UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL ™

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STRATEGIC PLAN

2013 - 2016

DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION (SAA)

INSPIRING GREATNESS

CONTENTS

1. PREAMBLE

The strategic direction of the Department of Student Academic Administration (SAA) is a culmination of an extensive process of consultation with staff. It is informed by the strategic direction of the Registrar's Division and is aligned to the broader vision, mission, values, goals and strategic objectives of the University (revised in 2012).

The Department considers its future in the next three years (2013 to 2016) against a backdrop of challenges in higher education at both institutional and national level. It also aims to establish itself as a collective unit underpinned by respect, accountability, professionalism and participatory decision making.

2. ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION

SAA operates university-wide and supports the academic endeavour in accordance with the devolution principle underpinning the university's college model. SAA provides crucial academic support functions to the colleges and is responsible for determining, disseminating, implementing and reviewing policies, principles, regulations, procedures and systems relating to academic administration and venue bookings. SAA also manages staff access to the ITS student system to ensure that student data is updated and corrected.

3. DIVISIONAL STRUCTURE

The organisational structure has been established, posts have been evaluated, vacant posts have been filled and there is stability to create a progressive forward looking team. The Department of Student Academic Administration is made up of the following sections:

3.1 General Enquiry Offices (GEO)
The one-stop general enquiry offices provide a seamless academic administrative service to students on the three main campuses. They provide general information about application, admission and registration process as well as the printing and supply of academic records to current and past former students on demand. In addition, these offices administer the twice-yearly exam sessions on the different campuses and provide commissioner of oaths services.

3.2 Applications and Information Office (AIO)
This office is responsible for preparation, publication and distribution of application forms and prospectuses for applicants. It also coordinates the processing of undergraduate South African applications via the Central Applications Office (CAO) and of non-CAO applications (returning students, international undergraduate and postgraduates).

3.3 Central Student Records and Archive Office (CSR&AO)

The central records section is responsible for archiving student files, printing certificates of merit, Dean's Commendations and degree certificates for graduation ceremonies and replacement certificates on request. A verification service is also provided and academic qualifications are verified for verification bodies, other universities and prospective employers of former students.

3.4 The central Timetabling and Venue Booking Office (TT&VBO)

This office is responsible for compiling university-wide lecture timetables and examination timetables. It manages all venue allocation for lectures, tutorials, tests, meetings, etc. It is also responsible for the hiring of UKZN venues to external organisations which generates about two million rand in revenue for the University.

4. SITUATIONAL ASSESSMENT

SAA does not operate in isolation. It provides a broad spectrum of university-wide services and operates within an integrated system to create a conducive learning environment for students and efficient administrative systems for staff. It is constantly challenged and influenced by legislative, socio-economic and technological factors both within and outside the university. The department further acknowledges that efficient management systems and processes as well as effective academic support are essential to attract and retain students. The strategic plan would therefore examine the challenges and threats arising from the external environment within which SAA operates.

5. VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

5.1 Vision

To provide efficient student-centred academic administrative functions in support of the vision of the university.

5.2 Mission

To support the mission of the university by striving for professionalism, excellence in service delivery and adherence to best practices.

5.3 Values /REACH

Respect: promote respect for both staff and student at all times

Excellence: providing correct and reliable information at all times

Accountability: taking responsibility for our actions

Client Orientation: providing high quality service

Honesty: subscribing to truth and honesty of conduct maintaining confidentiality in dealings with stakeholders

6. STRATEGIC GOALS

6.1 UKZN STRATEGIC GOALS
The university has set out the following strategic goals

GOAL 1: African-led Globalisation

GOAL 2: Responsible Community Engagement

GOAL 3: Pre-eminence in Research

GOAL 4: Excellence in Teaching and Learning

GOAL 5: Institution of choice for students

GOAL 6: Institution of Choice for Staff

GOAL 7: Institution of choice for students

6.2 SAA STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The departmental strategic plan is intended to map out the way forward within the broader context of the UKZN strategic direction as defined in the 2007 to 2016 strategic plan. SAA will therefore use the university goals and strategies to inform and guide the process. The following UKZN goals have been identified as relevant to roles and responsibilities of SAA:

GOAL 5: Institution of choice for students

GOAL 7: Efficient and effective management

7. STUDENT ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL 1
Efficient and student-centred academic administration to become an institution of choice for national and international students

1.1 Strategies
Establish clear academic administration principles, guidelines and processes that are designed around the needs of students in support of UKZN's goal to become an institution of choice.

- formulate overarching rules and procedures to govern a co-ordinated and technology-supported applications, admissions and registration processes

- enforce a user-friendly seamless application system that is compatible with the CAO system to ensure faster turnaround times for processing of applications

- maintain a well-developed interactive website for prospective students on study opportunities and entrance requirements

- coordinate walk-in applications university-wide

- improve communication between prospective students and the university through various means of communication

1.2 Develop a reasonable lecture and exam timetable that are readily available on the website and distributed the staff and students before registration.

- adopt acceptable timeframes for production and distribution of timetables

- Develop an accurate and well constructed timetable that is readily available and widely distributed

- Ensure website design remains pertinent and information is regularly updated and appropriate

1.3 Ensure good service ethos and excellent customer care for all stakeholders

- Develop customer service strategy and guidelines for the Department
- Ensure that all staff participate in diversity and customer service workshops

GOAL 2
Effective and efficient systems and operations

Strategies

2.1 Promote the university brand and increase revenue through the use of venues by external and external stakeholders

- Ensure the Principles and Regulations remain relevant and implemented
- Increase the use of electronic resources for internal bookings
- Ensure customer satisfaction through competent handling of requests
- Maintain an electronic venue viewing and booking system for internal and external stakeholders

2.2 Ensure that all policies, principles, rules and procedures are readily available to the university Community

- Develop a central repository of all student academic administration policies, procedures and guidelines that is accessible to the university community.
- Communicate new and revised policies and procedures to all university stakeholders
- Follow up on Department of Higher Education & Training directives as well as Council and Senate resolutions and decisions to ensure compliance

2.3 Review and adopt best practice for administration of examinations to ensure the integrity of the process:

- Review exam policies and procedures to ensure that they are up to date and relevant

- Ensure that invigilators are carefully selected and trained

- Develop and maintain a decision flow document to guide invigilators in the execution of their duties

2.4 Establish a uniform university-wide records management system to ensure legal, institutional and audit compliance:

- Develop appropriate manual and electronic systems to file and retrieve all records

- introduce online document management system to file, retrieve and disseminate documentation

- Ensure secure, audited processes and environment for printing/issuing/re-issuing and retrieving of all graduation certificates incorporating appropriate verification and authentication

8. EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Targets and Success indicators

SAA would be deemed to have been successful in reaching its goals when there is:

No	Success Indicator	Link to strategy
1	Consistent messages from CAO and UKZN to applicants	1.1
2	Online application system with step by step explanation	1.1
3	Timeous production and distribution of lecture and exam timetables	1.2
4	Faster turnaround times for processing of applications	1.3
5	Use of different communication methods with prospective students.	1.3
6	Increased revenue	2.1
7	Implementation of Standard Operating Procedures for academic administrative processes	2.2
8	Best practice in examination administration	2.3
9	Diverse team of competent and skilled invigilators	2.3
10	Fully functional electronic student records management system	2.4