In its most recent Strategic Plan, The University of South Dakota recognized its desire to “significantly increase student learning, retention, and graduation by creating a culturally and intellectually diverse environment that supports and engages all students through the integration of rich academic and social experiences.”\(^1\) With that over-arching goal in mind, the Academic and Career Planning Center, Office of Student Services, Center for Academic Engagement, and the Admissions office have fashioned a plan for student success on the Vermillion campus. The plan relies heavily upon the work done during the Foundations of Excellence (FOE) process in 2006-2007 and revolves around the institution’s historical mission to create leaders for the state through liberal learning.

**Objective 1  Complete degree programs**

As the costs of obtaining a bachelor’s degree escalate, the University has a responsibility to provide not only access to higher education but also effective mechanisms to identify and assist students who may be in danger of not completing their degree programs.

**Objective 2  Foster student/faculty relationships**

The student/faculty relationship is the most important relationship created on a college campus. Students who know and trust their professors engage in the fullness of a college education and are, therefore, more likely to succeed in college. We believe that our ability to form both meaningful relationships and provide a wide variety of academic programs is what distinguishes a USD educational experience.

**Objective 3  Aid students’ adjustment to higher education**

The academic culture of a university is vastly different than the public school culture familiar to most of our entering students. We have an obligation to orient students to this new culture and provide avenues for students to become acquainted with academic expectations and develop bonds among themselves and with University faculty and staff.

**Objective 4  Provide engaged consultation for students’ academic and career pursuits**

The investment in a USD education will provide a myriad of opportunities for personal satisfaction. We support our students’ investment through personal advising and ongoing assessment of students’ progress.

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\(^1\) *Building an Extraordinary University: 2007–2012. Strategic Plan of The University of South Dakota, 2007.*
Objective 5  **Encourage students to cultivate leadership qualities**

USD has a long-standing tradition of shaping the leadership of the state and opening the minds and hearts of its students to diverse points of view. Through curriculum, participation in campus organizations, and studies abroad the institution remains committed to these ideals and strives to expose its students to all aspects of civic life.

Objective 6  **Provide academic support and develop leadership skills through peer-led programs**

Students benefit from the experiences of their peers. USD is committed to providing opportunities for experienced, well-trained upper-class students to help first- and second-year students meet the academic demands of a USD education.

Objective 7  **Create an Esprit de Corps on the Vermillion Main Campus**

A discernable institutional culture helps students develop a sense of belonging and commitment to the institution. The University must make an intentional effort to maintain traditions and create new ways of helping students proudly identify themselves as “Coyotes.”

Objective 8  **Connect students to the City of Vermillion**

The University of South Dakota plays an integral role in the economic, social, and cultural milieu in the relatively small town of Vermillion. As such, it has a responsibility to integrate students into town life and to encourage a welcoming spirit in municipal government, law enforcement, and the general populace.
Meeting and Assessing the Objectives

Objective 1 Complete degree programs

As the costs of obtaining a bachelor’s degree escalate, the University has a responsibility to provide not only access to higher education but also effective mechanisms to identify and assist students who may be in danger of not completing their degree programs.

a. The Admissions Office and the Academic and Career Planning Center (ACPC) meet to consider the applications of students who do not meet the minimum admissions standards of the University. Students who are admitted after this consultation are restricted as to the number of credits they take during their first semester and are required to meet regularly with their academic advisor.

b. The Early Alert system allows professors/instructors to notify students early in the semester if they are not meeting expectations. Academic advisors follow up with these students.

c. Students receiving mid-term deficiencies are also contacted by their academic advisor and encouraged to meet to discuss study skill practices and consider strategies to improve performance for the remainder of the semester.

d. A Student Concerns Committee meets weekly to review cases of students who have performed poorly academically and/or have come under judicial review.

e. A learning specialist is on the staff of the Academic and Career Development Center to help students identify strategies to improve their learning.

f. First- and second-year students placed on academic probation are encouraged to register for the Customized Strategy Program (CuSP) that provides more intensive advising throughout the following semester.

g. First-year seminars and Career Exploration seminars are offered every semester for students to assess and enhance their motivation to continue toward degree completion.

Assessment goals for Objective 1

- Lower the percentage of first-time freshmen earning below a 2.0 in their first semester to 15% beginning in fall 2011. Past rates: 2006FA: 23%; 2007FA: 19%; 2008FA: 19%; 2009FA: 19%
- Increase 3-year average for first-year retention of first-time, full-time freshmen (Vermillion campus) to 75% by 2015 and 80% by 2020
- Increase 6-year graduation rates to 50% by 2015 and to 55% by 2020
- Increase the percentage of first-year male students attending USD to 45% by 2015 (current 5-year avg. = 41.58%)

Recommendations

- Establish the First Year Working Group. This committee would improve communication and collaboration among campus offices; advocate for resources needed to serve FY students; monitor retention data; and identify faculty and staff development needs
- Expand curriculum to appeal to potential male students

Denotes recommendation from Foundations of Excellence process, 2006-2007
Objective 2  Foster student/faculty relationships

The student/faculty relationship is the most important relationship created on a college campus. Students who know and trust their professors engage in the fullness of a college education and are, therefore, more likely to succeed in college. We believe that our ability to form both meaningful relationships and provide a variety of academic programs is what distinguishes a USD educational experience.

a. Faculty participation in the signature programs provide the opportunity for faculty and students to connect with each in small-classroom settings.

b. The Council for Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity (CURCA) advances research and creative activity among undergraduate students at USD.

c. The annual IdeaFest celebrates student research, creative activity and academic engagement. Students present their work in oral and poster presentations, live performances, readings, exhibits and displays.

d. Faculty participate significantly in the recruitment of incoming students through scheduled visits, Scholarship Day, and Open House events.

e. ‘Yote Float Tuesdays encourage social interaction between students and faculty outside the classroom.

f. Effective fall 2010, 70 faculty and 130 staff will mentor a first-year student. These mentors will make contact with a first-year student at least once a month via a face-to-face meeting, meal in the Commons, a personalized note, or attending a university event.

Assessment goals for Objective 2

- Improve the USD rating (as measured by effect size) in the 2012 NSSE responses associated with the Student Faculty Interaction Benchmark (SFI) as compared to similar Carnegie institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010 Response</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>USD</th>
<th>Carnegie</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor</td>
<td>FACGRADE</td>
<td>SFI</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about career plans with a faculty member or</td>
<td>FACPLANS</td>
<td>SFI</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>advisor</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussed ideas from your readings or classes with</td>
<td>FACIDEAS</td>
<td>SFI</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faculty members outside of class</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Received prompt written or oral feedback from</td>
<td>FACFEED</td>
<td>SFI</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faculty on your academic performance</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worked with faculty members on activities other than</td>
<td>FACOTHER</td>
<td>SFI</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>1.59</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coursework (committees, orientation, student life</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.16</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Recommendation**

- Recruit and provide incentives for faculty members best suited to teach FY students to teach introductory and FYE courses

Denotes recommendation from Foundations of Excellence process, 2006-2007
Objective 3  Aid students’ adjustment to higher education

The academic culture of a university is vastly different than the public school culture familiar to most of our entering students. We have an obligation to orient students to this new culture and provide avenues for students to become acquainted with academic expectations and develop bonds among themselves and with University faculty and staff.

a. Fast Track summer registration program provides a glimpse into the expectations of college life and allows students to meet advisors, current students, and their incoming peers.

b. Beginning in fall 2010, all first-year students will reside in North Complex residence halls, which will be directed by a full-time director. This will allow better coordination of student services programming and encourage a sense of community among each incoming class.

c. Welcome Week Orientation addresses both academic and social expectations and provides opportunities for students to become acquainted with student services offerings.

d. First Year Experience Networks create learning communities for first-year students. Students enroll in a first-year seminar as part of a block schedule in their first semester.

e. Beginning in fall 2010, faculty/staff mentors will serve new students as an additional contact on campus. These connections will help students adjust to college life and help them take full advantage of all opportunities that exist on campus and in the community.

f. The establishment of the Academic Commons in spring 2011 will consolidate student academic services and student activities in a unified location.

Assessment goals for Objective 3

- Maintain the number of FYE participants equal to 33% or higher percentage of the incoming class
- Establish benchmarks for Academic Commons use during the 2010-2011 academic year, then set assessments accordingly
- Improve the USD rating (as measured by effect size) in the 2012 NSSE responses associated with the following items as compared to similar Carnegie institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010 Response</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>USD</th>
<th>Carnegie</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work</td>
<td>ENVSCHOL</td>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically</td>
<td>ENVSUPRT</td>
<td>SCE</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing the support you need to thrive socially</td>
<td>ENVSOCAL</td>
<td>SCE</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>**</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation

- Create an Enrollment Committee to help align our application process and with institutional goals
Objective 4  Provide engaged consultation for students’ academic and career pursuits

The investment in a USD education will provide a myriad of opportunities for personal satisfaction. We support our students’ investment through personal advising and on-going assessment of students’ progress.

1. All USD students are assigned an academic advisor upon matriculation. The advisor is expected to engage in dialogue with the student about both academic progress and career aspirations.

2. Students not majoring in one of the professional schools or colleges are advised in the Academic and Career Planning Center. Students advised through this office remain with the same advisor until they complete 48 credit hours of coursework, when they are then assigned to a faculty advisor in their major.

3. Along with the Beacom School of Business Employment Services Office and the School of Education’s Student Service and Placement office, the Academic and Career Planning Center offers personalized consultation to help students connect their academic experiences to their career goals.

Assessment goals for Objective 4

• Establish benchmarks for internship participation in the 2010-2011 academic year, then seek to increase participation steadily to 75% of each graduating cohort by 2015 (.75 score for USD seniors in category INTERN04 by 2016 NSSE).

• Improve the USD rating (as measured by effect size) in the 2012 NSSE responses associated with the following items as compared to similar Carnegie institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010 Response</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>USD</th>
<th>Carnegie</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall, how would you evaluate the quality of academic advising you have received at your institution?</td>
<td>ADVISE</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor</td>
<td>FACPLANS</td>
<td>SFI</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>** -0.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practicum, internship, field experience, co-op experience, or clinical assignment</td>
<td>INTERN04</td>
<td>EEE</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring job or work-related knowledge and skills</td>
<td>GNWORK</td>
<td></td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation

- By fall 2012, establish a sophomore-experience program that will encourage second-year students to think more intentionally about post-degree options. The program will focus on internship, research, and leadership opportunities

Denotes recommendation from Foundations of Excellence process, 2006-2007
Objective 5  Encourage students to develop leadership qualities

USD has a long-standing tradition of shaping the leadership of the state and opening the minds and hearts of its students to diverse points of view. Through curriculum, participation in campus organizations, and studies abroad the institution remains committed to these ideals and strives to expose its students to all aspects of civic life.

1. The general education curriculum is framed to help students understand its purpose in developing their academic and career goals through liberal learning. This broader context is reinforced during Fast Track and Orientation programs.
2. Through national exchange or study abroad, students are exposed to different cultures and ways of thinking that will improve their communication skills and encourage them to remain open to new ideas.
3. XDIS 310, The Challenge course required of all USD juniors, is designed to provide students a better understanding of themselves, of their decisions, and their behaviors in a problem-based curriculum.
4. Beginning in fall 2010, the Division of Student Services, with support from faculty and staff across the USD campus and Vermillion community, will establish a student leadership program designed to assist students as they develop their leadership skills throughout their educational experience. The program will include student organization leadership training, a leadership series, a leadership conference, a brown bag lunch series, in addition to the informal training that occurs daily on our campus.

Assessment goals for Objective 5

- Increase the number of students participating in individual study abroad experiences in 2011-12 to 75 (47% increase from 2009-10) and 100 students in 2012-13 (95% increase from 2010-11)
- Improve the USD rating (as measured by effect size) in the 2012 NSSE responses associated with the following items as compared to similar Carnegie institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010 Response</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>USD</th>
<th>Carnegie</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding people of other racial and ethnic backgrounds</td>
<td>GNDIVERS</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-.40</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solving complex real-world problems</td>
<td>GNPROBSV</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-.21</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had serious conversations with students of a different race or ethnicity than your own</td>
<td>DIVRSTUD</td>
<td>EEE</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had serious conversations with students who are very different from you in terms of their religious beliefs, political opinions, or personal values</td>
<td>DIFFSTU2</td>
<td>EEE</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging contact among students from different economic, social, and racial or ethnic backgrounds</td>
<td>ENVDIVRS</td>
<td>EEE</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommendation

- Develop year-end award dinner for entire campus to celebrate student leadership

Denotes recommendation from Foundations of Excellence process, 2006-2007
Objective 6  Provide academic support and develop leadership skills through peer-led programs

Students benefit from the experiences of their peers. USD is committed to providing opportunities for experienced, well-trained upper-class students to help first- and second-year students meet the academic demands of a USD education.

1. The Supplemental Instruction (SI) program hires upper-division students to hold extra study sessions in the evening for some of the more challenging general education courses.
2. The Academic and Career Development Center hires and monitors tutor assistance to USD students.
3. The Native American Cultural Center provides a mentoring program for Native students.
4. Beginning in fall 2010, the Math Department will implement the “Math Emporium” concept, which offers individualized instruction for all pre-general education math students. The Emporium will be staffed with instructors, graduate students, and upper-division undergraduate math majors.
5. The English and Communication Studies departments staff the Writing Center and Presentation Center, respectively, with graduate students and upper-division undergraduate students who are trained to help students improve writing assignments and formal presentations.
6. Community Advisors host academic programs throughout the year to assist students as they progress through their academic career. These programs include career planning, study skills workshops, healthy lifestyle, time management, and more.

Assessment goals for Objective 6
- Maintain Supplemental Instruction offerings at current level or increase offerings if requests and demand warrant
- Increase the percentage of students participating in Supplemental Instruction in the course sections that offer SI each year from 41% (2009-2010) to 60% by 2014-2015
- Improve USD rating (as measured by the effect size) in the 2012 NSSE responses associated with the following items as compared to similar Carnegie institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010 Response</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>USD</th>
<th>Carnegie</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spending significant amounts of time studying and on academic work</td>
<td>ENVSCHOL</td>
<td>LAC</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>SR</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing the support you need to help you succeed academically</td>
<td>ENVSUPRT</td>
<td>SCE</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>-0.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tutored or taught other students</td>
<td>TUTOR</td>
<td>ACL</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-.10</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td></td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Denotes recommendation from Foundations of Excellence process, 2006-2007
Objective 7  Create an Esprit de Corps on the Vermillion Main Campus

A discernable institutional culture helps students develop a sense of belonging and commitment to the institution. The University makes an intentional effort to maintain traditions and create new ways of helping students proudly identify themselves as “Coyotes.”

1. On the day first-year students move onto campus, the University hosts a Convocation and invites parents to attend. Designed to mirror a graduation ceremony, the Convocation sets expectations for students.
2. Athletics’ jump to Division I will bring a renewed rivalry with South Dakota State to the competition field.
3. The annual homecoming celebration, Dakota Days, attracts alumni back to campus while allowing current students to revel in college life.
4. The Strollers annual variety show provides a showcase for students to perform musical and comedy skits for the rest of campus.
5. Students dress up the Doc Farber statue outside of Old Main to add a little humor to the day for those passing between classes.
6. Student Services will be hosting ‘Yote Floats every Tuesday at 3:00pm in the MUC Pit Lounge beginning in fall 2010.
7. Student Services staff, with support from various departments across campus, will host events such as Late Night Finals Breakfast, The Sunday NFL Ticket, and Friday/Saturday Night Movie Night at the MUC to ensure our campus is alive with activity.
8. Approximately 17% of the Vermillion campus has joined a USD fraternity or sorority. Fraternity and sorority life enhances campus life through student leadership and community service.

Assessment goals for Objective 7

- Increase Greek membership
- Improve USD’s rating (as measured by the effect size) in the 2012 NSSE responses associated with the following items as compared to similar Carnegie institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2010 Response</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>USD</th>
<th>Carnegie</th>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Effect size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How would you evaluate your entire educational experience at this institution?</td>
<td>ENTIREXP</td>
<td>FY</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>3.23</td>
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<td>If you could start over again, would you go to the same institution you are now attending?</td>
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Recommendations

- Create or purchase a symbol of the institution that provides students with some tangible, shared tradition (i.e. ringing a bell, walking under an arch, rubbing a stone)
- Revitalize student float-making for Dakota Days parade
- Create an Alumni Fair to showcase alumni to current students, share stories of USD, and help students make connections that can lead to future employment opportunities
**Objective 8 Connect students to the City of Vermillion**

The University of South Dakota plays an integral role in the economic, social, and cultural milieu in the relatively small town of Vermillion. As such, it has a responsibility to integrate students into town-life and to encourage a welcoming spirit in municipal government, law enforcement, and the general populace.

1. The Center for Academic Engagement acts as the clearinghouse to bring students and community together through service-learning projects.
2. The City of Vermillion partners with the University to provide free public transit during late-night hours on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.
3. During Welcome Week, first-year students march *en masse* to the downtown area of Vermillion, where they are greeted by local merchants. Students become familiar with shops and services downtown, while enjoying a free lunch.
4. The University opens the door to the DakotaDome for Vermillion Tanager football games, swim team practice, and municipal recreation activities. Vermillion residents will be able to purchase memberships in the new Wellness Center, scheduled for completion in spring 2011.
5. University Marketing is establishing a campaign to promote Vermillion as the friendliest college town in America. The UTown campaign will ensure visitors to Vermillion, as well as our community members, realize this is a college town and that we all take pride in our University and Vermillion community.

**Assessment goals for Objective 8**

- Expand Coyote Card use in Vermillion businesses
- Expand USD clubs’ participation in WelcomeTable
- Decrease number of freshman leaving on weekends

**Recommendations**

- Create an Economic Development group of faculty ambassadors for those who are considering Vermillion as a location for their business or company
- Partner with the City of Vermillion to build a new swimming facility
- Create a student co-op on either Cherry or Main Street
- Participate in a community calendar that would include all events taking place in Vermillion (USD, City, VHS, Community) and make the calendar readily available to students