AUXILIARY ENTERPRISE BUSINESS PLAN

Housing & Residence Life

FY2010 – FY 2014

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Submitted
to
Office of Fiscal Affairs
Board of Regents
The University System of Georgia

February 5, 2010
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Introduction:
The Department of Housing & Residence Life is undergoing major transitions at this time. In July 2008, we hired a new Director; in January 2009, he began a staff re-organization process which is still continuing; this full year we are collecting data to allow us to shift from a square-foot-allocation budgeting model to an actual cost model for facilities support; and the University is in the planning stages of moving Housing Reserves from part of the general Auxiliary Reserves to a stand-alone model. We are spending this year analyzing data and developing long-term plans to address facilities, budget, and staffing needs. The Business Operations Specialist in Student Affairs & Enrollment Management has been working with staff in the Division of Business & Finance to do detailed financial analyses of historic and current financial documents, and Housing & Residence Life has now hired part-time staff to improve tracking of current revenues and expenditures. Until we complete the data analysis and long-term planning process, we are not able to develop as detailed a Business Plan as we would like. This document is therefore not as specific as future Business Plans will be.

A third-party group, The SCION Group, LLC partially completed a Student Housing Master Plan two years ago. The document is only partially complete and still in draft form because the final phase of the document, financial documents, had not been completed. After multiple attempts to get the company to complete its work, we cancelled the contract with The SCION Group, LLC. The information already received is very useful. Some excerpts from that document have been included here. The entire document is available at request.

III. Description of Services

The Department of Housing and Housing and Residence Life strives to assist students in their overall personal development by providing clean comfortable housing, academic support, and educational/social programming opportunities to University of West Georgia students.

Clean Comfortable Housing
Clean comfortable housing options include traditional/community style living residence halls, suite style living options, and apartment style accommodations. Traditional housing options include Bowdon, Boykin, Downs, Gunn, Strozier, and Watson Halls. Suite style living includes Tyus Hall and the University Suites. Apartment style accommodations include the Arbor View Apartments. Greek Village offers more residential-style living, with chapter/living rooms and kitchens being shared by 6 to 20 residents.

A close relationship between the Director of Housing and Residence Life and the Director of Facilities and Grounds is maintained in order to ensure that these residence halls are kept clean and operational. Students are encouraged to report maintenance and housekeeping problems directly to facilities through a web based reporting tool. An e-mail is sent to the student reporting the problem, the work information center, and the building supervisor (for follow up).
Academic Support
Academic support is provided through various programming opportunities presented by the hall staff (primarily Resident Assistants) throughout the course of the semester. Resident Assistants (RA’s) assess the needs of their community through various means to provide ample programming opportunities to meet those needs. Since each building has its own specific community, academic support is tailored to the needs of the community.

The Housing and Residence Life staff recognize that the primary reason students come to the University of West Georgia is to complete a degree. As such, we provide a variety of services like the aforementioned programming opportunities to aid them in reaching their ultimate goal. Other services provided are maintaining courtesy and quiet hours so that the residence halls are conducive to studying.

Educational and Social Opportunities
Perhaps the most prominent purpose in the residence halls is that of assisting students in their personal growth and development. Numerous social and educational programs are presented in the residence halls to encourage residents to explore values and social relationships and to apply classroom learning to real-life situations. Additionally students are afforded the opportunity to be a part of the hall government within the residence halls.

Residence hall staff are responsible for presenting educational and social programs in each of their respective buildings. These opportunities have proven over the years to aid students in making a strong connection to the University of West Georgia, making it a place they can call home.

III. Relation to Mission of the University of West Georgia

The mission of the university is to provide educational excellence in a personal environment, and as such the Department of Housing and Housing and Residence Life (DRL) strives to provide that by offering (1) clean comfortable housing, (2) academic support, and (3) educational and social opportunities.

We are a residential university and as such provide competitive housing options to our students. The departmental mission is to have three tiers of housing options for our students, providing one third traditional community style housing, one third suite style living, and one third apartment style living.

IV. Goals

Our goals for this academic year, based on the Division of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management Vision (http://www.westga.edu/~saem/) encompass four categories:

1. Facilities
2. Education and Academic
3. Staffing and Human Resources
4. Operations
All of these are important to the operation and success of our department. Those specific and measurable goals are:

**FACILITIES**
1. Create a routine painting schedule on a 5-year cycle.
2. Repaint all metal shelving/closets in traditional halls.
3. Finalize a 5-year renovation plan for all traditional halls.
4. Increase curb appeal of all residence halls.
5. Spend $50,000 on hall public area upgrades.

**EDUCATION & ACADEMIC**
1. Invite faculty or non-HRL staff into the residence halls at least once each month to interact with students.
2. Identify and have RLCs make personal contact with students whose Fall 2009 GPAs are below 2.80 (but not those students on academic probation).
3. Assist the Excel Center in connecting with residential students who are on academic probation.
4. Develop one new living-learning initiative for the 2010-2011 academic year.
5. Develop and implement an assessment tool for the RPM experience.
6. Develop a community service plan for the Department.
7. Host at least one large-scale community service event each semester.
8. Develop paid ARHC executive positions.

**STAFFING & HUMAN RESOURCES**
1. Increase student employment opportunities in the Department.
2. Increase communication with off-campus housing programs.
3. Develop plan for the next step in the re-organization plan, including Graduate Assistantships.
4. Create an in-house student maintenance team.
5. Continue to increase RA and RPM compensation.
6. Create a plan for professional, student and support staff development.
7. Renovate at least half of staff apartment kitchens and bathrooms in traditional halls.

**OPERATIONS**
1. Continue to improve RLC office workspaces.
2. Purchase and implement usage of assignments software for department's needs (same goal from 08/09).
3. Seek assistance from a UWG academic department or student, in developing a marketing plan for our departmental program and/or initiatives.
4. Develop a schedule by which departmental publications are updated on an annual basis.
5. Present phase II of Blueprint project.
6. Implement strategies to create a 5% reduction of our utilities consumption.
7. Increase resources provided on HRL website.
8. Create strategies to reduce propped doors and increase hall security.
9. Increase cameras and other safety strategies.
10. Invite SGA to walk halls during on campus safety walk.
11. Research and implement new strategies (via innovative technology) to increase student resources/information on the Housing and Residence Life website.
12. Conduct at least three assessments of students/non students affected by major administrative operation procedures or functions (i.e. room change, move in day, room sign up, contract appeals process).

VI. Critical Success Factors (CSF’s)

The Department of Housing and Housing and Residence Life has several critical success factors, all of which are imperative to the growth and success of the department. Each CSF is dependant on another, and as such we strive to provide and improve these items.

Acquiring and retaining our customers (students) is a definite critical success factor for our department. Without students in the beds on campus, we are unable to meet revenue projections in order to sustain our department. It is vital to our operation to be able to acquire and retain students in on campus housing. We do this in a variety of ways. We strive to provide competitively priced housing options. We also provide a plethora of options, which are described in the first section of this plan. One of the ways we ensure that a certain number of beds are filled is by having a policy in place (freshmen residency requirement) to require students to live on campus. We work to provide good customer service in order to retain students in on campus housing by providing our staff with extensive training.

Customer satisfaction is another CSF concerned with our department. While we strive to make everyone happy, this is at times not the case. We are an educational institution and as such the correct answer for a student’s educational development is not always the answer that will make them happy. An example of a way we work to provide good customer service is through a liberal room change process, allowing students to change rooms as often as they wish.

Another way we try to improve customer satisfaction is through our satisfaction survey each Spring semester. This survey encompasses many aspects that relate to how well we are providing our service to the students. We use the date received to implement new strategies and improve our existing strategies. We have accomplished our FY2009 goal of completing the survey in the Fall semester as a way to improve in the current year. We will continue to do this from this point forward. We are doing this in hopes that it will increase the number of freshmen who remain on campus for the following year(s).

The quality of our housing options is critical in our ability to succeed. The housing options, while extensive, are in some places inadequate in comparison to the newer buildings on campus. We also face a challenge in recruiting new students, because many of the institutions with which they are comparing us have much newer housing facilities than UWG. Furniture and building aesthetics have aged considerably over the years. Some older buildings have seen improvements through renovations or interior decorating that has transpired in the past to improve the quality of the buildings. We have recently completed a $400,000 renovation plan which has helped with progressing this problem, but it has not addressed some of the more major renovation needs. See attachment “Facilities Renovation Phase I Summary Report” for a current status.
One critical success factor where the department has made some extensive changes in the recent past is in the area of staffing. This change in staffing has caused challenges as multiple individuals learn their role and position within the department. With new staffing comes new reporting structures and job expectation shifts. This has caused the department the greatest challenge recently. Below is a summary of personnel changes within the mid-management level in the last 2 years.

- Director – New from another institution
- Associate Director for Housing – Resigned to accept position in Dean of Students Office.
- Assistant Director for Programming earned Assistant Director for Residence Life promotion now assuming full responsibility over all Residence Hall Staffing. Has been employed by department for 3.5 years
- Assistant Director for Administrative Operations was promoted internally from entry level program coordinator position. Has been employed by department for 3.5 years.
- New Assignments Coordinator position was developed and hired, individual who was hired was new to University and College employment, working previously in Engineering and Construction
- Front Office Administrative Assistant transferred from Contracts, Planning and Development (now AECS)

The only position which saw little to no change was from our Business Manager of 20 years. She has assumed some greater roles and transitioned away from some others, but shares the greatest experience among the team.

Another area where we have seen solid improvement compared to past reports is in the area of student employees. The average turnover and loss of staff between Fall and Spring has sometimes reached and averaged in the upper teens. This past transition we lost 7 student staff and the previous year saw 12 lost student staff. In addition, we have grown our student staff program by almost 10 students with increased student assistants in the following areas:

- Front Office Assistants
- Budget and Reconciliations Assistants
- Grounds and Janitorial Assistants
- Moving and Facility Operations Team
- Student Assistant for Assistant Director for Residence Life

In addition, there are plans to add the following student positions:

- Student security patrol force
- Light maintenance
- Additional grounds and janitorial assistants
- Trash and garbage staff

VII. Revenue Sources
Sources of revenue derive from student housing through housing fees, social fees and the Residential Peer Mentoring (RPM, previously FYRST) fee. Each fee is based on parts of our mission. The housing rate is for renting the space in their specific living environment. The social fee is designed to supplement the housing fee and is kept in student fees account. Thus, the University serves as a steward of that fee for the student and it is used to provide programming for the students throughout the year. The RPM fee is similar to that of the social fee, but is used only for RPM related expenses. RPM is the Department of Housing and Residence Life’s first year experience program which accounts for approximately 17% of the occupancy in campus housing. This program’s effectiveness is struggling and being considered for cancellation for FY2010.

The Department of Housing and Residence Life also receives a small amount of E&G funds, which have been used for student academic staffing needs. Beginning with FY 2011, those funds are being discontinued, as we move more to operating as an independent auxiliary.

**Revenue Projections**

In order to discuss revenue projections it is necessary to discuss occupancy projections as well.

Occupancy projections are based on a percentage of students housed as that relates to enrollment projections.

Following is a summary of enrollment compared to housing occupancy for the past 5 years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>UWG Enrollment</th>
<th>HRL Occupancy</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2005</td>
<td>8330</td>
<td>2514</td>
<td>30.18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2006</td>
<td>8475</td>
<td>2427</td>
<td>28.64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2007</td>
<td>8842</td>
<td>2533</td>
<td>28.65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2008</td>
<td>9220</td>
<td>2591</td>
<td>28.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>9661</td>
<td>2697</td>
<td>27.92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The primary explanation for the decrease in occupancy percentage from FY 2006 to FY 2008 is the fact that we have increased our capacity by 400 beds. We have brought an estimated 1200 beds online through new construction and taken approximately 800 beds offline by returning traditional residence halls to University Administration use.

Revenue projections are based on occupancy, and rate increases are proportionate to the increase in costs. We have aggressively increased housing rates during the past two years.
to catch up with increased renovation costs. We have done while maintaining our commitment to affordable housing within the state of Georgia and continue to remain very competitive as compared to peer institutions across the state.

**Pricing/Fee Strategy**
Pricing is based on ever changing market conditions. The housing market in Carrollton, Georgia has grown substantially in the past 7 years, with at least three new apartment complexes marketed to college students coming on-line. Pricing of the buildings has generally been competitive with other schools in the University system as well as that of the market in Carrollton.

Our privatized options, as you will see, have been priced competitively; however due to some items discussed in the financial plan section, we have been operating at a deficit in these specific buildings. We feel this is due to an increase in the housing options offered off campus, as well as a lack on our part to analyze the financial data to appropriately account for costs and price our options accordingly.

**Market Analysis**
There are numerous things that the Department of Housing and Residence Life would like to do in order to improve customer satisfaction and the overall operation of the department. Those items are an increase in our student staff compensation, conversion of rooms in the University Suites to make them more accessible for handicapped students, replacement of outdated or damaged furniture in traditional residence halls, and a 10-month Arbor View contract option.

*Increased Student Staff Compensation*
The Department of Housing and Residence Life employs approximately 100 student staff members in the housing facilities. Their compensation in the beginning was designed to afford them the ability to be compensated enough to cover their room fee. Housing rates have increased 19% for the traditional halls and 20% for Tyus Hall in a 5 year period, and 10% for both the University Suites and Arbor View. There has not been an increase in student staff compensation during that period.

As such we are experiencing difficulty in filling these critical student staff positions. We are proposing an increase in student staff pay to account for the increase in housing fees, to make the position competitive with not only on/off campus opportunities, but comparable to that of other institutions similar to that of West Georgia.

*Furniture Replacement*
In order to make our facilities more attractive to potential new students, it would be beneficial to replace outdated or damaged furniture. This has been done in Bowdon and Downs Halls and we have seen an increased engagement among students in the common areas of these buildings. Before the furniture was replaced, these common areas were not used as they were designed. Now there are numerous students congregating in the lobbies, which is what was intended when these facilities were built. They are designed
for student interaction, and through this interaction they are able to grow and prosper into successful students at our University.

Strozier, Boykin, and Watson Halls would benefit tremendously from improved furniture and aesthetics on the interior of the buildings. We are confident that if these areas are improved, student interaction will improve in each of these facilities as well. This will also help make a better first impression on prospective students, which can benefit the university’s recruiting efforts.

**IX. Financial Plan**

As discussed previously, the Department of Housing & Residence Life is currently undergoing major transitions, as we move from a small department, with a square-footage based financing, and with reserves that are part of general Auxiliary Reserves to a complex department, with actual cost financing, and separate reserves. This is an extremely complex transition, and all of the financial analysis and planning is not yet complete.

The two areas in which we are projecting increased costs in the next five years are salaries and general operating costs. Salaries are expected to increase because of (1) continued reorganization which will result in increased responsibilities for some people, and which may result in new positions being added; (2) increases in student wages to compensate for increases in rent (most student staff are required to live on campus and pay rent) as well as increasing performance expectations; and (3) raises after FY 2011 consistent with whatever raises the state funds in E&G departments. For general operating costs, we have estimated a 4% increase each year to cover costs such as utilities, insurance, and supplies.

We also anticipate spending additional money in renovations, but have not yet completed that plan, so the financial documents do not reflect that.

Currently we have been operating at a deficit in our privatized housing and will continue to do so through FY 2009. This is due in part to increasing costs related to running the facilities that were not anticipated in the respective pro formas for those buildings. Another issue leading to that deficit is the allocation of plant expenditures. We are currently using a square foot allocation base, and as such if a certain building is not operating at full capacity, we are still paying for the unused portion of that building.

We have been doing well in our traditional style housing as there is no debt service on these buildings. Although we are operating above break even in these facilities, the amount of the deficit accrued in the privatized halls is the cause for the department to operate in the red.

There are measures in place to pull the department out of a deficit through a strategic increase in rates throughout the next five years. This can be seen in the financial data provided. It appears that the department had not been strategic enough in our
deliberation of assigning these fees in the past, and we are striving to improve upon this process in the coming years.

X. Performance Measures

In addition to our quality of life survey, we have made multiple efforts at acknowledging our strengths and improving our weaknesses. Because this is the first year of implementation, we do not have baseline measures to project the next five years. We will include those in the next update of this plan.

Closing

It is the Department of Housing and Residence Life’s goal to spend time each fall semester processing the information necessary for this report and to begin having this report prepared and ready by mid-January each year. If the Board of Regents requests this information on a different timeline, adjustments will be made accordingly.