The Student Affairs division’s strategic plan includes an objective to define and develop the AU experience, with the tactic “Reach divisional consensus about ‘the AU experience’ with regard to student affairs.” The targeted result is to achieve a clear division-wide understanding of AU’s distinctive qualities with regard to a student life experience. A pre-test was administered during our annual division kick-off in September and a post-test in May. 40 staff members participated in the pre-test and 14 participated in the post-test.

Key Findings:

- Staff were shown an unlabeled graphic element representing the student affairs vision statement and were asked the question “what is this image?” In the pre-test, 60% of staff answered the question correctly by stating “student affairs vision,” “AU experience,” “Student Affairs logo” or something similar. A common incorrect answer was “WILD at Alfred” or “the WILD logo.” 93% got it correct in the post-test.

- Staff were asked to name the three components of the AU Student Affairs Experience. 15% got it exactly correct, in the pre-test; 86% in the post-test. 43% correctly named two of the three elements (7% in the post-test), and 23% named one (0 in the post-test). 13% did not know any of the elements in the pre-test, 7% in the post-test.

- Staff were asked “despite what we say, what is your opinion of the key elements of the AU student affairs experience?” Results (summarized into broad categories) from both tests included: Sense of community (16), Diversity/Acceptance (12), Supportive environment (12), Leadership (8), Student-centered decisions (8), Positive relationships (4), Integrity/Responsibility/Respect (4).

In the post-test, respondents emphasized the quality of the experiences we provide to students as a key element: “applied learning to prepare students for life after college”, “creating not just fun but educational and supportive events to bring everyone together”, etc. There was also more emphasis in the post-test on listening to and giving voice to others.

Action: In light of this reinforcement, we will stick with this vision statement as our AU Student Affairs experience model throughout the next phrase of our division’s strategic planning cycle. We will continue to use this as a cornerstone in decision-making related to programs and budget allocations.