

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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INTRADISTRICT CORRESPONDENCE

To: All Staff

From: Donna Hatchett, District Director Public Affairs

Date: November 21, 2000

Subject: Strategic Conversation Summary

A summary of the Board's third Strategic Conversation, held on October 24, 2000 is attached for your information. The topic of student success was explored by addressing two key questions related to identifying barriers to student success and strategies to remove or reduce such barriers.

As with previous Strategic Conversations summaries, the attached information will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees and utilized in future decision-making and planning.

Strategic Conversation Summary Report

Appearing below is a summary of the information gathered through the discussion of the two key questions included in Strategic Conversation #3 "Student Success: What's Our Consumer Report?" More than 100 faculty, staff and students participated in the discussion, which was held October 24, 2000. The program began with brief overviews of six programs within the District that are focused on improving student success: Support services in the School of Continuing Education (Anna Garza); the SCE Learning Lab (Eileen La Morte); the Fullerton College Transfer Achievement Program (Lis Leyson); the Fullerton College Cadena Center (Steve Bautista); the Cypress College Puente Program (Therese Mosqueda-Ponce); and the Cypress College Nursing/Psychiatric Technician Program (Tammy Rice.)

Following the presentations, participants divided into groups that identified barriers or challenges to student success and, following a short break, re-organized to discuss strategies to address commonly-identified challenges. A brief report from each group concluded the Conversation. This report summarizes the challenges and strategies that were identified and discussed. The challenges have been organized into five key areas and the strategies are organized under four headings. This Summary Report will serve as a resource for the Board of Trustees and staff in addressing the critical topic of student success.

Question #1

What barriers or challenges have you experienced as you work to promote student success?

ACADEMIC

Agreed-upon definition of student success
Appropriate placement in courses
Rapport with instructors
Determining appropriate learning styles
Unrealistic expectations of time required to achieve goals
Poor study skills; many students don't seem to care, or know, about digging for information or concept of learning by trial and error; improper use of time
Basic skills deficiencies are too prevalent, especially reading levels, and students don't have enough time to develop them
Student orientations should be required
Begin introduction to college in junior high and early in high school, so students finish high school prepared for college
Limited support, tutoring, for difficult subjects
Lack of class availability
Larger class sizes limit the services offered by smaller programs

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Delayed intervention from counselors
- Lack of faculty camaraderie
- Lack of successful collaboration between SCE and colleges
- Low number of tenured faculty
- Lack of evening services: evening students shortchanged
- Financial issues focus on FTES
- Limited resources: need more support staff and staff development, particularly to develop teaching skills of new faculty and improve staff awareness of student services
- Need increase in cash allocation
- Need to streamline registration
- Internet access limited for faculty
- Poor communication with students about services; lack of clearly-written information telling students how and where to get counseling (catalog too confusing)
- Need for improved scheduling/availability of classes
- Demand for counseling too high at beginning of semester; not enough counselors are available to help students; long waiting time for students to see a counselor
- Students need more help in transferring to a university
- Make students more aware of academic and vocational opportunities
- Recruiting high school seniors too late
- College counselors not providing enough career guidance; students choosing careers without adequate information about requirements, job demands
- Bureaucracy complicates operations
- Need to be more competitive in recruiting instructors
- Need to employ caring, competent, bilingual staff; increase staff diversity
- Increase on and off campus publicity to target specific markets and increase awareness of campus resources; personalize marketing efforts
- Need to develop a common "ownership" among staff, including DEC, of importance of student success
- Only a small percentage of students get serviced and connected via special programs; we need to expand the climate in individual classrooms and departments to help students feel a part of the environment
- Need to network support services across the campus
- Assess students earlier and provide those who need it with adequate assistance
- Better record keeping and tracking needed; current technology doesn't produce necessary information; need data driven decisions
- Trustees often feel too removed from students; classroom visits should be encouraged to make them more aware of our students' abilities and needs
- Low salaries paid to tutors make hiring good tutors difficult
- Lack of connection between academics and student services results in poor customer service
- A mentoring program Learning Center would augment other services
- Institutionalized lack of commitment; lack of focus; apathy
- "Yellow note" syndrome; faculty not changing styles to accommodate changing students
- Lack of offerings for students "in the middle"

FINANCIAL

Students need to work
Cost of textbooks
Cost of child care
Students have very limited resources for supplies, etc.
Rumor mill generates much misinformation about financial aid
Access to and finances for major medical coverage

PHYSICAL

Location of student services (FC)
Clear signage
Parking (SCE)
Science labs need upgrading
Need Student Center (CC)
Access to facilities and services
Space shortage
Lack of adequate instructional materials
Lack of proper instructional equipment; technology; competitive curriculum
Child care facilities limited

SOCIAL

Lack of connection for students; isolation; students must be "engaged" early in first semester
Lack of role models for students
Climate of caring, feeling of belonging doesn't exist
Students do not embrace the concept of success
Language barriers; changing demographics
Fear of seeking assistance; often don't know where to begin
Low self esteem; lack of motivation
Gender-based math anxiety
Lack of family support or value of education
Lack of maturity
Real life problems; too many time demands
Unrealistic expectations of college level work; students don't understand teacher's requirements
for success (cultural system fractures and lack of information flow)
Low participation in campus activities
DSPS students sheltered by parents
Lack of goals; motivation; commitment; school not taken seriously
Wide range of students i.e. significant variations in motives, goals, needs, etc.
Frustrations arising from lack of awareness of services; misinformation
Students/parents/high school counselors attitude toward community colleges; need to do a better
job of educating the public about our mission
High school counselors not giving appropriate guidance

Question #2

What are the strategies that could be used in addressing this topic?

SOCIAL AND ACADEMIC UNDERPREPARATION OF STUDENTS

- Require an orientation class for first semester college students.
- Improve liaison with feeder high schools to better communicate expectations of the community colleges.
- Introduce students to role models
- Assist students to find meaningful (real world) connections to "formal" learning and course content.
- Better evaluate and find out how to communicate that evaluation to the under prepared student to motivate student to use available resources.
- Find ways to increase student self-concept, self-esteem, self-confidence - link these classes to academic classes.
- Develop holistic approach to learning that addresses most of the needs of these students. For example, address various learning styles.
- Address student fears of failure.
- Develop educational paths.
- Expand services for the "student in the middle."
- Offer free mandatory career assessment and follow-up.
- Support transition from non-credit to credit with tours to the campus and mock assessment testing.
- Create a task force to improve communication between non-credit and credit faculty and counselors.
- Create student mentor programs for first generation college students.

INCREASED VOCATIONAL AND ACADEMIC COUNSELING

- More outreach - counseling to start in middle school
- Increase awareness of counseling services among current students and parents.
- More parental outreach using students as vehicles to bring parents
- Community information - using the media
- Train counselors to inform students and parents of opportunities.
- Get businesses involved in education.
- Local school counselors come to NOCCCD for tours and vice versa
- Build stronger relationships between counselors and students.
- Increase mental health counseling resources.
- Changing "terms" - focus on student counseling, not academic vs. vocational.
- Reach students/parents on a more one to one situation.
- Research and utilize collaborative grants for increasing the number of counselors.
- Utilize non-profit, networking, and multimedia resources.

MANDATORY ORIENTATION FOR STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND STAFF FOR CAMPUS OVERVIEW

Provide incentives to students and others with possibility of "testing out".
Establish freshman orientation class.
Freshman orientation booklet (online)
Take orientation on the road with units.
Skits - interactive/participatory
Required for probation/dismissed students
Explore utilization of instructional faculty to provide orientation activities/services/classes.
Develop a monthly staff series to include classified and administrative staff.
Include parents in student orientations with instruction in time management and campus resources.
Institute mandatory student success class (year long counseling class) called the Freshman Experience.

INCREASED TIMELY AND WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY OF SUPPORT SERVICES AND LOCATION

Information kiosks on campus/postcards
Periodic reminders/bulletins of services (disseminated through faculty)
Resource fairs (varying locations)
Counselors go to various classes to explain services.
Simplify/condense information - mini resource handbook.
Increased signage (especially counseling)
Update campus maps and signs (or clean and light existing ones).
Student newspaper/class syllabus
Computer terminals - information
Jazz up marquee - electronic
Updated web page
Letter from President with highlights of activities and resources in student newspaper
Increase sensitivity of faculty toward student needs.
Institute better use of mailers, schedules of classes, printouts, permits to register.
Promote better communications between community and college.
Generate friendlier outreach to students - include bilingual.
Utilize web sites on both campuses for support services with special contacts in each area.
Recruit and hire qualified technicians/web masters to keep websites up to date.
Create student survival guides and handbooks.
Consolidate student services into one-stop shop for college support services.
Create and establish a comprehensive public relations program for a comprehensive student support services, via websites, cable, mailers, handbooks, newspapers.