

LOS MEDANOS COLLEGE
EXTENDED OPPORTUNITY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Teaching and Learning Project Assessment Report
SLO Survey #1 Results, Spring 2007

What we wanted to learn about our students:

Question 1: Institutional and/or Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

This project assessed student proficiency in terms of self-advocacy, which is an SLO shared by both the institution and EOPS. Additionally, EOPS used this survey to assess student proficiency in explaining the meaning, privileges and obligations of socially conscientious citizenship.

SLO#2: LMC students will demonstrate proficiency in self-advocacy.

SLO#3 EOPS Students will be able to identify various resources available for social, personal, academic development

Question 2: The research question investigated?

There were two research questions investigated by this project:

- 1) To what degree can EOPS students identify campus resource offices by function, and
- 2) Do EOPS students possess the knowledge needed for self-advocacy at LMC?

Question 3: Why are the research questions important?

The first question is key to determining if EOPS students are aware of the various campus resource offices and how each functions. Since EOPS exists to provide services “above, beyond, and in addition to” services available to all other students at LMC, it must ascertain if students know what resources exist. Next, it is important to evaluate the degree to which students access existing resources, so that additional exposure and/or encouragement for their use can be offered.

With regard to the question of self-advocacy, this question is important because it seeks to determine the degree to which students understand the meaning and relationship between their privileges and obligations and their role in the context of society, in a larger sense.

What we did:

Question 4: How was the research question investigated?

The question was investigated through a survey that required identifying resources by function, and answering both true/false and multiple-choice questions.

The survey studied 172 EOPS students that were surveyed during EOPS Informational Session in Spring, 2007. Most students present were grouped in one of three categories— newly enrolled (30%), continuing (57%), or returning after a break from the program (13%), with 63% identified as female and 34% identified as male. In terms of background, student demographical data was captured, reflecting family educational background, program standing, ethnic background, educational goals, and gender, with an ethnic breakdown of 35% African American, 26% Latino, 16% Caucasian, 9% mixed racial decent, 5% declining to identify, 4% Pilipino, 3% Asian, 2% Middle Eastern, and .5% Pacific Islander.

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Question 5: Were direct, indirect or qualitative measures used in the assessment?

Direct measures were used in the form of a survey as described above; this approach solicits student responses to objective questions, i.e., factual, as objective reality was the target domain of assessment.

Students were given an objective questionnaire containing questions about resource offices, student rights, and their behavior in the academic context. Correct answers and incorrect answers were identified and tabulated to show an aggregate response to each question (see attached). In terms of student proficiency identifying the function of campus resource offices, on average, 64% of the students identified the correct function of 15 campus offices. With respect to student knowledge and practice of self-advocacy, 72% correctly answered the 10 questions posed. With respect to addressing a problem with an instructor, approximately one fourth (23%) indicated that they usually address their problems directly to the instructor, 63% are currently or planning to get involved in some aspect of campus life, 64% could identify alternative ways to access a personal computer, outside of individual resources, and 75% of all surveyed felt that the best way to plan a schedule is by asking a counselor. It should be noted that this lattermost question, does not solicit expressly objective information, as it leans more for qualitative data or perception.

What we learned about our students:

Question 6: What are the findings?

In terms of student knowledge of campus resources, a fair number of students know what purpose each resource office serves; however, (67%) is not particularly high or exemplary. With 73% of those surveyed showing accurate knowledge of their privileges and obligations, as well as how these equip them to participate in society in general, most students understand the relationship; however, with 49% of those surveyed stating that they had no right or ability influence the policy, a real need for instruction in leadership is presented. It is a bit alarming that of the 64% of students who do not own a personal computer that only 28% of them make us of campus computer labs. On the up side, it is noteworthy that nearly 75% (74%) believe that visiting a counselor is the most efficient way to plan an academic course.

Question 7: What do the results mean?

Overall, EOPS is generally effective in preparing students to advocate for themselves. It would appear that approximately 30% of the surveyed students are not fully benefiting from the program services; however, without more specific demographics, it is hard to determine if this is a highly niche cohort; for example, if a very small percentage of those polled were DSS students, that might account for the two questions about DSS services registering the poorest response. On the other hand, if EOPS is to succeed in instilling an attitude of a citizen, then it cannot give a pass on ignorance, based on demographics— non-disabled students should possess knowledge to assist disabled students, just as a Humanities major should be able to direct someone to a math lab. The poor response points to a need for EOPS to continue to review its mechanisms for informing students.

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Looking particularly at the gulf revealed between students and instructors, given only 1 in 4 students felt it appropriate to address class issues to an instructor, students must be taught how to conquer their fear of instructor, however it might be described. The often adversarial feeling that students have is often founded more in misperception than one-on-one encounter, and it goes unchecked, the student loses out on the possibility of mentoring and the instructor loses out on the possibility of shaping a future colleague.

In the grander scheme, since EOPS seeks to provide institutional knowledge and encourage an attitude of self-advocacy among students traditionally suspicious and disconnected from institutions of higher education, there may be a direct correlation between the 30% that seems to have not yet embraced the program's philosophy and the demographic indicating that 30% of those surveyed were newly enrolled in EOPS. It may be the case that a significant number of these newly enrolled EOPS students have just recently enrolled at LMC.

What we plan to do next to improve student learning:

Question 8: How will the results of this project be used to improve student learning in the program? What is the plan of action? Who is responsible for implementing the action plan and what is the timeline?

The data has allowed EOPS to review its current strategies and re-strategize for great student impact, geared to the specific areas where students proved deficient or marginally proficient.

EOPS has modified the structure and information shared during Student Informational Sessions. Moreover, EOPS Counselors are more intentional in informing students of the various student services programs available at LMC. Modification to these two areas is our attempt to increase student awareness and engagement.

EOPS will be conducting the same survey again during EOPS Student Informational Sessions for the Spring 2008.