

FINAL REPORT

Peer Review
Webster University
November 28-30, 2006

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In spring 2006, Webster University conducted a departmental review of the Student Employment Program (SEP), which included completion of the CAS-Based Self-Assessment Guide (SAG). Two peer reviewers were asked to review the results of the SAG and participate in an on-campus peer review, November 28-30, 2006.

The peer review consisted of a one and a half day campus visit and interviews with focus groups and key participants in the Student Employment Program. The reviewers met with representatives of the Career Services, Payroll, Financial Aid, Business, and Undergraduate Admissions Offices; members of the Self-Study Committee; focus groups of student employees, supervisors and international students; members of the Student Employment Allocation Committee; Deborah Dey, Vice President for Students & Enrollment Management; Ted Hoef, Associate Vice President and Dean of Students; and John Buck, Associate Dean of Students and Director of Housing and Residential Life.

This report summarizes overall strengths and challenges of the SEP and provides recommendations to address the identified challenges.

Overall Strengths

- The commitment to a fiscally strong, goal-oriented and educationally fulfilling Student Employment Program.
- The commitment to augmenting the Student Employment Program to focus on career and student development.
- The value of student employee staff as essential to the operation of the university and the financial benefits students receive from working.
- The Student Employment Supervisor Manual and Student Employment Master Calendar created by Career Services contain clear guidelines for specific aspects of the Student Employment Program.
- Formal and established student recognition programs.

Challenges and Recommendations

Three themes identified as challenges based on interviews with focus groups and administrators are:

- **Communication**
- **Professional Development** (Career, Leadership, Job Skills, Supervision)
- **Funding & Available Jobs vs. Awards**

Communication

Duplication of services between offices, lack of regular information reporting, and different software systems were identified as some factors inhibiting open, effective communication. This has a negative trickle down effect for supervisors and students.

Recommendations:

- A. **Develop an electronic method** to bridge the software systems used by Financial Aid and Payroll allowing these departments to share and more efficiently report the information.
- B. **Develop payroll reports** to track hours, earnings, and work award amount and send to supervisors on a regular basis. Research options for electronic timesheet entry.
- C. Career Services to **provide regular updates to key offices and supervisors** about job availability and issues related to student employment.
- D. **Devote a full-time position to student employment administration** to effectively manage and grow the program; delegate some of the duties from the current position to departments that generate the information (e.g., reporting of student earnings).
- E. **Develop a core team of supervisors, Career Services, Payroll, and Financial Aid staff to serve as an advisory team** for the Student Employment Program (SEP). This team will regularly review and assess the needs of the SEP and recommend ways to meet these needs with the support of the university administration.

Professional Development

This is a recurring theme from all constituencies. There are few formal, institutionally supported programs relative to professional and leadership development for student employees and supervisors. Inadequately skilled student employee staff is a challenge for departments. No tie exists between Admission and Alumni regarding student employment.

Recommendations:

- A. **Provide paid, formal, regular training/orientation for students** on a minimum of one time per semester. Develop a student employment manual.
- B. **Share training ideas between departments.** Use supervisors with existing training programs (Residential Life, Information Technology Services) as a core team of trainers for professional development sessions such as *goal setting, conflict management, effective communication, and ethics.*
- C. **Develop an educationally purposeful employment experience** for students in collaboration with *Webster Leads.*
- D. **Encourage supervisors to develop ways to increase responsibility and leadership roles for students** within their positions. Include formal goal setting as a part of student evaluations.
- E. **Survey alumni**, who worked through student employment, to determine the impact and influence of their student employment experience to the development of transferable career skills.
- F. Use students from Webster's communication program as a channel to **promote the vision of the SEP, student employee recognition and other related student employment topics.**

Funding and Available Jobs vs. Awards

The current funding structure (four different funding sources) creates a burdensome monitoring process for supervisors. It may also prevent some students from applying for or receiving jobs for which they might be qualified. Pay rate increases are subjective. Students exhaust their work awards too soon in the year.

Recommendations:

- A. **Provide a “need blind” structure to allocate student salaries** to departments. Allocate student salaries based on positional rather than financial needs of the department. Departments would be approved for a certain number of positions based on their position needs rather than budgeted dollars. Departments would not be allowed to hire more than the approved positions.
- B. **Develop a Wage Classification Review Committee** to review wage increase requests. This would provide consistency in budgeting like positions and a standard by which the increases are granted.
- C. **Limit the number of hours students are permitted to work.** This will reduce the rate that work awards are expended and may open additional positions to other students. This will also reduce or eliminate the need for appeals to increase work awards. Limit Resident Assistants to one job on campus to free up positions for other students.
- D. In partnership with supervisors, **assess student employee positions and create more entry level jobs.** This would provide more jobs, allow mentorship opportunities through peer training, and create incentives for students to learn more advanced skills and to “grow” within the department.
- E. **Provide student employment on international campuses** for students in study abroad programs, which is permissible under federal work study regulations. Creating positions abroad might encourage more students to study abroad since they can earn money while studying abroad and it would also open up on-campus positions for other students. This would require a change in Webster University policy.

The reviewers commend Webster University for conducting a comprehensive Self Assessment and Peer Review Evaluation of the Student Employment Program (SEP). This demonstrates strong commitment to career-based education of students and continuous improvements of the SEP.

The reviewers express gratitude to Suzanne Jones for facilitating their campus visit and being a most gracious hostess; they also thank everybody they met during the course of the visit for their time and participation. It is the reviewers’ hope that the recommendations they make help Webster University to further improve and develop its Student Employment Program consistent with the mission and goals of the institution.

OVERALL STRENGTHS AND GROUP SUMMARIES

Overall Strengths

Webster University is committed to a fiscally strong, goal-oriented and educationally fulfilling Student Employment Program (SEP) as well as growing the SEP to focus on career and student development. This is evident by virtue of the self-study and peer review processes. The financial benefits to students and the value of student employee staff to the operation of the university were two identified needs and strengths of the program by the focus groups and administrators.

Additional strengths of the SEP are the student employment master calendar and supervisor manual, which contain clear and specific guidelines for specific aspects of student employment, and the Outstanding Student Employee of the Year recognition program held twelve times per year.

Group Summaries

I. Career Services, Payroll, Financial Aid, Business Offices, Undergraduate Admissions, and International Recruitment & Services

Specific program **strengths were not expressed** by this focus group. However when asked, “**What one thing you would like to improve or implement in the next 3 months?**” three areas identified were: *additional funding, departments receiving a list of students without jobs, and better communication between departments.*

Challenges identified by these departments are:

- A. **Appeal process through Financial Aid Office.** The appeal process for students with work awards and no jobs versus students appealing to increase their work awards.
 - a. Increasing work awards when students work over their award. This is a manual process, which is labor intensive.
 - b. Availability of jobs compared to students with work awards and those who want to work (work waiting list).
- B. **Lack of communication between departments** administering the SEP.
 - a. Since the SEP is now under Career Services it is difficult for other offices to answer students’ questions pertaining to job availability.
 - b. The Financial Aid, Payroll and Career Services software systems are different. This creates difficulty in tracking earnings, especially in the case of multiple jobs.
 - c. Financial Aid and Payroll use stand alone databases.
- C. **Lack of funding.** The gap between the cost of attendance and financial aid makes the recruitment process challenging as student employment is an important recruitment tool.

Reviewer Observations: There is no deliberate tie in between Admission (recruitment) and Alumni (post-graduation) relative to student employment. Without this, there are no measurable outcomes of the impact of student employment on retention, career development, and alumni giving. If student employment is used as a recruitment tool, it is curious that there does not seem to be an intentional process to use it as a retention tool or for alumni giving. Student employment seemed to be seen primarily as a transactional relationship (financial benefits) and not for the transformational, relational, and leadership opportunities it affords.

II. Self-Study Committee

Not all members were able to attend so comments are not reflective of the entire group. Participation in the self-study was voluntary and in response to a request from Suzanne Jones. It is noteworthy that when asked through what filter the self-study members answered the questions – was it in consideration of the entire campus SEP or members' own departments – it seemed that responses were filtered primarily through the specific department that answered the questions. Therefore, it is not clear to these reviewers if the self-study results are reflective of the campus SEP as a whole. In some areas there are inconsistencies between ratings and comments.

It is clear that **there is a strong commitment to students and their employment experience**. Supervisors recognize the important and valuable contributions student employees make to the department and university. **Strengths evident from interviewing this focus group** are: *Self-Assessment Guide*; *training, development and recognition of students*; and *written policies and procedures*.

1. The **Self-Assessment Guide is very comprehensive** and includes a clear mission statement for the SEP. The Committee clearly identified specific strengths and areas of improvement for the SEP.
2. The Committee shared **specific examples of training, development, and recognition** of students currently provided in their departments or through Career Services. Supervisors provide technical and customer service training, skill-based training, try to capitalize on students' strengths, and allow students to take the initiative in their positions. The campus participates in National Student Employment Week, held the second full week of April.
3. **Written policies and procedures and performance expectations are in place** on both a departmental and an institutional level. The supervisor manual available through Career Services has valuable resources for interviewing, training, motivating and terminating student employees along with good tools and tips for supervisors. Legal advice is available to supervisors on an as needed basis.

The Committee identified **lack of adequate funding through federal work study funds as a primary challenge** for the program. When asked if funding were not an issue, **making sure student employees are available and have employment skills** was the next identified challenge. The Committee also identified staffing; a need for more professional development programming for students and supervisors; for student employees to put value on their own positions; fund allocation – funding priority consistent with institutional protocol; and fiscal responsibility and cost effectiveness of the SEP.

When asked, **“What one thing you would like to improve or implement in the next 3 months?”** the Committee stated: 1) professional development sessions on interpersonal relationships using role playing or web-based training; a program is offered through Career Services and is available upon request; and 2) group training before school starts. Unfortunately, Webster does not allow freshman to start working before the fall term starts even though it is permissible under federal work study regulations (“Operating a Federal Work Study Program”, Chapter 2, page 6-29).

Reviewer Observations: Formal goal setting is not included in student evaluations and there is no accountability to ensure that evaluations are completed by supervisors and returned to Career Services. While there is a primary mission statement for the Student Employment Program, there is not a stated vision for the program on a department or an institutional level.

III. Focus Group - Student Employees

The students involved in this focus group were open and forthcoming about many positive aspects of the Student Employment Program.

The **'quality pieces' of student** employment that they identified were making friends and the ability to apply skills of their major to the job experience. The students feel recognized and appreciated in their student employment positions because a) supervisors treat student employees respectfully and politely; b) there is informal, regular appreciation such as "good job", "thanks for doing..." pizza and holiday parties, and c) Webster hosts a student employee appreciation week. The students experience growth opportunities through their student employment by learning and using various software systems. They also learn how to open up to and communicate with others.

When asked about **leadership opportunities available in their student employment**, they were not immediately able to answer this question, which led these reviewers to believe that leadership is not overtly promoted or planned within students' employment experiences. After providing specific examples to students such as suggesting changes to the department or receiving encouragement to take on increased responsibility, the students were able to articulate that supervisors are open to new ideas and feedback to improve the process. Some students take the initiative to make a process more efficient and will then inform the supervisor. If the process is not wholly accepted, the supervisor respectfully provides ways to improve or correct the students' work.

When asked to whom would they go or whom would they see if they had a problem on the job, this question initially created a sense of confusion. (NOTE: This could be viewed as a positive response in that there may not be significant issues within the department. Conversely, this could be seen as a potential issue if the students do not see themselves as engaged, empowered employees within the department - that the conflict is "not their issue".) When provided specific examples about possible problems such as a conflict with another student employee or with a supervisor, students responded that they would first go to another student employee. If the concern was confirmed by the other student employee, the concern would be brought to the supervisor's attention. They may also go directly to the supervisor depending if the issue seemed warranted. These responses support the students' earlier statements that they feel respected and supported by supervisors and that students learn to communicate with others through their student employment experiences.

Advice they would give to other students new to the SEP included: 1) to go to the office(s) to get your questions answered, 2) be assertive and take the initiative, 3) pick a job that you like, and 4) when looking for a job, go to each department to "feel it out".

Ten years from now, the best things they would like to say about their student employment experience are that 1) it looks good on a resume, 2) they were able to learn how an office is run, 3) they learned transferable skills (e.g., communication, office procedures), and 4) they worked with other people in all ways of communication and formats (interpersonal, email, written).

On a scale of 1 to 5, the students would rate the communication from the Financial Aid, Payroll and Career Services Offices at about a “4”. They stated there is some run around between the offices, but said that students have to take the initiative in order to get their questions answered.

Two **challenges identified by the students** were training/orientation and written manuals for students. **Training/orientation** for students is primarily department-specific and on a student to student, informal basis. Some students receive formal training from their supervisor(s) and most students seem to receive a general departmental orientation. Students also take the initiative in order to learn the job. There is **no formal policy and procedure manual** in departments nor a student employment manual specifically geared toward students.

Asked, “**What one thing you would like to improve or implement in the next 3 months?**” there were two responses:

- **Early awareness for resume building.** Some students receive information about career building within their classes.
- Allow prospective students to Webster to **sit in on a job in which the student might want to work** - similar to sitting in on a class. They would also like this option for current students, who may be prospective applicants to a position. This would be helpful to make a better decision about the job and would provide additional information about the job that might not be reflected in the job description.

Reviewer Observations: Students’ main goal is to earn money. They do not automatically see their student employment experience as an opportunity to develop lifelong and transferable career skills.

IV. Student Employment Allocation Committee

Strengths of the Committee are its commitment to stay the course with the new allocation process and the commitment to provide jobs for all students awarded student employment as part of their financial aid package.

A **challenge of the Committee**, which is common to similar committees at other schools, is **to devise an equitable, structured process to allocate limited financial resources**. The challenges listed here for the Committee are based primarily from information the reviewers gleaned from listening to the Committee’s conversation. Immediate challenges appear to be providing jobs for students with work awards and the new allocation process.

The Committee acknowledges that there are **students without jobs** but there does not seem to be a clear plan to determine how many students are without jobs and why. Monies are currently allocated to departments where students without jobs are not qualified to work (i.e. IT Services requires applicants with technical skills). There is also a need for more entry-level positions.

The **Committee is wisely holding back from making more changes at this time** and until they can complete an assessment of the new allocation process based on quantifiable data. There does not appear to be a reporting system of how funding is used by measures such as tracking of actual hours and dollars from all sources of student employment funds awarded on financial aid award letters versus needs of departments and the university.

The reviewers were not provided an opportunity to pose the question “One thing the Committee would like to improve or implement in the next 3 months?”; therefore, it is unclear what direction or vision the Committee plans to take and what recommendations could be made based on expressed needs of the Committee.

Reviewer Observations: There does not appear to be open communication between all constituencies of this Committee. The Committee did not have complete data reflected in the budget allocation report at the time the reviewers visited and it is not understood by these reviewers if there is an accurate baseline of the allocations by department. The Committee is encouraged to be patient with the new allocation process, anticipating that it could take up to two years for solid data to be available for critical assessment of the process.

V. Focus Group – Supervisors

This group is an engaged, committed group with broad representation from various departments. **The majority of supervisors provide paid training/orientation for their students** to cover the “nuts and bolts” of the job, have a formal interview and application process in place, and participate in formal recognition of their employees.

Training is both informal and formal, and may be offered on Saturdays or evenings if it works best for students. This is noteworthy in that even though it may be inconvenient for the supervisor it is very student-focused and sensitive to students’ schedules. Some departments include students in weekly staff meetings, provide side by side training with staff, a half-day day customer service training, or use role playing for their training. This may reduce the sense of ownership and empowerment of students. Surprisingly, many supervisors if they asked for references during the hiring process did not actually check them. Some supervisors did not ask for references at all.

They are **supportive of professional development sessions for supervisors** and would like to see topics on:

- Student employment essentials within the department. NOTE: This is available through Suzanne Jones. There seems to be a disconnect between the marketing and awareness of this service’s availability.
- Basics of student employment: paychecks, forms, work award, reporting of student hours and earnings (how much has been used and how much remains).

Students are empowered in leadership positions within their employment by taking the initiative to learn and grow based on their own comfort level. This is an individual opportunity, based on the department.

There is a **strong student employee recognition program** – twelve opportunities per year – through the Outstanding Student Employee of the Year (OSEY) award. Students nominated for the OSEY are celebrated with a luncheon and plaque, which underscores the significance of the award. One of the twelve recipients is selected and the nomination is then forwarded on to national competition for the NSEOTY award through NSEA.

Supervisors are **challenged with finding the time for training** and have a **concern that expanding the SEP** might mean that too much would be asked of Suzanne Jones and over extended her beyond what she is currently doing. Supervisors identified a **communication block with the Payroll Office** as their greatest frustration and see the Payroll Office as a weak link in the overall SEP. Career Services has picked up this piece due to its student focus even though it may not belong there. Specific concerns of supervisors relative to payroll are:

- Supervisors do not receive payroll reports from the Payroll Office to verify that the hours worked and submitted for payment were what were actually paid. Supervisors cannot verify that students are not being under or over paid. Some supervisors have developed a way to work around this issue by photocopying the students' pay stub once a month to track earnings.
- Follow up from Payroll Office on students with incomplete forms and who are not getting paid is slow or not communicated.

The first response to what their thoughts are of student employment were that it is a 'hit or miss' process and can be limiting for departments that have jobs with major or course-specific requirements. Student employees are a necessity of labor to fill the needs of the department due to attrition and are also helpful in that they can do things that full-time staff would not or cannot do. There are attitude problems of students toward work; some students lack basic employment etiquette skills (cell phones and personal email at work).

What improvements would you like to see in the next 3 months?

- **Improve communication from the Payroll Office.** Streamline the processes (e.g., electronic time sheets, payroll forms) and make it more student-focused.
- **Better training,** especially on CARS.
- Have university-wide baseline skills and competencies for student employees, including employment etiquette.
- Provide **real world job skills and experience through student employment;** focus on students' specific skills and strengths.
- **Don't call it 'work study'.**

Reviewer Observations: For the most part, students are not included in staff meetings/retreats to plan, review and determine departmental goals.

VI. Focus Group – International Students

The **international students appreciate the flexibility and understanding of supervisors** for international students and their cultural differences. International students are well taken care of at Webster University through events such as tours, travel, discussion groups. Students **appreciate the "dos and don'ts" of employment and the code of conduct provided by Career Services** and also that supervisors make themselves available for questions.

The **challenges faced by international students** were many. Three main themes are: 1) availability of jobs; 2) job skill training and development, and 3) financial aid.

Availability of jobs included the number of jobs and also not being hired for jobs for which they are qualified due to their funding source. This latter comment brought up a concern by the international students that there is a **subtle feeling of discrimination** because work study students are hired over international students. International students then second guess the reason that they are not hired – is it the funding source, their job skills, discrimination, or some other factor? **Dignity of labor** is an issue for some cultural groups. If the only positions are food service, while an honest job it is not acceptable for some international students due to their cultural beliefs. There are **not enough graduate assistantship positions** and it is difficult to find jobs that apply to the major in order to add value to the major and applied career skills.

Students need encouragement to find a job; sometimes they give up too quickly. There is **no training/orientation on how to find a job** or any on-campus student employment workshops. It is also difficult to know what outside employers are looking for in applicants. NOTE: This seemed to be more of a concern for career planning rather than student employment. Students would appreciate a new student employee meeting – by department – to review projects, supervisor expectations, job expectations, how to find a job, etc.

Because international students do not receive financial aid and are generally not permitted to work off-campus, **student employment is critical to them to fund their education**. There also is no specific funding for graduate students through student employment. International students are sometimes locked out of jobs because they only qualify for international work study at the time of admission or budget work and are also not able to work enough hours to earn money for educational costs. NOTE: Under F-1 visa regulations, international students are only permitted to work a maximum of 20 hours per week. The students would prefer to work one job with more hours rather than multiple jobs with fewer hours.

Improvements they would like to see in the next 3 months would be to learn how to take a leadership role in the job. This could be provided to students by Career Services to answer the question, “What do I want to get out of this position?” Supervisors could also periodically visit with students on goals, how to achieve them, and what to learn through the student employment experience.

VII. Administrators

The **support of administrators in the Student Affairs division** (e.g., Career Services, Housing and Residential Life) is a **clear strength** of the Webster Student Employment Program (SEP). Webster University is fortunate to have executive administrators committed to the SEP and the development of Webster students through student employment. While most universities recognize the value of student employment for financial reasons, not all recognize the value of a substantive, transformative student employment experience for students.

The administrators are mindful that **one risk of augmenting the SEP** would be to add more work for Suzanne Jones. As the SEP grows into a more transformational program, the campus culture and language associated with the SEP will need to change from students being merely a labor force to them having leadership opportunities in their employment. It is the impression of the reviewers that the administrators take these challenges seriously and will approach them in a mindful, strategic

manner, which speaks highly of administrative support within the Student Affairs division for this program.

The vision of Webster is for all students to have a study abroad experience although it conflicts with university policy, which does not allow students to work while studying abroad. The policy can create financial hardship for students seeking study abroad opportunities. It is **not clear what the institutional philosophy or the vision is relative to student employment**, and if there is a philosophy or a vision, whether or not it is congruent with the current practice. **Student employment is not included in the institutional strategic plan** to provide students substantive career experience through a variety of means, including student employment, internships, volunteerism, and leadership opportunities.

Challenges expressed by administrators, which are consistent with focus groups, are:

- **Jobs.** 1) Availability of jobs versus students wanting to work or need-based students with work awards; 2) students running out of their work award; 3) international students want to work, struggle to find jobs, and are locked out of positions, and 4) no student employment at non-US campuses even though permissible under federal work study regulations.
- **Institutional Commitment.** The general sense is that there is not a strong institutional commitment to the focus of student employment. Staff and resources to administer the SEP are stretched and the university has not grown in certain support areas. Administration of a student employment program normally requires a full-time person to effectively manage and grow the program.
- **Program Changes.** There have been too many changes too quickly (e.g., budget allocation process, reduction of hours in the staffing of the SEP) and additional changes may not be supported or accepted by supervisors or students.

In one year, administrators want to see Webster moving toward educationally purposeful campus employment so it goes beyond a paycheck, have clarity and broader based acceptance of students' employment experiences, and practical leadership development in student employment. This would include specific "how tos" for new student employees to look for a job - much like the 'how to' list for graduating seniors provided by Career Services – and using the *Webster Leads* model to incorporate an educational component within the SEP.

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Three themes are identified as challenges based on interviews with focus groups and other campus members.

- **Communication**
- **Professional Development** (Career, Leadership, Job Skills, Supervision)
- **Funding & Available Jobs vs. Awards**

Communication

- 1) Communication between Payroll, Financial Aid and Career Services Offices, Supervisors, and Student Employees. Duplication of services between offices, lack of regular information reporting, and different software systems were identified as some factors inhibiting open, effective communication. Since student employment is under Career Services it is difficult for other offices to answer students' questions such as job availability. This becomes a negative trickle down effect for supervisors and students.
- 2) Tracking and reporting of student hours and earnings. Supervisors do not receive regular reports listing the total hours their students have worked and been paid, and the amount earned or remaining on students' work awards. Payroll Office tracks earnings of students with < \$400 remaining on their work award, sends this information to Career Services, which in turn sends the information to students.

Recommendations:

- Payroll Office to develop a reporting format (print or electronic) to track hours, earnings, work award amount, and amount of work award expended and send to supervisors on a monthly basis (minimally) and preferably after each payroll.
 - Payroll Office to send notification directly to students with < \$400 remaining on their work award, with a copy to the supervisor and Career Services Office, if appropriate.
 - Research options for electronic time sheets entry.
 - Career Services to provide regular news updates to key offices about job availability and frequently asked questions relative to student employment.
- 3) Financial Aid and Payroll Offices use stand alone databases. The two systems are not integrated, which does not allow real-time sharing of information between these offices. It is not clear to these reviewers how the Financial Aid Office is able to consistently and accurately track work study earnings in order to manage students' financial aid awards and to complete the FISAP.

Recommendation: Develop an electronic method to bridge the two software systems to allow more efficient sharing and reporting of information needed by these two offices.

- 4) Payroll Processing. Incomplete payroll forms was consistently expressed as a concern, which presents two immediate issues: 1) students are not being paid or not being paid in a timely

manner, and 2) possible violation of labor laws that require payroll forms be completed within a certain timeframe (e.g. I-9 form). The other concern expressed was lack of reporting between the Payroll and Financial Aid Offices and supervisors, which was addressed previously and will not be repeated here.

Recommendations:

- Incorporate time into each new student employee's orientation – preferably the first day of employment – for the supervisor or a designee to take the student to the appropriate office to complete employment forms.
- Eliminate the “bad list” on the bulletin board outside of the Payroll Office and implement an electronic method to communicate to both students and supervisors if payroll forms are missing. Since this information is currently maintained by the Payroll Office, it would seem most appropriate for this office to communicate this information.
- Revise current practices and the supervisor manual regarding the completion of the I-9 form. Current university policy and practice is to require new, non-international student employees to provide two forms of identification – a driver's license and a social security card – to complete their I-9 Verification of Employment Form. One, this is not legally permitted. (Page 2 of the I-9 Form: “*ANTI-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE: It is illegal to discriminate against work eligible individuals. Employers CANNOT specify which document(s) they will accept from an employee.*” Also from the Handbook for Employers: Instructions for Completing Form I-9 (M274), Part Seven, Page 12, Question #9, at <http://www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/m-274.pdf>.) Two, by allowing students to provide any form of acceptable document (e.g., passport for all students), it may increase the completion rate of payroll forms.

- 5) Institutional Commitment to the Focus of Student Employment. There was a general sense expressed that student employment is seen primarily as a way for students to earn money and the university to have an additional source of labor. This may or may not hold true; however, it is a perception and therefore important to address.

Staff and resources in the SEP are stretched. This was expressed by focus groups and individuals and is an observation of these reviewers that the administration of the SEP is understaffed and would benefit from a full-time position to effectively manage and grow the program. There have been many changes in a relatively short time period without growth in support areas, which has contributed to stretching of staff and resources in the SEP.

Recommendations:

- It is important for the university to articulate its commitment to the focus of student employment in philosophy, practice, procedure, and policy. It is recommended that the university include within its strategic plan a goal of substantive career experiences for students through a variety of practical experiences, including student employment, internships, volunteerism, and leadership opportunities.
- Ideally, devote a full-time position to student employment administration. In the absence of a full-time student employment administrator, delegate some of the duties from the current position (e.g., reporting of student earnings) to complementary departments.

- Develop a core team of supervisors, Career Services, Payroll, and Financial Aid personnel to serve as an advisory team for the SEP. This team would regularly review and assess the needs of the SEP and recommend ways to meet these needs with the support of university administration.

Professional Development

- 1) Professional development and training. It is evident from the interviews that student employment is recognized as a valuable college experience. Each focus group had at least one person mention his/her personal experience with student employment while in college, which confirms the long-term, positive impact of student employment to develop lifelong, transferable career skills.

However, student employment seems to be considered more of a transactional versus transformational experience; there are few regular, formal, institutionally supported programs relative to professional and leadership development for student employees or supervisors. Additional challenges identified were: inadequate student staff with good employment skills; inconsistent completion of student evaluations; and no conscious tie in between Admission and Alumni regarding student employment - student employment is used to recruit students although it is not evident how it affects retention and alumni giving.

Recommendations:

- Student Employment Program and *Webster Leads* to collaborate and develop an educationally purposeful employment experience for students. This might include skill-based training sessions for student employees and supervisors to integrate leadership and professional development opportunities within the SEP. Sessions might include: *goal setting, employment basics & etiquette (paychecks forms, use of email), customer service, effective communication, conflict management, and ethics.*
- Encourage supervisors to develop ways to increase responsibility and leadership roles for students within their positions. Identify key supervisors to partner with administrators in this process.
- Schedule a portion of fall move-in days so departments can conduct student employee orientation. This could include time for new student employees to complete employment forms.
- Include formal goal setting as a part of student evaluations and develop a system of accountability to ensure that evaluations are completed by supervisors and returned to Career Services. This might include 1) providing incentives to departments and supervisors that complete and return student evaluations, 2) educating students about the importance of their evaluations as part of the career development and resume process, 3) establishing it as a performance issue for the supervisor within his/her own employment evaluation, or 4) temporarily suspending departmental funding until evaluations are completed and returned.
- Develop department training manuals.
- Develop a student employment manual for students as a section of or complement to the supervisor manual.

- Survey alumni, who worked through student employment, to determine how it may have impacted their ability to attend Webster or influenced their development of transferable career skills.
- 2) Recognition of student employees. This is a strength of Webster. Unfortunately, the recognition and success stories of student employees are not published on campus or to the outside communities via the web, the school and local newspapers, Admission or Career Services literature, or other university publications. An expressed concern was a potential student privacy issue.

Recommendations:

- Provide students a release of information form to voluntarily sign when nominated to allow publication of this information (picture, excerpt of the nomination, etc.). The Admission Office may already have a form used for hometown newspaper releases.
- Webster University is known for its communication program. Use students in this program to promote the mission, vision and plan of the Student Employment Program, recognition of student employees, reminders about upcoming student employment events, and other related student employment topics.

Funding & Available Jobs vs. Awards

1) Lack of adequate funding.

a. Funding Structure: The current structure includes four funding sources for student employment salaries: *Federal, Webster, International, and Budget Work Study*. While tracking and paying salaries from distinctly different funding sources is necessary, it creates a burdensome monitoring process for supervisors. It may also prevent some students (e.g., international, non-need based) from applying for or receiving jobs for which they might be qualified.

The allocation process to departments is new for Webster; a strength of the Allocation Committee is its commitment to stay the course with this process. At the time of the peer review visit, the Committee did not have complete data reflected in the budget allocation report, which presents an added challenge for the Committee. The Committee will need solid figures from Finance of the total available dollars to effectively manage and evaluate this process. The Committee is encouraged to be patient with the process, anticipating that it could take up to two years to adjust to this system.

Recommendations:

- Provide a “need blind” structure to allocate student salaries to departments. Earnings based on funding sources would be tracked on a finance level through cost centers or accounts instead of tracked on a department level. If student salaries are allocated without designation of the funding source at the department level, the funding source is irrelevant to the supervisors’ hiring of students.
- Allocate student salaries based on positional rather than financial needs of the department. Departments would be approved to hire students based on number of *positions* needed to cover their department needs rather than budgeted *dollars*. This frees

up supervisors to hire based on position as determined by departmental coverage need rather than dollars. Departments may not hire more than the approved positions. If more positions are hired than approved, the department must meet the budget shortfall. If hired to the approved level and spent at greater than the budgeted utilization rate, the administration covers the short fall from other departments' student salaries. (See Table.)

EXAMPLE:

Department	Allocated Positions *	Total positions at 100% budget	Department Utilization % **	Total Budgeted Allocations	Total Spent
Dept A	5 @ \$2000 3 @ \$3000	\$19,000	85%	\$16,150	\$16,530 (87%)
Dept B	5 @ \$2000 1 @ \$2300 2 @ \$2600	\$17,500	93%	\$16,275	\$16,275 (93%)
Dept C	2 @ \$2300 5 @ \$2600 2 @ \$3000	\$23,600	100%	\$23,600	\$22,892 (97%)
TOTALSs	10 @ \$2000 3 @ \$2300 7 @ \$2600 5 @ \$3000	\$60,100		\$56,025	\$55,697

* based on department requests and approved positions

** based on historical data of student salary spending

Unexpended allocation from Dept C would be used to cover expenditures by Dept A beyond its utilization percentage.

- b. Community service positions. Currently Webster pays the matching share on community service positions not approved for a 100% waiver. The federal work study program allows universities to charge back a 25% match (minimum) to the community partner.

Recommendation: If most of Webster's community service positions are in the literacy program (100% federal work study waiver) it may not be feasible to charge a match. However, for positions that do not qualify for the 100% waiver it would benefit the university to charge back the allowable 25% match to community partners (e.g., YMCA) and use this money to fund more positions so Webster would not subsidized the full community service program. This process may need to be phased in as it could affect the relationship with community partners.

- c. Pay rate increases are subjective. Supervisors are to be commended for their commitment to providing competitive wages to student employees, who have proven a value to the department. However, this also poses a concern in that pay increases are approved based on a supervisor request and a review by the SEP. While there is currently a wage classification system in place to provide similar wages for comparable positions, the range is broad and the review/appeal process is subjective. This could result in some positions within the same wage classification level to be paid at variable wages.

Recommendation: Develop a Wage Classification Review Committee, which would meet on a quarterly or semester basis to review wage increase requests. The Committee would have access to all positions campus wide, which would provide a consistent standard by which requests would be granted. This would reduce the chance that students doing similar jobs in various departments being paid at different wages. It will also provide consistency in budgeting like positions.

- 2) Available jobs vs. awards. Students are permitted to work more than 20 hours per week (hpw), which accelerates the earning rate of the student's work award. It also limits the number of available jobs for eligible students. International students expressed concerns that sometimes they are locked out of jobs because they only qualify for international work study (at the time of admission) or budget work. They also expressed a subtle feeling of discrimination because work study students are hired over international students, which leads to them second guess the reason they were not hired – is it funding source, skills, discrimination, or some other factor.

Recommendations:

- Limit number of hours that students are permitted to work. This will reduce the rate that work awards are expended and may also open additional positions to other students since a student working 20 hpw is the equivalent of two students working 10 hpw. This may be a difficult change to implement, as it involves a paradigm shift and change in campus culture. It will prove most difficult for the sophomore and junior students. That being the case, it is recommended that sophomores and juniors currently working 20 hpw be grandfathered in. Sophomore and juniors not currently working 20 hpw would not be grandfathered in.
- Limit Resident Assistants to one job on campus to free up positions for other students. If there is a surplus of jobs after all students with work awards have located their job, exceptions could be made.
- Email list to departments of students with a work award and who are looking for jobs.
- In partnership with supervisors, create entry-level jobs. Assess jobs that require a higher level of skill to determine if there are entry-level skills within the job description that could be extracted to form two jobs – an entry-level and a lead position. This would provide more jobs, create mentorship opportunities through peer to peer job training, provide opportunities for students to learn more advanced skills as they develop in a position or department (e.g., IT Services), create incentive for students to take the initiative to learn more advanced skills within the department, and allow supervisors to “grow” their students within the department.
- Provide jobs on study abroad programs, which is permissible under federal work study regulations (“Operating a Federal Work Study Program”, Chapter 2, page 6-36). Creating positions abroad might encourage more students to study abroad since they can earn money while abroad and also open up on-campus positions for others. This would require a clear payment and reporting process of hours and earnings between Student Employment, Payroll and Finance Offices. Should Webster decide not to change this policy, the university is encouraged to look at how students might be able to earn a half-year work award at twice the number of hours for half the amount of time (i.e. a full year \$3000 work award, which is 11 hpw, would be approved for 22 hpw for one semester).