights and responsibilities as students. The *Lowdown: A Student Handbook, 2001-2002* and the *Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002* each provide students with extensive information on their rights and responsibilities. In addition, students can find pertinent information on the University website. The *Lowdown* contains a comprehensive explanation of student services, the role of student government in campus governance, and thorough information regarding all policies and procedures. The following is a partial listing of policies and procedures presented in the *Lowdown* and on the website: Code of Student Conduct, Campus and Community Resources, Substance Abuse Policy, the SGA Constitution, the SGA Code of Laws, USA Posting Policy, Housing Regulations, Personnel Policies for Students, and Student Record Policy (*Lowdown*, pp. 177-118; www.southalabama.edu/currentstudents). The *Bulletin* (pp. 24-29) provides extensive information for students regarding USA policies and procedures.

The units that provide student development services publish pamphlets that detail their programs and services. This literature includes the unit's goals as well as the policies and procedures that govern them. These goals and objectives are annually evaluated as to their appropriateness and conformity with the University mission. This information can

be found in information racks and other sources around campus, as well as on the University website.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#6 of 9

Organizational Status

*(Page 60, Line 6): Student development services **should** be given organizational status commensurate with other administrative areas within the institution.*

As mentioned above, the Student Affairs Division is a major part of USA. The Vice President for Student Affairs is on the same level with the other Vice Presidents of the University. All Vice Presidents report directly to the President of the University.

Student-development services offered outside this division are also of highest priority and fall under the purview of either a vice president or an associate vice president.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Suggestion

None.

#7 of 9

Staffing

*(Page 60, Line 8): These services **must** be staffed by individuals who have academic preparation and experience consistent with their assignments. In exceptional cases, outstanding professional experience and demonstrated competence may substitute for academic preparation.*

Position descriptions and resumes for all professional staff in the Student Affairs Division are available in the Self-Study Office. The USA Personnel Office, in consultation with the appropriate division head, sets all position requirements, such as degree and experience. This office also maintains a complete file of professional staff resumes. The Principal Committee's review of these qualifications indicates the staff is sufficiently trained and experienced to provide the desired services. Members of the professional staff are encouraged to attend conferences and seminars to update and improve their knowledge base. The Division also holds a yearly retreat to cover questions that might arise among staff members. Each of the Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) notebooks contains the requirements of the various professional positions, as well as the qualifications of the staff members holding each position. Each CAS notebook also recounts the various professional development seminars and workshops attended by staff members. The CAS notebooks are available in the Self-Study Office.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#8 of 9

Exceptional Cases

*(Page 60, Line 13): Exceptional cases **must** be justified by the institution on an individual basis.*

All student development services staff have academic preparation and experience consistent with their assignment. (USA official employment records and transcripts).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#9 of 9

Evaluation

*(Page 60, Line 14): Student development services and programs **must** be evaluated regularly.*

A review of (1) the various division documents and (2) documents from each of the respective student-service areas indicates that staff professionals do a sufficient job of setting goals and objectives and use a variety of methods for gauging the success of their service offerings. Each of the CAS notebooks recounts the goals, objectives, services, and outcomes of each unit's efforts. (The CAS notebooks are available in the Self-Study Office for review).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

Proposal for Excellence

The Principal Committee suggests that the Vice President for Student Affairs continually explore new strategies that provide for ongoing program and divisional evaluation.

5.4.2 Resources

#1 of 2

Adequate Resources

*(Page 60, Line 16): Human, physical, financial and equipment resources for student development services **must** be adequate to support the goals of the institution.*

The goals of the institution with regard to student-development services have been articulated in previous sections of this *Self-Study Report*. The goals and expectations are high. Student development is a priority of this University. Accordingly, the Student Affairs Division should take a “continuous improvement” approach with a focus on the needs and satisfaction levels of students. Because student services are offered in great measure on this campus and the SACS criteria have been met or exceeded, it is logical to assume appropriate resources are being provided. In addition, 79% of student respondents in the *Self-Study Student Survey, 2001* indicated that USA offers students “opportunities for an active campus life.” Of those who have used the respective services of the University, 88% were satisfied with the Student Recreation Center, 86% were satisfied with the Student Center, 75% were satisfied with Counseling Services, and 77% were satisfied with Student Health Services. These statistics indicate that selected services are providing the desired results.

Budget documents for each student-service area are available in the Self-Study Office. Funding for student development is derived from student fees and the University general fund. It appears that basic funding needs are being met, but most staff professionals desire more space, more financial resources, and newer and better equipment. Overall, appropriate resources and equipment are provided.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

Proposal for Excellence

Although resources for student development are adequate to support the goals of the institution, the Principal Committee suggests that several steps be taken to further improve the resource allocation process. First, a comprehensive needs assessment of students is suggested to gauge overall interest in various services, perceptions of existing services, and desired improvements. Next, staff professionals should be brought into the mix to determine the most pressing needs at this time. Finally, budgetary realities can be compared to the student needs assessment and the resources required by staff professionals.

#2 of 2

Staff Development

*(Page 60, Line 18): Staff development **should** be related to the goals of the student development program and **should** be designed to enhance staff competencies and awareness of current theory and practice.*

Each department that provides student-development services encourages its professional staff to engage in staff development and continuing education. In addition, the Student Affairs Division each year plans an in-house retreat that addresses the needs and

questions of staff members. The CAS notebooks, available in the Self-Study Office, contain extensive information on the Division's staff development program.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Suggestion

None.

5.4.3 Programs and Services

5.4.3.1 Counseling and Career Development

#1 of 3

Personal Counseling and Career Development

*(Page 60, Line 22): Each institution **should** provide personal counseling services for students, as well as a career development program.*

USA provides extensive and qualified personal counseling and career development services to students. Two major departments are dedicated to ensuring this service: (1) Counseling and Testing Services and (2) Career Services.

The Counseling and Testing Services' (CTS) mission is "to facilitate the student's educational, personal, and social development while offering pathways to success and a

fulfilling journey.” The service is a comprehensive developmental and mental health center providing a full range of services to meet the needs of students, faculty, and staff. CTS is staffed by Licensed Professional Counselors available to assist students with personal, academic, and vocational concerns. The counselors are qualified to assist individuals and couples in solving situational problems or improving self-understanding and personal relationships. The following services are provided by CTS: psychological counseling, group therapy, crisis intervention, substance-abuse education and counseling, employee-assistance counseling, mental-health consultation, career testing and counseling, sexual-assault counseling, various training programs in such areas as communication and conflict resolution, and extensive testing in such areas as aptitude and personality/interests.

CTS is staffed by (1) a director who holds a PhD in counseling and educational psychology and who has significant professional certification and experience and (2) at least five other counselors/coordinators who hold either masters-level or terminal degrees and appropriate professional certification and licensure. Students benefit greatly from the CTS’s relationship with USA’s Medical School. Psychiatric consultation and services are available for clients through a cooperative program with the Medical School’s Department of Psychiatry. At least four psychiatric residents from the Medical School are on staff for such services (the CTS website is www.southalabama.edu/counseling).

Counseling services are available without cost (except minimal testing fees) to students, faculty, and staff. Strict confidentiality of records and counseling relationships is maintained.

University Testing Services serves as a regional testing center for national testing organizations. Services are provided in the areas of testing as requested by various entrance examinations and are administered at the Testing Center in Alpha Hall East (www.southalabama.edu/counseling; *Counseling and Testing Services Notebook*).

CTS reaches numerous students through its consultation and outreach programs. The staff provides workshops on topics such as anger management, communication, career development, conflict resolution, diversity training, leadership training, stress management, substance-abuse prevention, time management, and value clarification. The CTS website offers such “virtual brochures” as Strategies for Moderate Drinking, Straight Facts about Marijuana, Time Management and Study Skills, Sexual Assault, and Drugs and Health Risks. CTS does an adequate job of evaluating programs and continually improving its programs, and it has an outstanding website (www.southalabama.edu/counseling). CTS is also prominently advertised in such student publications as the *Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002* (p. 20) and the *Lowdown: A Student Handbook, 2001-2002* (p. 27), and CTS has brochures available at such places as the Student Health Center, the Student Center, and various housing offices.

The second unit vital to student counseling and career development is the University's Career Services (CS) office, a unit of the Division of Enrollment Services.

Career Services has a primary mission to provide the types of career-development services that support the overall vision, mission, and goals of USA. The University Mission Statement includes the following points of special importance to CS. First, the undergraduate curriculum is designed to convey to students the values, knowledge, and skills they need to prepare them for professional careers and lifelong learning. Second, graduate programs are directed toward preparing students for professional and academic careers. Finally, USA's programs are founded upon the concept of a reciprocal relationship between the institution and the community it serves, and thus USA should administer programs that enhance the economic development of the state and region. By providing a comprehensive approach to career preparation with experiential learning as an important component, Career Services teaches students career decision-making skills and planning skills, and it fosters the integration of academic and career goal development. CS actively develops and maintains relationships with a diverse group of employers and organizations to provide links to the world of work through which students, faculty, and the community can take advantage of information sources and employment programs. Career Services is especially focused on assisting students in the transition from academic life to the world of work so that graduates can enhance the economic development of the state and region. CS desires to produce graduates who are self-motivated and able to form, articulate, and act upon reasoned decisions in their personal, civic, and professional lives. Career Services is a major interface for the

University and the private economic sector (*Career Services Achievement Summary and Goals and Objectives Notebook*; www.southalabama.edu/careersrv).

CS offers an array of services designed to aid the student in the transition from college to career. During the 1999-2000 academic year, for example, CS provided career advising to nearly 5,000 students and alumni, presented 64 career-development lectures, attracted over 1,200 employers seeking full-time employees, and hosted numerous career expos that attracted 239 employers and 2,825 students. Six months after graduation, 68% of students registered with CS were employed, as compared to 50% of students not registered with the office. These numbers represent merely a sampling of the kinds of activities undertaken by CS (*Career Services Achievement Summary and Goals and Objectives Notebook*; www.southalabama.edu/careersrv).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Suggestion

None.

Proposal for Excellence

The Principal Committee is impressed with the effectiveness and efficiency of Career Services and Counseling and Testing Services. However, the Committee suggests that it may be advisable to examine the possibility of combining/consolidating the two into one department/unit under the umbrella of Student Affairs. Also a centralized location such

as the Student Center might increase visibility. Thus, students would have a one-stop service center of all career, counseling, and testing services in an easily accessible venue.

#2 of 3

Career Information and Planning

*(Page 60, Line 25): An effective career development program **should** include career information and planning, placement services, career counseling, testing services, and follow-up activities.*

Career Services (CS) provides a variety of career-development services that includes career information and planning, placement services, career counseling, testing services, and follow-up activities. CS, directed by a highly-experienced career services professional who also holds a PhD in counseling psychology and human systems, is a resource to undergraduates as well as to graduating students and alumni. CS assists students in exploring and clarifying life goals and ambitions, provides guidance on majors and career options, and offers quality assistance for students in preparing, articulating, and translating their academic pursuits into fulfilling career choices.

CS also goes to great lengths to educate students about the job search process and provides them with networking and opportunities with diverse employers. CS builds working relationships with these employers to provide better opportunities for students. CS also provides students with resources to explore graduate studies and professional programs, and it provides the University community with current information about national, regional, and local employment trends. Finally, CS collaborates with faculty,

administrators, staff, alumni, community members, and other constituents to develop effective career programs, services, and resources.

Career Services provides services designed to help students attain career information, evaluate their career choices, and plan careers. Career Education and Advising Services include individual and group career advising, graduate internships and assistantships in collegiate-career services, development of customized lectures for academic departments and student groups, management of a career library with over 1,800 print resources, and the update and maintenance of technology resources in a student computer lab. The Career Education and Advising Specialist builds relationships with faculty and students to increase awareness of the value and types of services available.

The comprehensive advising service provides assessment of a client's strengths in terms of skills, values, interests, and personality style. Clients are administered a number of assessments, and students explore how their strengths and interests relate to academic majors and occupational choices. Training in employability skills provides professional guidance with resume development, interviewing preparation, job search techniques, and the effective use of over 1,800 print resources in the Career Services library. Advisors also prepare students for admission to graduate and professional schools. Each year, over 3,500 students partake of these advising services; thus, the specialist is assisted by a number of graduate interns and assistants. The internship and assistant program has given numerous USA students the opportunity to work firsthand at delivering collegiate career services.

The FOCUS II software program allows students to identify interests and explore occupations within the framework of Holland's Occupational Classification System. The information gained from this system accelerates the advising process and prepares students for a conference with a career advisor. Each academic year, the FOCUS II program is utilized well over three hundred times. The *Please Understand Me* software program helps students identify their personality type within the framework proposed by Jung and Myers-Briggs. The Personality Type Tool Kit provides students with summary information about their personality, strengths, and possible careers. This program is utilized well over six hundred times annually. Resources specifically allocated for students and alumni include a small four-station computer lab with a central laser printer. Career Services maintains an listing of Internet resources for students.

USA has an alternating and parallel cooperative-education program in which students have an opportunity to gain high quality full-time work experience while pursuing their educational objectives. The alternating program allows students to switch between attending university full-time during one term and working full-time the next term. The parallel program allows students to work and study concurrently each term. Between 100 and 150 students participate in the cooperative education program each year.

Career Employment Assistance coordinates the recruiting, interview, and placement process that attempts to register, properly inform, and match several hundreds of employers and prospective employees. The Career Employment Assistance program is a

vital program for providing USA graduates and alumni seeking employment.

Prerequisite for registration in the program is viewing a fifty-five minute video Employability Skills Seminar. The seminar provides an overview of the technology and resources provided through the employment assistance program and instructions on using Callup Signup and JobLine software. Career advisors provide essential instructions in a self-directed approach to resume development, job search strategies, and interviewing techniques, thereby empowering the candidates' independence throughout career changes. Over four hundred students utilized employment assistance placement services during the 2000-2001 academic year. Electronic communication equipment such as Callup Signup and Jobline have greatly increased access to job opportunities. The Career Services website is popular, with thousands of hits from students and employers each year.

In addition, CS annually hosts a number of career expos and job fairs that attract seventy to eighty employers and upwards of five hundred students. Assessment surveys from employers attending these events reflect strong support for CS, the expos, and USA students. Career Employment Assistance facilitates the job search process by providing prospective employers with student information, as well as providing extensive information about prospective employers. For example, approximately 15,000 resumes are forwarded each year electronically to approximately four hundred to five hundred employers. On campus, several dozen companies schedule interviews each year with upwards of five hundred students.

CS has done an exceptional job of establishing annual goals and objectives and of assessing its accomplishments. Much of the evaluation relates to the standards set forth by the National Association of Colleges and Employers and the Southern Association of Colleges and Employers, organizations to which CS belongs. CS also produces a report on employment and graduate education each year that is based on an extensive survey of University students and graduates. This report gives detailed information on employment status, success due to CS, interviewing success, job search success, salary range, location of employment, job relation to academic major, and satisfaction with Career Services. The data indicate that CS is highly successful in achieving its goals and objectives. Career Services also uses workshop and program evaluation forms, comment cards, and other methods to evaluate its program effectiveness (*Career Services Achievement Summary and Goals and Objectives Notebook*; www.southalabama.edu/careersrv).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Suggestion

None.

#3 of 3

Specified Policies

(Page 60, Line 28): There **should** be clearly specified policies regarding the use of career development services by students, alumni, and employers.

Career Services operates under policies and procedures established through its own planning and evaluation process. These policies and procedures include clear guidance as to who is eligible to use CS services. All users of CS, both employers and potential employees, are required to register and go through an eligibility screening. All users of the web resources, for example, are required to log in with a username and password. Eligibility requirements are presented to new users but should probably be more prominently displayed on web resources and publications (*Career Services Achievement Summary and Goals and Objectives Notebook*; www.southalabama.edu/careersrv).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Suggestion

None.

5.4.3.2 Student Government, Student Activities and Publications

#1 of 4

Student's Role in Institutional Decision-Making

(Page 60, Line 32): *The institution **must** develop a statement of the student's role and participation in institutional decision-making.*

The *Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002* (as well as the *Lowdown: A Student Handbook, 2001-2002*) states that students are given a responsible voice in the

decision-making process of the University. The Student Government Association (SGA) offers one mechanism for students to be involved in the governance of USA. In Article III of the *Constitution of the Student Government Association*, the purpose of the SGA is “to provide a harmonious and effective learning process by which individuals may better themselves and their community by social, economic, and cultural advancement, to provide a forum for the expression and advancement of student needs and interests, and to provide services for the students” (*Lowdown*, pp. 144-165).

The SGA is composed of three branches: the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. The legislative body is the Student Senate. Students are elected as senators from each college and division based on the percentage of students enrolled in each college or division. The Senate formulates SGA policy. Every Monday night during the semester, the Senate provides a forum that is open to all students. The Senate has committees whose membership is also open to all USA students including Athletic Development, Elections, Escort Service, Interpresidents Council, Jaguars Involved In Volunteer Efforts, Multicultural Affairs, Non-Traditionals/Hillsdale Interests, Publications, Public Relations and Advertising, Recruitment and Governmental Affairs, Social Development, and University Safety/Improvements. Through this committee structure, most issues have a forum for discussion.

The Judicial Branch of SGA is the Supreme Court, which is responsible for interpreting the SGA Constitution and all policies passed by the Student Senate. The Court also hears student disciplinary cases as requested by the Dean of Students. The Chief Justice

presides over the Supreme Court and is elected in spring. Eight Associate Justices are appointed by the SGA President and approved by the Senate.

The Executive Branch upholds the SGA Constitution, implements and enforces policies of the SGA. The officers are president, vice president, treasurer, and attorney general. The Executive Council supervises the committees listed previously. The Constitution describes SGA practices, procedures, and the duties and powers of officers.

Students also participate in the decision-making of the institution by serving on campus-wide committees. Committees on which students serve are as follows: Traffic and Parking, Library, Athletics, Health and Wellness, Board of Communications, Orientation, Convocation, Graduation, University Disciplinary, Housing Petitions, and Student Health Advisory. Students are asked to serve on many other committees as they convene. For example, virtually every major ad hoc committee established by the Board of Trustees, President, or Senior Vice President for Student Affairs includes at least one student. Recent issues such as the presidential search, intercollegiate football, and state appropriation/proration have all been open to student input and debate. Students served on committees charged with discussing and addressing these issues. Students were actively involved in the preparation of this institutional self-study. They are also asked to serve on committees to interview candidates for new faculty or staff positions. Students serve on committees within each college. The President of the SGA or his/her designee is an ad hoc member of other USA committees and is a non-voting member of the Board of Trustees.

Students are given a voice at USA as a matter of course. For example, the President offers students an opportunity to meet at the President's Table. Students are asked to give suggestions about USA, ask questions, or discuss problems they may have encountered at USA. The President's Table is usually scheduled during lunch, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the Student Center Food Court at least once each semester.

Documents 5.4.3.2: 1 of 4 describe these programs.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#2 of 4

Activities Program

*(Page 60, Line 35): The institution **must** have an activities program appropriate to its purpose and encompassing student interests.*

USA offers an extensive array of student activities as well as support services to ensure involvement and overall well-being of students. The provision of student activities and services is the joint responsibility of several USA offices and departments.

The mission of the Student Center is “to serve as a focal point of the campus where the University family – students, faculty, staff and alumni, as well as extended community-- can participate in informal association outside of the classroom” (*CAS Self Assessment for the College Union*). Programs given by students and for students provide an opportunity to gain an understanding and appreciation of cultural pluralism and ethnic diversity. In the statement of the *Role of the College Union*, one of the main functions of the Student Center is to encourage self-directed activity for the individual student and for groups. The facility includes lounge areas, a student art gallery, office space for student organizations, recreational facilities, dining services, and other service facilities. In a freshman survey conducted in 1998 and 1999, 216 freshman responded to questions about the Student Center. In this survey, 78% of the respondents indicated they had used the services of the Student Center, and 93% of these were satisfied with the services. In response to the *Self-Study Student Survey, 2001*, 68% of respondents had used the services of the Student Center, and 86% of the users were satisfied.

Jaguar Productions (the Student Programming Board) is a part of SGA and is the organization created to provide programs and activities on campus for the entertainment and enrichment of the student body. In addition, Jaguar Productions plans, coordinates, implements, and evaluates all programs presented and reviews students’ interests and creates programs to reflect these. The Program Director handles the daily operations of the program and serves as an advisor to the students on the committees for Jaguar Productions; the Director also helps in the planning of the programs. Jaguar Productions is staffed by interested students and operates under student control. Any interested

student can join one of the committees that make up the Student Programming Board. These committees are as follow: Special Events, Horizons, Club South, Movies, Trips and Tours, Promotions, Concerts, Fine Arts, Technical, and Recruitment. The membership of the Student Programming Board consists of the following: chairs of the ten standing committees, the President of the SGA or designee, the President of the African-American Students Association or designee, three students appointed at-large by the SGA President, the President of the Student Programming Board, the Vice-President of the Student Programming Board, the Administrator of Community Participation of the Student Programming Board, the Financial Director of the Student Programming Board, and—as an ex officio member--the Dean of Students or his/her designee. The President, Vice President, and Financial Director are students who are nominated and voted in office by the SGA.

Jaguar Productions sponsors a variety of programs during the year. In the academic year 1999-2000, sixty-nine programs were presented; these consisted of educational lectures, movies, comedy shows, musical concerts, coffeehouses, trips, Tuesday Nooners, special events such as Homecoming, Mayfest, and CBS College Tour, discount ticket opportunities, and appreciation events for the members of Jaguar Productions. Jaguar Productions has a website at www.southalabama.edu/jaguarproductions/. Records of the attendance at each event are kept to document the event and the response. Student surveys are conducted to determine the type of music, entertainers, and other events students would like to see.

The Office of Community Involvement (OCI) is a division of Student Services and matches students, faculty, and staff who are interested in volunteering with a particular non-profit agency in the Mobile community. OCI promotes a volunteer program that embraces the concept of service learning. Service learning stresses the importance of students discovering the social issues behind the problems they are addressing and creating a reciprocal relationship where both are active learners. OCI gives volunteers a choice of working in areas including child care, elderly care, special populations, and literacy.

OCI has several other functions at USA. It serves as an information agency for faculty, students, and staff in terms of a variety of agencies and volunteer opportunities in Mobile. OCI has peer support for the volunteers, maintains a record of volunteer hours completed, and can provide references for students. OCI works with the faculty to implement service learning in the curriculum. OCI gives awards annually to students and organizations that have excelled in community service during the academic year.

The student handbook, *The Lowdown*, lists the current student organizations and provides the requirements, policies, and procedures that organizations must follow to be a registered organization on campus. There are over 130 student organizations; these include departmental clubs, Greek organizations, academic honoraries, leadership societies, professional societies, and special interest clubs.

An Escort Service is provided by SGA to students who call on a special phone or the number listed for students on campus after dark. The escort wears a name tag and red escort shirt and has Escort Service picture identification. The escort will drive or walk the student anywhere on campus. Students can also apply to be escorts. Each applicant is interviewed and reviewed by a selection committee.

Another service provided to students at USA to help promote safety is Safe Ride, sponsored by the SGA. A student can have one free ride per month from downtown Mobile to campus in a Yellow Cab. Students who think they are unable to drive home can call for a free ride home.

The Department of Campus Recreation is located in the Student Recreation Center. The center has two basketball courts, six racquetball courts, a track, a fitness room, and a small games area. The Department of Campus Recreation provides opportunities for all members of the USA community to experience satisfying recreational experiences. The *Self-Study Student Survey, 2001* found that 68% of the students had used the Student Recreation Center, and 88% of these were satisfied. (Further discussion of campus recreation is given in Section 5.4.3.7, which addresses intramural sports.)

The Mitchell Center is a multi-purpose facility for major campus events. It is the home of the South Alabama Jaguars basketball program, but it is also of great use to student activities and programming. It features a 10,000-seat arena where sports events, graduation, concerts, and convocations are held.

The Office of International Services and Admissions (OISA) is staffed by a Manager of International Services and Admissions, a Coordinator of International Services, an International Services Specialist, and two clerical staff members staff OISA. The manager reports to the Associate Vice President of Enrollment Services.

OISA coordinates the various services provided to these students. These services include the following: processing of all prospective student requests, the admission processing and issuing of visa documents for those admitted, orientation, arrival assistance, temporary and permanent housing, immigration assistance and counseling, cultural adjustment assistance, tax workshops, employment assistance (coordinated with the Career Services Center), and practical training assistance. Additionally, the Manager of the OISA serves as advisor to the Council of International Student Organizations (CISO), one of the more active student organizations on USA's campus, while the Coordinator of International Students serves as advisor to Phi Beta Delta, the international student and scholar honor society. CISO sponsors a welcome party for new students at the beginning of each semester, and an International Student Awards banquet that features international entertainment, while also recognizing numerous international students for their outstanding academic and community service achievements.

The Office of Minority Student Affairs, located in the Student Center, was "created to assist in the personal development and retention of minority students at the University of South Alabama" (*Lowdown*, p. 30). One of the objectives of the program is to develop

and coordinate a program called Project Success, a mentoring program to increase retention. Another objective is to promote cultural awareness on campus and in the community. A third objective is to advise the African-American Student Association on annual events as well as to develop new programs. The African-American Student Association has objectives to promote the progression and growth of African-American students, to offer social activities, and to work with all student organizations to foster cultural diversity and a sense of community.

The Office of Student Support Services/Disabled Student Services provides services to students who are physically, emotionally, or learning disabled. The services provided to the disabled students include priority registration, counseling, advocacy training, enlargements for the visually impaired, interpreters for the deaf, assistance in obtaining recordings for the blind, and arrangements in and out of the classroom as covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. In the *Self-Study Student Survey, 2001*, 5% of students had used the services, and 57% of these users were satisfied.

While this discussion has been far from exhaustive (other student activities and services exist), it certainly gives an indication of the variety of activities and services provided to students.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#3 of 4

Supervisory Role of the Institution

*(Page 61, Line 1): The institution **must** develop policies and procedures governing the supervisory role of the institution over student activities.*

Student activities at USA are closely supervised and monitored. The *Lowdown* is a comprehensive guide that states the types of activities and organizations allowed on campus, the institutional offices designated to supervise and support various activities, rules and regulations for all campus organizations, and other information as to governance of student activities.

Five administrators in the Student Affairs Division are responsible for student government, student activities, and publications: the Director of the Student Center, Manager of Campus Recreation, Manager of Special Student Services, Manager of Student Media, and Manager of Minority Services. Each reports to the Vice President for Student Affairs. The offices of the Student Affairs Division are located in the Student Center.

The staff of the Student Center consists of Director, Program Director, Coordinator of Campus Involvement, Coordinator of Student Center Services, and building staff. The Director has a M.Ed. in counseling and student personnel, and the members of the

professional staff have degrees in appropriate fields. The professional memberships and development activities, community relations, and honors of the staff of the Division of Student Affairs are included in the management audit conducted at the end of each year.

The Office of Campus Involvement supervises the organizations involved at USA to ensure that the activities meet University standards. The Coordinator of Campus Involvement works with the sponsors and officers of the organizations to make sure guidelines and rules are followed. Each organization must be registered to sponsor an event on campus. The guidelines necessary to register an organization at USA are listed in the *Resource Manual for Student Clubs and Organizations*. The organization has to register each fall after it has been approved to operate on campus. A faculty member serves as a sponsor for each organization. The *Lowdown* provides guidelines and policies for campus organizations. The Coordinator of Campus Involvement works with the SGA and officers of the organizations to ensure that policies and regulations are followed. The Coordinator also supervises the Greek organizations and their advisors. The coordinator works with the Interfraternity Council and the Panhellenic Council to ensure that Greek organizations meet guidelines and follow the regulations as detailed by the University.

The Student Programming Board supervises all student activities. Funds are generated through student activity fees and tickets for events. The *Lowdown* details the policies and regulations concerning how this board operates and how funding for events are handled. Funds for organizations are generated by obtaining funds from SGA or membership fees and costs for that organization. The Office of Campus Involvement supervises the

budgets and expenditures. The Vice President for Student Affairs serves as an advisor for the SGA and thus reviews its financial books.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#4 of 4

Institution's Responsibilities to Student Media

*(Page 61, Line 6): When student publications or other media exist, the institution **must** provide a clearly written statement of the institution's responsibilities regarding them.*

The student newspaper is the *Vanguard*. It is published weekly and has articles pertaining to student life, events on campus, sports, and other topics of interest to students. Campus television is referred to as Jag TV; it offers original student productions and other shows of interest to students. A full-time manager of student media supervises these two media operations at USA. Students serve in all other positions affiliated with these two productions. The *Vanguard* has a website located at www.usa.vanguard.com. Funding for the newspaper and the television station is obtained through a fee approved by the Board of Trustees and the sale of advertising.

The Board of Student Communications has jurisdiction over the student-operated newspaper and television station. The membership of the board consists of representatives from Student Affairs, Public Relations, various faculty members from related disciplines, and students representing several areas. The extensive guidelines for membership, meetings, and funding are given in the *Lowdown* as part of the SGA Constitution. It clearly describes USA's jurisdiction over student communications. (See Document 5.4.3.2: 3 of 4, *Resource Manual for Student Clubs and Organizations*).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

5.4.3.3 Student Behavior

#1 of 2

(Page 61, Line 9): *The institution **must** publish a statement of student rights and responsibilities and make it available to the campus community.*

The Code of Student Conduct is published in the student handbook, *The Lowdown 2001-2002*, p. 78, and can also be found on USA website (www.southalabama.edu/studentconduct). *The Lowdown*, is provided to all incoming

students and is also available for students in the offices of the Director of the Student Center, the Vice President for Student Affairs, and the Student Government Association.

Discipline matters of a non-academic nature are dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct. The primary purpose of the Code, therefore, is to protect and preserve a civil and safe educational environment, and the disciplinary actions prescribed are meant to protect and preserve a quality educational domain. The Code defines, categorizes, and details the nature and types of nonacademic violations. It states the authority under which it is administered and clearly lays out the procedures and steps for the reporting of violations by persons who have been the victims. The rights of the accused and avenues of access to a fair and impartial hearing are documented. Also clearly spelled out are the hearing and appeal procedures, the structure and composition of the disciplinary committee responsible for enforcing the Code, and the disciplinary actions that may result in proven cases of Code violations.

As with non-academic discipline matters, there are policies and procedures pertaining to student conduct in academic matters. These policies and procedures, along with the student bill of rights, are described in *The Lowdown, 2001-2002* (pg. 132-138). The Student Academic Conduct Policy specifies that any dishonesty related to work or records constitutes academic misconduct, including, but not limited to, activities such as giving or receiving unauthorized aid in tests and examinations, improperly obtaining a copy of an examination, plagiarism, misrepresentation of information, altering transcripts or university records. All matter related to academic misconduct are the responsibility of

the academic units involved and the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Each academic department has a Departmental Undergraduate Academic Standards Committee and those departments offering graduate work also have a Departmental Graduate Academic Standards Committee. These standing committees conduct all hearings involving academic misconduct and are composed of both faculty members and students.

In addition, each college has Collegiate Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Standards Committees that are composed of faculty members and students and who may prescribe penalties including reduction to no penalty, or dismissal of charges. Appeals may be remanded to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs whose decision is final.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#2 of 2

Jurisdiction of Judicial Bodies

*(Page 61, Line 11): The jurisdiction of judicial bodies (administrative, faculty, and student), the disciplinary responsibilities of institutional officials, and all disciplinary procedures **must** be clearly defined and broadly distributed.*

The administration of the Code of Student Conduct is a responsibility of the Vice President for Student Affairs, who is also the Dean of Students. One of the Vice President's duties is to preserve and maintain an atmosphere of harmony and discipline among the student community. The Code is one of the tools used to achieve this objective; it allows the Vice President to delegate judicial authority to a designee referred to in the Code as the Judicial Officer. This authority is currently vested in the Director of the Student Center and on a day-to-day basis, the Judicial Officer deals with infractions of the Code. The specific judicial process is described in Document 5.4.3.3:2 of 2.

The other course of action is for the accused student to request a formal hearing between the student and the University Disciplinary Committee (UDC). A formal hearing involves the presentation of witness testimony and the ability of the accused student to present evidence on his/her behalf and to question all witnesses. The UDC is a standing committee and consists of two to five students, a faculty member, and/or administrator. The Judicial Officer, who is the discipline-hearing officer, chairs the UDC. The members of the UDC serve for a period of one year. All Supreme Court Justices of the Student Government Association are considered as potential members of the UDC. All UDC members are required to attend a one-day training session once a year to become familiar with the responsibilities of membership and the hearing procedure.

If a violation of the Code involves police investigations, presentation of the investigating officer's testimony before the UDC is made in accordance with guidelines prepared by the Judicial Officer and the Chief of the University Police. The document containing these guidelines is available at the offices of the Dean of Students and the Judicial Officer. The offices of the Dean of Students and the Judicial Officer maintain student records of Code infractions. These records are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. Files are kept for six years for any given student from his/her last violation of the Code; these records are destroyed after year six. However, there are some exceptions. In cases involving expulsion and in cases when sanctions have not been satisfactorily completed, files are maintained for ten years.

The Code of Student Conduct is a comprehensive document that provides detailed information on the policies relating to drug, alcohol, substance abuse, education, sexual battery/rape, sexual harassment, and hazing. In the interest of wider dissemination of Code information, policies relating to student sexual assault are printed in each edition of the *Lowdown*. The procedures for anonymously reporting to the police, along with phone numbers, are also made available within the *Lowdown*. Details are also provided relating to the facilities for counseling and emotional trauma. The Code applies to all on-campus, non-academic student activities; however, policies and regulations that are outlined in the *Residence Life Handbook and Calendar* govern on-campus residents of dormitory facilities. This document complements the Code and further describes the expectations and responsibilities, as well as rights, of students living in the on-campus housing facilities.

As with non-academic code of conduct violations, there are clearly stated procedures pertaining to the processing of academic-related violations (*The Lowdown*, p. 132-138). The policy encompasses the definition of academic dishonesty, the committee structure involved in the process (at the department, college, and University levels), the authority of each committee, and procedural guidelines inclusive of an appeals process.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

Proposal for Excellence

USA has a thorough Code of Student Conduct that is widely distributed and available to all students. However, to improve the usefulness of the Code, the Committee suggests the following. The Code should be reviewed for potential updating, inclusion of a table of contents, streamlining, and clarification. For example, students are referred to the Dean of Student Affairs, which might cause confusion if it is not widely known that the Vice President for Student Affairs also serves as Dean of Student Affairs. The Division of Student Affairs should assume responsibility for ensuring that *The Lowdown* is an accurate and useful document for students.

5.4.3.4 Residence Halls

#1 of 4

*(Page 61, Line 16): If an institution has residence halls, it **must** develop policies and procedures for governing them and **must** take reasonable precautions to provide a healthful, safe and secure living environment for residences.*

USA offers a wide range of housing facilities to meet the lifestyles of its diverse student body. The options available include traditional residence halls, apartments, suites, and a limited number of private suites and efficiency apartments. Family housing and graduate apartments are also available on a limited basis.

USA has specific policies and procedures to ensure a healthful, safe, and secure living environment published in the *Residence Life Handbook and Calendar (RLHC)* (pp. 6-16). In fact, there are a number of ways in which USA ensures a healthful, safe, and secure living environment. There are regularly scheduled inspections to ensure compliance with various safety, cleanliness, and housing codes. Also, residence-area coordinators are college housing professionals responsible for supervision of residence hall student staff, student discipline, counseling, and maintenance repair requests, among other responsibilities. Resident advisors are on duty when offices are closed, and they make periodic rounds in each residence hall area, managing emergencies and enforcing policies. Night clerks are available in the office in each resident hall. Night clerks monitor building security in the common areas and make rounds throughout the building or commons (*RLHC*, p. 2).

Residents contract to conduct themselves in a manner as to allow others the quiet enjoyment of the residence hall (*RLHC*, p. 4). Residents are expected to behave as mature members of the USA community and within the standard of the Student Code of Conduct. Residence-hall staff conduct periodic room inspections to assure that sanitation and safety standards are maintained. There are specific policies related to controlled substances, cooking, garbage, smoking, weapons, visitation by the opposite sex, parking, and weapons. Fire safety is maintained through fire drills, alarms, and extinguishers; smoke detectors are located in every room (*RLHC*, pp. 6-10). Specific information related to preparation for hurricanes and other natural disasters is also listed in the *RLHC* (p. 16).

The University is concerned about personal safety habits and basic security of property. Policies regarding campus safety in the residence halls include lockouts, loss and damage to personal property, and guests (*RLHC*, p. 12). Suggestions about crime prevention are provided in the USA Department of Housing pamphlet *Campus Safety: A Personal Concern* (see also the *CAS Housing Program Self-Assessment, 2000*). The University Campus Police play an integral role in ensuring safety of residents, and police regularly patrol the various housing areas.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#2 of 4

Support of the Educational Mission

*(Page 61, Line 20): The learning environment in the residence halls **must** support the educational mission of the institution.*

The learning environment in the residence halls supports the educational mission of USA. The mission of the Residence Life Program is to serve the USA community by providing housing for undergraduate and graduate students. This mission is based on the concept that the residence-hall community should be a living and learning environment for students. The Essence Program for freshmen requires participants to live in USA housing; this program provides peer advisors to answer questions and advise new students as they adjust to college life. Discussion of social issues, current trends, and self-help programs provide a supplement to the educational process of the University. Staff ensure a safe, pleasant, and reasonably quiet environment conducive to academic and personal success.

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The Residence Life Council represents housing students on campus and serves as a programming board for residence halls (*RLHC*, p. 2). The Council provides a mechanism for student and staff participation in decision-making and planning for residences. Housing policies related to residence behavior, conduct, controlled substances, fire safety, campus safety, counseling and testing, dining, health insurance and services,

minority services, and student support services are detailed in the *Residence Life Handbook and Calendar*. All these policies, as well as those discussed earlier in this section, are conducive to a learning environment within the residence halls.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

Proposal for Excellence

Although it is evident that campus housing provides a safe environment conducive to learning and maturation, the Principal Committee suggests an on-going evaluation of the student needs in reference to housing accommodations. The Committee suggests that USA maintain awareness of students' needs and of the condition of USA housing in order to direct improvements and renovations.

#3 of 4

Adequate Staff Organization

*(Page 61, Line 22): An adequate staff organization **should** be given responsibility for the administration of the residence hall system.*

USA housing falls under the auspices of the Vice President for Student Affairs and is directly supervised by the Director of Housing. Housing employs over 125 personnel including but not limited to accountants, operations managers, hall directors, residence advisors, peer advisors, and various maintenance specialists. The organizational section of the *CAS Housing Program Self-Assessment* sufficiently defines the roles, accountability, and authority of the Director of Housing and other related positions.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Suggestion

None.

#4 of 4

Sufficient Academic Training and Experience

*(Page 61, Line 24): The staff **should** have sufficient academic training and experience to enhance the learning environment in the residence halls.*

All job descriptions (generated by the Office of Personnel Relations) of positions within the housing division are available in the organizational section of the *2000 CAS Housing Program Self-Assessment*. Required academic achievement and professional experience are defined within the job descriptions. The Principal Committee believes that the academic achievement and professional experience required, as defined in this documentation, are sufficient to enhance the learning environment in the residence halls.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Suggestion

None.

5.4.3.5 Student Financial Aid

#1 of 5

Effective Program

*(Page 61, Line 27): The institution **should** provide an effective program of financial aid consistent with its purpose and reflecting the needs of its students.*

The program administered by the Office of Financial Aid is comprehensive; it includes loans, grants, scholarships (need and non-need based), fee waivers, and employment. An extensive list of funding sources available to students is published in the *Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002* (pp. 14-19) and online (www.finaid.usouthal.edu).

The Office of Financial Aid “subscribes to the principle that the purpose of financial aid is to provide assistance to students who, for lack of funds, would otherwise be unable to attend college. Financial aid is awarded according to each individual’s needs in relation to college costs” (*Bulletin*, p. 14).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Suggestion

None.

#2 of 5

Student Counseling

*(Page 61, Line 30): Effective program administration **should** include counseling students on the efficient use of their total financial resources.*

The Office of Financial Aid employs three counselors who provide consultation pertaining to the efficient use of financial resources (*Office of Financial Aid Organizational Chart, September 2000*; personal conversation with Director of Financial Aid, May 14, 2001. See Document 5.4.3.5: 2 of 50). In addition to these counselors, the Office has established other avenues to educate students in personal finance and budgeting. These avenues include a website that provides a range of information pertaining to money management (www.finaid.usouthal.edu/Budgeting.html). Furthermore, entrance and exit interviews are required for students receiving financial aid. These reinforce the rights and responsibilities of borrowers. Finally, there is an abundance of literature (bulletins and brochures) concerning these topics available for student use.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Suggestion

None.

#3 of 5

Institution-Wide Coordination

*(Page 61, Line 32): There **must** be provision for institution-wide coordination of all financial aid awards.*

USA requires that all financial assistance to students be coordinated through the Office of Financial Aid. All scholarships, whether academic or athletic in nature, are centralized for distribution through the Office of Financial Aid (personal conversation with Director of Financial Aid, May 14, 2001. See also Document 5.4.3.5. 4 of 5).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#4 of 5

Audit of Program

*(Page 61, Line 34): All funds for financial aid programs **must** be audited in compliance with all federal and state requirements.*

The Grants and Contracts Accounting Office, in conjunction with an outside accounting firm, conducts an independent annual audit of federal awards. The latest audit conducted by Ernst and Young found “the financial statements provided present fairly in all material respects...and current funds, revenues, expenditures and other changes for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles” (Ernst and Young Report for year ending September 30, 2001).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#5 of 5

Title IV Compliance

(Page 61, Line 36): An institution participating in Title IV programs must comply with the regulations in the student loan programs as established under Title IV of the 1992 Higher Education Amendments. Excessive default rates in the student loan program may be cause for conducting a special evaluation.

USA is approved to administer the following Title IV Higher Education Assistance programs: The Federal Pell Grant Program, the Federal Family Education Loan Program,

and the federal campus-based programs. The federal campus-based programs that USA is approved to administer are as follows: the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant Program, the Federal Work Study Program, the Federal Job Location and Development Program, and the Federal Perkins Loan Program. To continue to participate in these programs, USA files the Fiscal Operations Report and Application to Participate by no later than October 1 of each year to obtain funding for the award year beginning the following July 1.

Excessive default rate is defined by the United States Department of Education as 25% of students who received loans in any fiscal year. The default rate for USA students receiving loans for FY1995 is 5.8%, FY1996 is 7%, and FY1997 is 6.9%. USA is far from demonstrating what is defined as an excessive default rate; therefore, further examination is not warranted (Official Default Rate, Information for Financial Aid Professionals, at www.ifap.ed.gov. See also Document 5.4.3.5: 5 of 5).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

5.4.3.6 Student Health Services

#1 of 1

Effective Program

*(Page 62, Line 3): An institution **must** provide access to an effective program of health services and education consistent with its purpose and reflecting the needs of its constituents.*

Student Health Services is administered by the Family Practice Department of the University's College of Medicine, and its goal is to provide convenient and effective primary medical care, health education and outreach, and counseling and consultation services to all students actively enrolled at USA. (See Document 5.4.3.6: 1 of 1). The Student Health Center (SHC) is a facility located on the main campus and staffed by physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and LPNs. The Administrative Director of the SHC has an MBA with extensive experience in healthcare administration. The Medical Director is a family physician with extensive clinical and faculty experience. The SHC benefits from its close relationship with the College of Medicine. A Health Provider is available for appointments between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. weekdays and is also available by telephone for emergencies arising after regular hours. Registered nurses staff the Center from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. when school is in session. A number of full-time staff and student volunteers also work with the SHC to administer a variety of health education and outreach programs designed to maintain and improve the health of USA's student population.

SHC offers a variety of services designed to meet the needs of the USA community based on feedback from the Student Health Advisory Committee (SHAC). The SHAC

meets twice a month and is active in advising Student Health Administration on new programming and additional services that would benefit the student population. The SHC also collects and reviews other student input on all organized activities and continues to seek feedback and evaluation on current services.

As a primary care clinic, the SHC offers basic medical services such as outpatient primary care visits, laboratory tests, physical exams, screening and counseling, immunizations, health education and prevention, gynecological services, and after-hours call coverage. Evaluations by a health care provider and referral service are provided to the student body at no cost above the student health fee. The SHC also provides a number of more advanced health services to students for minimal fees above the student health fee. These include special physical exams, STD Screening, laboratory tests, x-rays, immunizations, gynecological services, sports medicine, and allergy injections. The University Pharmacy is located on the first floor of the Health Services Building, where students are entitled to a 10% discount off the pharmacy administration fee as well as discounts off contracted prescriptions and over-the-counter medications. The SHC maintains a chart on all students visiting the center. All records are confidential.

The student health fee is not health insurance and does not cover major medical illness or injury, emergency room visits, laboratory or radiological services, or medical referrals. The emergency room fee at USA hospitals is waived, however, for currently enrolled students presenting their identification card. The student is responsible for all other expenses incurred such as hospital room, physician charges, pharmacy fees, and

laboratory charges. A health insurance policy is available to students for a nominal fee. Students are encouraged to enroll in the health insurance program if they have no other health insurance coverage.

Counseling and informational services are also provided to the student body at no cost above the student health fee. Other services offered at no cost include wellness programs; information and consultation on nutrition, fitness, emotional well-being, weight control, high blood pressure, stress reduction, drug and alcohol use and abuse, contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, and other preventative-health concerns. A health educator and peer health advisory team (made up of USA students) coordinate educational outreach programs and campus events designed to prevent disease and to promote wellness. Examples of health education programs include campus health fair, smoking-cessation programs, vision screening, breast cancer awareness, TB screenings, sickle-cell education and screening, HIV testing, safe spring-break seminars, and diversity training.

The Student Health Center also provides a 24-hour sexual assault hotline, a victim's advocacy program, and a support/recovery program for rape victims. In addition to the wellness programs, the peer health educators noted above provide a number of seminars and outreach programs on student sexual health, with special emphasis placed on contraception, STD's, HIV/AIDS, decision making, risk reduction, and relationships. The SHC provides training to students, faculty and staff regarding student health and health-related issues. In addition, SHC trains sexual-assault counselors, peer educators

(students), members of the Student Health Advisory Council, resident advisors, medical students, community nursing, and physician assistant preceptors.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

Proposal for Excellence

The Principal Committee suggests that a campus-wide survey/assessment of students concerning their perceptions of needs might be helpful in determining the needs of the student body. The frequency of this assessment may be annual, biannual or as designated by some advisory body consisting of health professionals and students.

5.4.3.7 Intramural Athletics

#1 of 1

Personal Development of Students

*(Page 64, Line 7): Intramural sports programs contribute to the personal development of students and **should** be related to the total program of the institution. These programs **should** be directed and supervised by qualified personnel and **should** be appropriately funded.*

USA's intramural athletic activities are established and supported by the Department of Campus Recreation which is a division of the Student Affairs. The Department's mission is to provide opportunities for all members of the USA community to enjoy satisfying recreational experiences related to their particular needs, varying from the highly competitive to those of a non-competitive nature (*Lowdown: A Student Handbook, 2001-2002*, p. 25).

The Department operates under written policies and procedures that support its purpose. Detailed manuals are available, such as the following: the *Student Employee Policies, Procedures Manual, Risk Management Manual, Club Sport Program Guide*, and *Training Procedures Flyers (Campus Recreation Notebook: Handbook and Policies Manual Section)*. The manager and staff members review these guidelines annually as part of their routine evaluative process. Detailed goals, objectives, and criteria for evaluations are written annually to set the Department's priorities (*Campus Recreation Notebook: Goals and Objectives*).

The Student Recreation Center, a facility of over 48,000 square feet, contains two basketball/volleyball courts, six racquetball/handball courts, a track, a fitness/weight room, and a small games area. Fitness classes of many types are offered, including aerobic, step, and Tae Bo. Fitness evaluations, nutritional counseling, and personal training sessions are available also. Intramural competitions are scheduled year round in the following sports: soccer, tube water polo, flag football, ultimate frisbee, dodge ball,

team handball, as well as traditional softball, volleyball, and basketball (*Campus Recreation Notebook: Flyers, Schedules, Promotions*).

Recent program enhancements include a wellness/weight-loss program called Diminishing Dimensions, Rockin' with the Rec (an intense series of programs to introduce the activities of the Recreational Center) and outdoor recreational programs (e.g., rock-wall climbing, hiking, camping, and mountain climbing).

The facilities and activities available through the Student Recreation Center are described in the *Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002* (p. 20) and the *Lowdown* (p. 25), as well as promoted in other print media such as the student newspaper, special flyers, calendars, brochures, and bulletin boards (*Campus Recreation Notebook: Flyers, Schedules, Promotions Section*). The Southfit website (www.southalabama.edu/src/) also describes the various classes, as well as the personalized training and evaluation programs available.

The intramural sports program is a branch of campus recreation and is ultimately under the auspices of the Vice President for Student Affairs. The Manager of Campus Recreation has extensive experience in the field along with a terminal degree in administration. The Assistant Director of Intramural and Recreational Sports has thirteen years of relevant experience in various areas of recreation and student activities. The unit also employs an Exercise Physiologist/Fitness Coordinator with nearly ten years of relevant experience and a M.Ed. in Exercise Physiology. The unit employs many

instructors for the fitness classes, and their qualifications are available on the department's website. Employee evaluations are conducted annually to help in maintaining focus on the department's primary goals (*Campus Recreation Notebook: Job Descriptions, Staff Evaluations*).

According to user logs, the Intramural Sports Programs had more than 225 teams, while the minor sports involved over 500 participants, and over 5,000 people used the weight room. Aerobics classes have been a regular success, with over 5,500 participants (*Campus Recreation Notebook: Participation Records*). The array of programming offered by campus recreation/intramural and recreational sports attests to the appropriate funding level provided by USA.

In conclusion, the Campus Recreation Program is run in a highly professional manner, striving for inclusion, safety, fitness, and fun. The participation of nearly two thousand students in intramurals demonstrates a strong promotional campaign. A positive public relations program continues to build the program. In the near future, this growth will necessitate additional facilities. More weight-lifting and cardiovascular equipment, basketball courts, and outdoor recreation facilities will be needed. The Campus Recreational Program currently has adequate facilities to support its mission and goals, but--as the program grows--attention to expansion must be considered.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Suggestion

None.

5.5 INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

5.5.1 Purpose

#1 of 4

Goals and Objectives

*(Page 62, Line 14): The intercollegiate athletics program **must** be operated in strict adherence to a written statement of goals and objectives which has been developed by the administration, in consultation with the athletic director, with appropriate input from the faculty, and which has been given official institutional approval.*

The following is an excerpt of the philosophy of the Department of Athletics, more specifically a list of ideals that guide the Department's existence (*Department of Athletics Policies and Procedures Manual*, p. 2; *Student Athlete Handbook*, p. 4, Document 5.5: 1 of 4).

1. To recognize the dignity and worth of every individual who comes in contact with the Department of Athletics.
2. To provide equal opportunity to every student-athlete to develop his/her maximum ability, both in the classroom and on the playing field, regardless of race, creed, nationality, or economic status.

3. To provide the best available coaching and training staffs in order to bring out the athletic potential of all its student-athletes.
4. To develop all student-athletes so that each can become a contributing member of society and live a rewarding and fulfilling life.
5. To provide the academic support services necessary to maximize the opportunity for academic success and graduation for student-athletes through a system of advising, monitoring academic progress, and identification of potential problems.

The above list was established through a collaborative effort inclusive of student-athletes, coaches, and administrators with final approval of the Athletics Council. The Council oversees all elements of the Department of Athletics and is made up of five faculty and other members of the USA community. USA displays its approval of the Department's mission, philosophy, and goals by publishing them in the *Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002* (p. 3).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#2 of 4

Support of Institutional Purpose

*(Page 62, Line 19): This statement **must** be in harmony with, and supportive of, the institutional purpose and should include explicit reference to the academic success, physical and emotional well-being, and social development of student-athletes.*

As stated in USA's mission, "The University is committed to the education of the whole person--the creative person. To accomplish this, a range of curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students to expand their cultural, physical, and emotional awareness are provided" (*Bulletin*, p. 3). The mission of the Department of Athletics is to complement and supplement this "total educational" program of the University. The Department must provide learning experiences for all student-athletes and give each individual the opportunity to share in personal and group success. The Department provides student involvement in activities that help develop unity by encouraging a common quest for all students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends of USA.

The athletic program is committed to enriching the mental and physical capabilities of student-athletes while developing and building a respected program that is competitive on a national level in selected sports, while at the same time operating a quality program in the other sports that will create a basis for pride among the varied constituencies of the University (*Bulletin*, p. 3). Furthermore, the Department of Athletics takes a strong position in guiding and supporting student-athletes through the provision of academic support services needed to maximize the academic success of all participants

(Department of Athletics Policies and Procedures Manual, p. 2; Student Athlete Handbook, p. 4).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#3 of 4

Athletics Program Evaluation

*(Page 62, Line 23): The intercollegiate athletics program **must** be evaluated regularly and systematically to ensure that it is an integral part of the education of athletes and is in keeping with the educational purpose of the institution.*

The Department of Athletics is evaluated on a regular and systematic basis, via the National Collegiate Athletic Association Self-Study, the Title IX Committee on Gender Equity, student-athlete exit interviews, and the University Athletic Council. Several basic areas are included in evaluations: institutional mission, governance and administrative issues, academic issues, financial issues, conduct of student-athletes and coaches, commitment to rules compliance, and the student-athlete experience. These evaluations ensure that the Department is operating in accordance with the educational purposes of USA. (See Documents 5.5.1: 3 of 4 A-E).

The intercollegiate athletic program is operated in strict adherence to the written statement of goals and objectives that, according to the *Department of Athletics Policies and Procedures Manual*, was developed by the Athletic Director in conjunction with the

staff and with input from the appropriate faculty committee and members of the administration. The goals and objectives of the Department are reviewed and changed as needed with the approval of the Faculty Athletic Representative and University President. The athletic program is operated in conformity with the rules and regulations of the Sun Belt Conference, the NCAA, and the University.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#4 of 4

Self-Study

*(Page 62, Line 27): Evaluation of the athletics program **must** be undertaken as part of the self-study conducted in connection with initial accreditation or reaffirmation of accreditation.*

As demonstrated through the process and results of this particular SACS University self-study along with the most recent NCAA Certification self-study, evaluation of the athletics program has been and is undertaken as a part of a University self-study. In August of 1997 the NCAA certified the Program and the University. This classification means that the institution is considered to be operating its athletics program in substantial conformity with operating principles adopted by the Association's Division I membership. The certification is based on the results of an institutional self-study

concerning all areas of operations. The self-study identified specific areas of attention in gender equity and minority opportunity issues. The Department of Athletics addressed these issues by formulating specific plans to enhance the areas of gender equity and minority opportunities. These plans were submitted to the NCAA and will be evaluated as to their progress in a mid-certification review to occur in the summer/fall of 2002.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

5.5.2 Administrative Oversight

#1 of 3

Administrative Control

*(Page 63, Line 1): The administration **must** control the athletics program and contribute to its direction with appropriate participation by faculty and students and oversight by the governing board.*

The President, who is accountable to the Board of Trustees, has overall responsibility for all programs provided by the University. The Athletic Director reports directly to the President with whom he meets on a regular basis. The President appoints the Faculty Athletic Representative (who serves as the chair of the Intercollegiate Athletic Council) and additional members of the Athletic Council. Faculty also play important oversight

roles by serving on the Academic Compliance Committee, the Intercollegiate Athletic Council, and the Athletic Certification Committee (described in Section 5.5.2, pg. 90 and 101). Recent tangible examples of improvement as a result of administrative oversight are as follows:

- Creation and appointment of a Senior Women's Administrator at the rank of Associate Athletic Director;
- Creation of a subcommittee on gender/minority equity;
- Survey of students' interests and abilities, which led to the creation of a women's soccer program; and
- An increase in the number of full- and part-time coaches in women's athletics (women's golf, women's tennis, women's track, and cross-country).

No major policy change occurs without the President's approval. In accordance with recent NCAA certification, the Department of Athletics, under direction of the Senior Women's Administrator/Associate Athletic Director, has taken appropriate steps ensuring implementation of long-term goals for gender equity.

The Athletic Director serves as an ex-officio member of the Jaguar Athletic Club, an external organization that raises funds for athletics. The student-athletes are represented through their membership in the student-athlete advisory committee providing an active voice in Department policies and procedures. There is on-going communication among the President, the Faculty Athletic Representative, the Athletic Director, and the Assistant

Athletic Director-Compliance concerning NCAA and Sun Belt Conference compliance issues.

The Board of Trustees is primarily a policy-making board that provides general oversight, sets policies for USA, and approves the budget for USA--including the budget of the Department of Athletics. The President, Vice President for Student Affairs, Athletic Director, Registrar, Director of Admissions, and the Director of Financial Affairs share responsibility for the conduct and oversight of the athletics program. USA has established clearly defined roles and responsibilities and has created mechanisms (both internal and external) to review and monitor compliance with the requirements, rules, and regulations of the NCAA, Sun Belt Conference, and USA.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#2 of 3

President's Ultimate Responsibility

*(Page 63, Line 4): Ultimate responsibility for that control **must** rest with the chief executive officer.*

As mandated by the NCAA (Bylaw 6.1.1, *NCAA Manual, 2001-2002*) and defined in the *Department of Athletics Policies and Procedures Manual* (pp. 12-13), ultimate authority for all aspects of the athletics program must, and does, rest with the President.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#3 of 3

Conduct of Athletics Program

*(Page 63, Line 5): It is **essential** that responsibilities for the conduct of the athletics program and for its oversight be explicitly defined and clearly understood by those involved.*

The Athletic Director establishes the priorities of the program and is in charge of and responsible for the daily operations of the Department of Athletics. The Athletic Director has responsibility for budget creation and management, oversight of fund-raising activities, supervision of all head coaches, scheduling of competition, use of facilities, contracts and agreements, conference affiliation, student-athlete welfare, and rules compliance.

USA employs an Assistant Athletic Director-Compliance (DC) and a Compliance Coordinator who report directly to the Athletic Director. Both the DC and the

Compliance Coordinator monitor compliance and certifications, and they serve as the direct liaison to other USA units that assist in the certification process (i.e., Admissions, Registrar's Office, and Financial Aid), along with the Faculty Athletic Representative and the Athletic Certification Committee. The Athletic Certification Committee is comprised of faculty and staff members from the individual colleges. The Athletic Certification Committee's primary purpose is to certify the academic progress for eligibility in continued athletics participation.

The DC facilitates training in rules compliance for student-athletes through annual team meetings and annually updates the Compliance Section of the *Student-Athlete Handbook*. The DC meets monthly with all coaches regarding compliance matters. The DC and the Senior Women's Administrator (SWA) oversee requisite data collection and report findings concerning Sun Belt and NCAA mandates (e.g., recruiting, initial and continuing eligibility, and Title IX implementation). Any rules violations are investigated by the DC and reported internally to the Director of Athletics, the Faculty Athletic Representative and the President, and externally to the NCAA and Sun Belt Conference. In addition, the DC attends regularly scheduled weekly meetings with the Director of Athletics.

The SWA also functions as the Associate Athletic Director overseeing departmental financial affairs, media relations, athletic training operations, academic services, facilities, and the men's and women's coaching staffs. In these roles, the SWA interacts daily with the coaches and other support staff. The SWA reports to the Director of Athletics.

The Assistant Athletic Director for Development coordinates all external activities including marketing, advertising, ticket sales, and corporate sponsorship contracts. This position supervises the Director of Marketing and Promotions and reports to the Director of Athletics. The Department's Business Manager is an active member in the day-to-day operations of the Department interacting with the SWA and ultimately reporting to the Vice President for Financial Affairs.

The Faculty Athletic Representative plays an active role in the athletic program. The Representative serves on the Athletic Certification Committee that meets once per semester. In addition, the Representative is the chair of the Athletic Council. In these roles, the Representative has a great impact on the philosophy, direction, and focus of the Department of Athletics. The Representative administers the NCAA Coaches Certification Test, as required by the NCAA.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

5.5.3 Financial Control

#1 of 5

Administrative Control

*(Page 63, Line 9): All fiscal matters pertaining to the athletics program **must** be controlled by the administration, with ultimate responsibility resting with the chief executive office.*

The Athletic Director (through extensive consultation with the SWA, the administrative staff, and the coaches) develops the operational budget for the Department of Athletics. The operating income of this budget is provided primarily through University allocation. Student athletic fees, investment income, ticket sales, concession sales, corporate sponsorship, Jaguar Athletic Club contributions, and Sun Belt Conference/NCAA revenue sharing supplement USA's allocation. The budget is approved by the USA Budget Committee, the Vice President for Financial Affairs, and ultimately the President *(Department of Athletics Policies and Procedures Manual, p. 48)*. The Athletics Director, the SWA, Athletic Business Manager, and USA Business Office collectively monitor and control all budgetary expenditures.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#2 of 5

External Fund-Raising Activities

*(Page 63, Line 11): If external units (alumni organizations or foundations) raise or expend funds for athletic purposes, all such financial activities **must** be approved by the administration, and all such units shall be required to submit independent audits.*

Gifts and other fund-raising activities are under the auspices of the Jaguar Athletic Club (JAC) and the Athletic Development Office. JAC is the primary external fund-raising arm of the Department of Athletics and is overseen by an Executive Director and ultimately controlled by an elected Board of Directors. JAC's budget, inclusive of expenditures and appropriations, is created by the JAC Executive Director and approved by the JAC Board of Directors. In accordance with the State of Alabama, the University, NCAA, and Sun Belt Conference regulations, JAC is audited by the University's internal audit system annually. The Athletic Director must ultimately approve all expenditures and appropriations.

In addition to JAC, the Athletic Director maintains a Development Office whose main purpose is to identify and solicit corporate sponsorships and increase ticket revenue. The Assistant Athletic Director for Development, who in turn directs a Marketing and Promotions Director, supervises the operations of the Development Office. All corporate contracts must gain approval of the Athletic Director, the Financial Affairs Office, and the University Attorney. The Athletic Director assumes ultimate accountability for the procurement and implementation of all external fund-raising activities. (See Documents 5.5.3: 2 of 5 A and 5.5.3.: 2 of 5 B).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#3 of 5

Scholarships, Grants-in-Aid, Loans, and Student Employment

*(Page 63, Line 16): The administration of scholarships, grants-in-aid, loans, and student employment **must** be included in the institution's regular planning, budgeting, accounting and auditing procedures.*

The Office of Financial Aid administers all scholarships, student employment (work-study), grants-in-aid, and loans. Student-athletes are subject to the same rules, regulations, and oversight as any other student enrolled at USA, as well as to NCAA I regulations (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, p. 14; *Department of Athletics Policies and Procedures Manual*, p. 32).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#4 of 5

Appropriate Oversight and Audit

*(Page 63, Line 19): All income, from whatever source, and expenditures for the athletics program **must** have appropriate oversight by an office of the institution that is independent of the athletics program.*

Income and expenditures for athletics are authorized annually as part of the USA budget process. Purchasing procedures for the Department of Athletics are the same as for any other academic or auxiliary unit of the institution. All income and expenditures require initial approval of the SWA followed by the Athletic Business Manager and, ultimately, the Athletic Director. Following the required Department approval, income and expenditures are then approved by the USA Business Office, which falls under the ultimate control of the Vice President for Financial Affairs.

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#5 of 5

Appropriate Oversight and Audit

*(Page 63, Line 22): All such income and expenditures **must** also be appropriately audited.*

The Department of Athletics is audited annually by USA's internal auditors and bi-annually by approved external auditors (*Ernst and Young Report of Independent Accountants*, March 17, 2000).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

5.5.4 Academic Program

#1 of 4

Recruitment, Admission, Financial Aid, and Eligibility Policies

*(Page 63, Line 24): Institutions **must** have clearly stated written policies pertaining to the recruitment, admission, financial aid, and continuing eligibility of athletes and, with faculty participation, **must** annually monitor compliance with those policies.*

The Department of Athletics has sole responsibility for recruiting student-athletes. JAC members are continually educated concerning NCAA limitations placed upon them by means of information distributed through various publications and via access to departmental, conference, and NCAA websites. As per Sun Belt Conference and NCAA mandates, prospective student-athletes are provided with contact information procedures prior to official visits.

All coaches responsible for recruiting are provided access to the following:

- *NCAA Division I Manual*
- *NCAA Coaches Recruiting Guide*
- *NCAA Transfer Guide*
- *NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete*
- *On-Line NCAA LSDb Search Engine*

All coaches involved with recruiting are required to pass an annual NCAA Coaches Certification Test. The Faculty Athletic Representative administers the exams and forwards the results to the Sun Belt Conference office. Any coach who fails the test is prohibited from off-campus recruiting activities and must wait thirty days to retake the test. All recruiting procedures (including prospective student-athlete contacts, evaluations, and unofficial or official visits) are recorded and monitored by the coaching staffs, the Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance, and the Compliance Coordinator. All financial aspects involved in the recruiting process are monitored and approved by the Department of Athletics Business Officer, and ultimately the USA Division of Financial Affairs. Tremendous attention is given to sustain the coordination and communication among the coaching staff, the Compliance Office, and the Business Office to adhere to NCAA Sun Belt Conference and USA regulations. Ultimate accountability rests with the Director of Athletics.

The procedures for admission of student-athletes to USA follow the mandates of the NCAA and are the same as those for the general student population. The Enrollment Services Division, through the Office of the Associate Vice President for Enrollment

Services and the Office of Admissions and Orientation, provides services for students throughout the admissions process (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, p. 7).

As mandated by the NCAA Principle Governing Financial Aid (*NCAA Manual, 2000-2001*, p. 5), “A student-athlete may receive athletically related financial aid administered by the institution...provided the amount does not exceed the cost of education authorized by the Association.” Abiding by this principle, the Department of Athletics has written procedures defining the designation and distribution of all financial aid (*Department of Athletics Policies and Procedures Manual*, p. 32).

At the beginning of both the fall and spring semesters, the Director of Academic Services and the Compliance Director review the academic progress of all student-athletes and forward that information to the Faculty Athletic Representative. Furthermore, a standing athletic-eligibility committee composed of faculty and staff reviews and certifies (independently of the athletics program) continuing eligibility and satisfactory academic progress as defined by the NCAA (*NCAA Certification Committee Roster, 1999-2000*).

The guidelines for continuing eligibility are provided in the *Department of Athletics Policies and Procedures Manual* (p. 26) and the *Student-Athlete Handbook* (p. 33).

The Athletic Council, which meets once per semester, is charged with the responsibility to support and evaluate academic accountability, ethical accountability, NCAA compliance and financial accountability of the Department of Athletics. The Council’s

membership includes five faculty members. The Council recommends to the President of USA the general policies pertaining to intercollegiate athletics (*Student-Athlete Handbook*, p. 10; *Athletic Department Policies and Procedures Manual*, pp.19-20).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#2 of 4

Policy Implementation

(Page 63, Line 28): *The implementation of academic, admission and financial aid policies **must** be the responsibility of administrators and faculty not connected with the athletics program.*

USA's academic policies and procedures are administered through the Office of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (*Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin, 2001-2002*, pp. 24-29). The Office of Admissions and Office of Financial Aid (under the direct supervision of the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Services) are responsible for implementation of policies pertaining to admissions and financial aid (*Bulletin*, p. 7). These offices have sole ability for implementation of policies pertaining to financial aid and are not connected with the athletics program (*Bulletin*, pp. 7, 14).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#3 of 4

Special Admissions for Athletes

*(Page 63, Line 31): If there are special admissions for athletes, they **must** be consistent with the institutional policy on special admissions for other students and be under the control of regular academic policies and procedures.*

USA provides a Developmental Studies Program designed for students who do not have the high school grades or test scores generally required for college admission but who, according to other criteria, indicate a potential for academic success in an institution of higher learning (*Bulletin*, p. 9). Admission under this program is open to all students. No exceptions are made for participation in athletics. The control of this program falls under the auspices of the Department of Developmental Studies in the School of Continuing Education and Special Programs, which is ultimately under the direction of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs (*Bulletin*, pp. 117-118).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.

#4 of 4

Maintenance of Good Academic Standing

*(Page 63, Line 34): Academic policies governing maintenance of academic good standing and fulfillment of curricular requirements **must** be the same for athletes as for other students.*

USA utilizes a grade-point balance system (GPB) that determines the student's academic status. The GPB is a relationship between the cumulative number of grade points earned and the total number of credit hours attempted. In addition to meeting NCAA continuing eligibility standards, USA student-athletes must meet the established GPB requirements designating appropriate academic progress (*Bulletin*, p. 27; *Student-Athlete Handbook*, p. 33).

Conclusion

Compliance.

Recommendation

None.