Teaching and Learning Project Assessment Report

What we wanted to learn about our students:

1. Students will demonstrate a proficiency in self-advocacy.

2. Do students understand the Educational Plan process? Specifically, do they understand the purpose of each course listed on their Plan?

3. The Educational Plan is a useful tool which can act as a “roadmap” guiding students toward their educational goals. With that in mind, we would like to know if students fully understand and remember why they selected each course during their Educational Plan appointment. If they leave the appointment feeling unsure or confused about this, they may not be as motivated to complete their courses, or they may make course substitutions that are inconsistent with their goals.

What we did:

4. During a scheduled appointment, students who completed at least a one-semester Educational Plan with a counselor were assessed. Both new and continuing students were included in the sample.

5. Direct Measures of Student Performance. During a scheduled appointment, students who completed at least a one semester Educational Plan with a counselor were assessed on their ability to explain the purpose of courses listed on their plan.

Initially, the counselor chose three courses at random from each student’s Plan. Students were then asked to explain the purpose of each course. If 100% accuracy was achieved, the number “3” was circled on the assessment form. If only 2 were correct, then the number “2” was circled, and so forth. If 100% accuracy was not achieved during the first round, 2 additional courses (could be the same courses) were chosen, and students were retested. This process could be repeated if necessary. After each test, if students’ responses indicated a lack of understanding, explanations were given. The assessment form also contained an area were counselors could record notes about specific problems students encountered. Those who continued to have problems were asked to schedule another appointment for follow-up work.

The assessment form also included specific wording of our department’s (Counseling) Student Learning Objective as well as information regarding the goals and components of the Educational Plan. As we worked through this
assessment process—before we actually had any overall assessment results or developed an action plan—we hoped that students would gain a greater understanding of course requirements during the assessment process itself.

This form also included a line for a student’s ID number which could allow for future research such as demographic comparisons.

Qualitative Measures (1). At the conclusion of their Ed. Plan appointment, students were asked to complete a survey (“Educational Plan Questionnaire”) asking them questions about their experience with the counselor and their overall impressions of their Educational Plan session. Each question left room for comments. These surveys were conducted anonymously.

Qualitative Measures (2). In a “focus group” format, counselors were asked about their observations and impressions of the Ed. Plan appointments.

What we learned about our students:

6. Currently 26 students have been assessed. Of those 26, 9 students also completed the Questionnaire.

Results of Direct Measures Assessment:

**First Trial**

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<th># Correct</th>
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**Second Trial (5 Students)**

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**Third Trial (2 Students)**

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Summary of Counselor Comments from Direct Measure Assessment:

- Asked about the difference between certificates and degrees.
- Wanted double counting on CSU GE explained again.
- Forgot that Biosc 10 met a transferable lab science requirement.
- Needed to be reminded that PE met a Board requirement for Transfer Path AA Degree.
- Needed prompts to remember that Physics 15 met a CSU GE science requirement.
-Forgot that Eng. 221 met minimum UC eligibility requirements.
- High school student needed additional review of degree requirements.
- Unclear that our major courses can be double counted toward a major at a private college.

Results of Questionnaire:

Students surveyed answered “Yes” to all 5 questions, indicating that (1) they felt their Ed. Plan was worthwhile, (2) the counselor was helpful in explaining the process, (3) they were involved in choosing their courses during the appointment, (4) they could explain to someone else why each course is on their Plan, and (5) they felt their Ed. Plan appointment was long enough.

Summary of Comments from Student Questionnaire:

- Counselor and I worked closely together.
- Counselor was very helpful.
- Helped me consider how much I can handle each semester.
- All my questions were answered.
- Counselor was patient and listened to my concerns.
- I really understood my classes.

Results of Counselors “Focus Group” Comments:

After both the test and questionnaire had been given, counselors were asked to reflect and share observations about their assessed Ed. Plan appointments. This took place for approximately ½ hour during a regularly scheduled staff meeting.

Summary of Counselor Observations and Impressions:

- In general, ½ hour Ed. Plan appointments are too short; 45 minutes would
be better.
- We could provide more thorough explanations and more frequent check-ins with students if appointments were longer.
- We’ve recommended that students print a copy of their Ed. Plan prior to their appointment, but, overall, this isn’t occurring yet.
- Department websites that list major course requirements need to be updated.
- Our Ed. Plan may need to be revised to include more information about transfer requirements, planned, and in-progress courses, etc.

7. What do these results mean? During the Ed. Plan appointment:

- Some students do not understand how courses fulfill CSU and UC GE requirements.
- Some students do not understand the difference between certificates (both certificates of completion and achievement) and associates degrees.
- Some students are unclear about how LMC coursework articulates to private colleges.
- Some concurrently enrolled high school students may need an Ed. Plan appointment in which more basic information about the college and college life, in general, is emphasized.
- Some, if not all, Ed. Plan appointments need to be longer.
- Results indicate that some revision of the Ed. Plan form may be beneficial.
- Instructional department information on our website needs to be updated or revised.
- Additional student preparation for an Ed. Plan appointment needs to be considered, e.g., students should print a copy of their Ed. Plan form from WebAdvisor prior to their appointment.

What we plan to do next to improve student learning:

8. Taking into account the above implications, Ed. Plan appointments will be modified. For example, problem areas will be addressed by focusing on them during the appointment, some or all appointments will be lengthened, and the Ed. Plan form itself will be considered for revision—counselors have several changes in mind already.

The lead SLO Committee Counselor and Department Chairs will coordinate the implementation of the action plan; however, all counselors will participate in testing the revisions and providing feedback for future modifications. Implementation will begin during the fall 2008 semester.