

Chapter 4

SERVICE REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT

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1 Annual Processes

At the College, there is a well established Service Review (survey process), designed to obtain feedback from users of College services. While this has been the main focus of the Working Group's attention, the Group also obtained information about the following annual and ongoing processes which are used to assess and improve the quality of service provided.

Most services track activity levels and have a set of key measures of service which show trends and are used to report, and to help improve ongoing monthly and annual data. [See

Rationale: A 3-year cycle was chosen because it would be fairly manageable, and provide regular feedback and useful comparative data over a short time-frame. A 2-year cycle was considered (as CNC is a 2-year institution), but not chosen because it was felt that including more services in any given year in the surveys would make them too lengthy and lead to poorer response rates.

3 The Service Review Process

The Service Review Process is described in Appendix M: *CNC Guidelines for Service Reviews*.

Time/Cost: The process is relatively easy to administer and cost-effective (although it does represent a significant commitment on the part of the College). The average annual cost, in printing and support staff time, is approximately \$3,450, taking 1998 as a representative year. In 1998, 1699 surveys were distributed; 515 were returned. Printing

- 4 There was ample opportunity for input into the development and editing of survey items.
- 5 The results of the survey were generally useful to department members, sometimes helping departments identify the differences between the service they intend to provide and those which user groups perceive they offer.
- 6 Survey results are used in varying degrees in planning services and in preparing budgets.
- 7 The results have been used to improve various aspects of department services.
- 8 The surveys are viewed as a good source for obtaining feedback on client satisfaction; however, equal emphasis was placed on ongoing input received (comments, suggestions, tracking trends in use, etc.)

a) Perceived Gaps/Shortcomings in Current Evaluation Processes

Individual departments highlighted concerns which included the following:

- 1 Some confusion regarding how surveys are distributed.
- 2 Regional campus services might wish to be included in the evaluation process.
- 3 Some Prince George campus service areas are interested in input from the Regions.
- 4 Several user groups are being missed in the current process (e.g. Purchasing - suppliers; Security Services - students; Residence - summer residents). In the case of the Residence, other methods such as comment cards or exit surveys might be used; to be explored with the service area.
- 5 In terms of the survey format, length and anomalies in the rating scales caused some concern. There was also an interest in having items more targeted to user groups and in providing an opportunity to drop off surveys where they are completed (rather than delivering them to another location).
- 6 Difficulty in providing negative feedback to department personnel.
- 7 Some areas believe they receive very little feedback when surveys are completed (particularly those that have less direct contact with users).
- 8 Several service areas which are revenue generators (e.g. Daycare, Residence, Cafeteria, Bookstore) are governed/influenced by expectations other than those covered in surveys.
- 9 Need for follow up review by/with supervisor to assess progress in areas of concern.

b) "Best Practices" Currently in Use

In a number of cases, departments generated ideas which they believe will improve the process of evaluating services as well as methods of effectively using the results of the surveys. Several of these have already been implemented by the departments and include:

- 1 Careful editing and modifying of survey items in order to gather information from a variety of target populations, including the use of exit surveys and mail-outs where appropriate.
- 2 Increased number of survey drop-off locations to encourage returns.
- 3 Consistency in rating scales.
- 4 Involvement of all staff in the area in the formulation of survey questions.
- 5 Extended debriefing opportunities to more effectively use survey results to set goals, objectives and budget priorities.
- 6 Ongoing evaluation mechanisms, such as suggestion boxes, questionnaires, tracking of use measures, etc. (more fully described in Section 1: Annual Processes above)

4 Compliance with SCOE A Criteria for Service Reviews

The Working Group believes that the service review processes, both annual and cyclical,

Institutional Strategic Plan

While CNC does not have a single Strategic Plan document, service reviews are consistent with Mission and Goals statements. Results of the reviews are used within the service area for planning purposes (to set goals and objectives and budget priorities, or improve a particular aspect of the service based on comments

developed procedures for continuously checking on people who were working late at night.

In addition to survey results, other measures (outline in Section 1: Annual Processes above) are used extensively to determine trends, justify budget changes, and make ongoing improvements.

6 Summary of Recommendations

The Working Group acknowledges and commends the efforts of service departments in soliciting evaluative feedback from their constituents and in using the information to improve the quality of service offered. The following recommendations merely seek to enhance existing practices.

Recommendation 4.1: Greater attention to orienting departments to the purpose, methods and uses of the survey.

Recommendation 4.2: Inclusion of staff, faculty and administration in a department in the formulation of survey questions and selection of target groups.

Recommendation 4.3: Provision of opportunity to fully review the significance of survey results, to use the information constructively to set goals and objectives, to influence direction, and to establish priorities.

Recommendation 4.4: Formal reporting of results and recommendations and follow-up action.

Recommendation 4.5: Developing of alternative, functional ways of achieving ongoing evaluative feedback concerning the quality of services offered.

Recommendation 4.6: Revision of the process to address specific concerns raised by departments: student input for Security, supplier input for Purchasing, Regional input, consistent rating scales, more drop-off locations, more flexibility in distribution methods, and concerns about negative comments.

Implementation strategy: The recommendations listed above have been incorporated into the *CNC Guidelines for Service Reviews* in Appendix M (revisions underlined), for consideration by the CNC Institutional Evaluation Steering Committee.

7 Methodology used by the Working Group

Based on the provincial *Institutional Evaluation Guidelines* relating to services reviews (Reference 1), and information about the current CNC Service Review process (Appendix L-M), the Working Group developed a set of questions and conducted interviews with representatives of

each of the 23 Prince George campus service areas. Responses were then compiled (Exhibit 1) and analyzed, to identify areas of consensus, perceived gaps/shortcomings in current evaluation processes, and “best practices” currently in use. These in turn formed the basis for the Group’s recommendations for improvements in the service review process.