

In Step With Student Services

Spring 2014

Issue 3

Student Services SLO Themes

LMC students will:

- Demonstrate proficiency in the use of college on-line services.
- Demonstrate proficiency in self-advocacy.
- Be able to identify and set goals to guide their educational and career plans.
- Be aware of expectations for socially responsible behavior and actively engage in the college experience.
- Demonstrate responsibility for their actions and for taking personal initiative.

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Greetings LMC Community!

In the spirit of sharing information and bringing you up to date on important projects and initiatives within Student Services we bring you our third edition of *"In Step with Student Services"*.

One of the major projects we continue to emphasize involves the work of the Student Services SLO Committee. Committee members take the lead on assessment projects that help us gauge what students are learning as a result of their experiences in our programs and services. The themes of our

SLOs are listed in the column to the left.

The three featured services and related SLO projects we are highlighting in this edition are: **The Student Life Office Impact Retreat, New Student Workshops, and DSP&S Group Orientations.** We are also sharing an overview of the new Counseling by Majors program.

For a snapshot of these SLO projects and a look at additional initiatives being led by our *amazing* Student Services staff, please read

Student Life Office

Carla Rosas, Interim Director of Student Life and Transfer Programs

Introduction

The Office of Student Life provides leadership development opportunities that support students in becoming agents of positive social change and responsible members of a diverse and global society. The IMPACT retreat is a one-day leadership retreat in a "mini conference" format held on a Saturday each year. Students from the entire campus are invited to participate. The retreat traditionally includes a keynote speaker, a large group "True Colors" workshop to examine leadership styles, and breakout sessions on different leadership topics presented by guest speakers (often college faculty and staff).

Student Services Theme

Los Medanos College students will be aware of expectations for socially responsible behavior and actively engage in the college experience.



Student Life SLO

Students who participate in IMPACT (the student leadership retreat) will:

- 1) Develop an understanding of their own leadership style and how it relates to others.
- 2) Learn skills and strategies for being effective leaders in their programs, clubs and organizations.



What We Did

Students completed an event evaluation form administered at the end of the IMPACT retreat. This evaluation included assessment questions with quantitative responses for SLO #1 and qualitative responses for SLO #2. These responses were analyzed according to the IMPACT Retreat Evaluation SLO rubric. This rubric notates below proficiency, proficient, and above proficiency, for both SLO's, as key indicators for assessment. In addition to the rubric, sample comments from students were selected to highlight the general breadth of SLO #2.

What We Learned

SLO #1: Of 38 total students, 50% were above proficiency, 13% were proficient, and 36% were below proficiency.

SLO #2: Of 38 total students, 60% were above proficiency, 18% were proficient, and 21% were below proficiency.

The entire Student Life staff discussed the results of this assessment during two separate meetings in April 2013. The majority of the dialogue focused on improving proficiency with regard to SLO #1, as the results of the assessment showed greatest opportunity for improvement in this area.

SLO #1, which focuses on developing knowledge of students' personal leadership styles and exploration of interpersonal

dynamics associated with working in groups with multiple diverse styles, is currently addressed in a large-group "True Colors" workshop. The results of the assessment showed that a significant group of students scored below proficiency. Through dialogue it was found that the current workshop format focuses mostly on students developing an understanding of their own leadership style, but offers limited opportunity to develop an understanding of other styles and how they interact with each other.

With regard to SLO #2, the high level of proficiency achieved by students indicates students learned a variety of skills/strategies that they can employ as leaders. Student responses such as "how to dress professionally," and "not wear scented perfume to interviews," demonstrated the learning of specific skills while responses such as "Listening, not closing people off mentally," and "We are all connected, we need each other, we impact each other, and I can make my own impact by learning and teaching others," demonstrated more conceptual learning.

What We Plan to Do to Improve Services

For SLO #1, it was agreed that the overall schedule of the IMPACT retreat should be adjusted to allot more time for the "True Colors" workshop in order to have an increased focus on SLO #1. This would allow for deeper exploration of group dynamics and differing styles through "mixed-color" group activities with possible inclusion of the use of media by having students watch clips from popular films, identify the "colors" of characters and analyze their interactions. In addition, it was suggested that students could be provided with additional resources to explore content related to "True Colors" in additional detail following the retreat.

Opportunities for improvement that were discussed for SLO #2 include creating a workshop proposal form for presenters which would include listing the workshop learning objectives, which could be published in the event agenda for students to have a clearer understanding of the skills/strategies to be learned, and which would reinforce the importance of focusing on those skills by presenters.

New Student Workshops

Carole Rogers, Interim Welcome Center Coordinator & Jorge Cea, Manager, Student Outreach Services

Introduction

All students new to Los Medanos College are strongly encouraged to attend a New Student Workshop orientation session. The workshop is part of LMC's enrollment sequence of: application, assessment, orientation, registration. Participation in this sequence is advised for all new students to be best prepared for first semester course registration. Students who attend a workshop are instructed in the basics of degree and certificate program requirements, academic policies, student

support services, and how to create a first-semester educational plan. They also receive an earlier registration date to increase the opportunity to register for desired classes.

Student Services Theme

Los Medanos College students will be able to identify and set goals to guide their education and career plans.

Outreach Services Program SLO

Students who access the Information/Welcome Centers for

enrollment questions will acquire knowledge about the matriculation process: application, assessment, enrollment workshop, and course registration.

What We Did

In spring 2013 the Info/Welcome staff administered surveys to the participants in eight of the twelve New Student Workshops and collected 86 completed surveys for evaluation. On this survey, workshop attendees were asked the following:

- Demographic Information:
 - ◊ Student name (optional)
 - ◊ Gender
 - ◊ Race/ethnicity
- Questions:
 - ◊ How did you find out about the New Student Workshop/Orientation?
 - ◊ Did you take an assessment before the Workshop?
 - ◊ Are you planning to enroll at Los Medanos College?

The survey was distributed and collected in person by Information/Welcome Center personnel within the first 5 to 10 minutes of each session. The four workshops that were not surveyed took place at the Brentwood campus and/or in the evening when Info/Welcome center staff was not available to administer the survey. Therefore, the findings may not adequately represent these groups: Brentwood, evening, and late or drop-in students.

What We Learned

Of the 86 surveys collected:

Question 1: How did you find out about the New Student Workshop/Orientation?

- 68% learned of the workshop from the Los Medanos College Website.
- 13% found out about it directly from a visit to the Info/Welcome Centers
- 14% chose other *
- 4% called the college

(*Three students who chose “other” learned from their high school, and three students from other student services offices. Two students found out through campus correspondence.)

Question 2: Did you take an assessment before the Workshop?

- 62% had assessed before the workshop
- 14% didn’t know they had to
- 2% couldn’t schedule one
- 7% said they didn’t need one
- 8% chose other*
- 6% gave no response

(*Four students who chose “other” explained that they had one scheduled after the workshop date. One student suggested assessments be scheduled so that they precede workshops.)

Question 3: Do you plan to enroll at Los Medanos College?

- 92% plan to attend LMC
- 6% chose other*
- 2% gave no response

(* Three students who chose “other” explained that they had already enrolled. Two were undecided.)

Most learned of it through the LMC Website. This indicates that the website is directing more than 2/3 (68%) of those surveyed through our enrollment steps. Another 17% learned through the Info/Welcome centers in person, or by phone. Of those who chose “other” many found out through other campus resources.



The majority (62%) had already assessed prior to the workshop, and through the “explain briefly” comments, four students stated that they had an assessment scheduled afterward. The fact that 14% didn’t know they had to attend a workshop indicates work must be done to increase awareness of the workshops and their importance in the matriculation sequence.

An overwhelming majority of attendees stated that they plan to attend LMC. However, since they were in an LMC enrollment workshop this number isn’t surprising.

What We Plan to Do to Improve Services

1) The Outreach staff plans to continually update and enhance the outreach services webpages, specifically the “Steps for New Students” link to provide clear and up-to-date information.

There are plans to create a “Welcome to Los Medanos College” webpage as a logical virtual starting point for potential students. This link will be under the purview of the Outreach Department.

2) The Outreach staff will work to clarify information for incoming students regarding who needs to assess and what other assessment tools can be used for placement. The staff

will also review assessment enrollments to determine if scheduling might be altered to accommodate students at other times than currently provided.

- 3) The survey will be modified to
 - Add more demographic data
 - Include the choice of “have one scheduled” for question

#2

- Ask students where they plan to take classes: Pittsburg, Brentwood, or online.

The revised surveys will be distributed to students during the registration cycle for spring 2014, with Brentwood, and evening sessions included.

DSP&S Group Orientations

Ginny Richards, DSP&S Coordinator

Introduction

In previous years, DSP&S had offered a group orientation which included group counseling and establishing accommodations so that students could receive priority registration. The DSP&S Advisory Committee had also recommended that a specialized orientation for graduating seniors with disabilities be developed and implemented. The DSP&S Orientation sessions were developed to provide DSP&S counseling on an earlier timeline for incoming high school graduates with disabilities. The DSP&S Orientation sessions included an overview of academic policies, an overview of degree and certificate program requirements, instruction on the use of WebAdvisor, and accommodations that are available in the college setting. Another objective for students attending the DSP&S Orientation sessions was to have at least a 2-semester education plan.

For the first time in many years, the DSP&S staff decided to restart group orientations for incoming high school students. The plans were to have a group of 25 students attend a three-hour workshop which included both group advising and establishing DSP&S accommodations for Fall semester 2012. Given the reduced resources and new format for providing orientation to DSP&S students, we intended to assess the effectiveness of our workshop and make adjustments for the following year.

Student Services Theme

Los Medanos College students will be able to identify and set goals to guide their education and career plans.

DSP&S Program SLO

Students with disabilities will demonstrate the ability to successfully navigate college and community support systems.

What We Did

Students were required to complete a college application for Summer or Fall 2012, take the college assessment test, and provide DSP&S with verification of a disability prior to attending. Students were also required to attend the New Student Orientation for incoming high school students. DSP&S staff planned to have two counselors for each of two orientation sessions. At the end of each session, the staff planned to sur-

vey attendees regarding their experience and what they learned.

What We Learned

- The DSP&S counselors found that the groups attending the group orientations were too large to effectively complete both advising and establishing accommodations for all students attending. The advising and accommodations components took so much time that the survey was not completed at either session. Additionally, several students needed more time in advising appointments after the orientations.
- The sessions were conducted on Saturdays and access to other campus student support services was not available during those days. This was a drawback for many of the students attending the sessions.
- The staff also learned that the DSP&S Orientation information was not consistently shared among the feeder high school professionals. Communications in general and revisions to the outreach fliers were identified as areas that needed improvement.
- Additional areas that were problematic: Students filing applications outside the fall/summer application times which then impacted their ability to register and students not consistently understanding that in order to receive an early registration appointment, they also were required to attend the New Student (High School) Orientation days.

What We Did to Improve Services

DSP&S staff began earlier planning for 2013 orientations and included Admissions & Records and Brentwood Center Staff in the earlier discussions, along with a review of outreach materials. DSP&S staff presented orientation dates at the December Advisory Committee meeting and listed the orientation information on our DSP&S website much earlier. The staff also required students to provide disability documentation prior to the orientation session, rather than allowing students to bring the documents on orientation day. This provides

DSP&S counselors additional time to review the documents. To provide further clarity to students attending the 2013 orientation sessions, DSP&S staff developed a PowerPoint presentation. DSP&S staff revised the previous survey and debriefed with DSP&S staff, Admissions & Records, and Brentwood Center Staff to improve upon any areas of communication and transition for students.

Additional changes that have been addressed: DSP&S staff

revised the existing new student checklist to reflect these new procedures; the number of students attending each orientation session has been reduced; a handout for parents was developed, describing the differences between high school disability services and college DSP&S support; additional orientation materials and handouts have been developed for students in the program, as well as for their parents. Orientation plans for 2014 are well underway, a collaborative effort with Admissions & Records and Outreach staff.

Collaborative Efforts: Counseling by Majors

Project Objective

The integration of Student Services and instructional programs to deliver targeted counseling for specific programs of study.

About the Counseling-by-Major Project

Early in spring 2013, the Counseling Department participated in a series of retreats to begin exploring ways to re-envision the delivery of counseling services. The intent was to create a model that could increase the number of students being served, while also addressing more focused program planning and career counseling. By the end of the spring semester, a plan was in place for implementation during the 2013-2014 academic year.

Thanks to support provided through Perkins funds, three part-time counselors were hired to provide the infrastructure for the counseling-by-major model, in close coordination with the Counseling Department co-chairs. All academic programs were divided into three groups, with one counselor assigned to each group. With fifteen hours a week devoted to this pilot project, the counselors are able to divide their time addressing the following outcomes:

- individual counseling appointments
- coordination with faculty within the majors, participation in instructional department meetings or visits to classrooms within the majors
- student orientations, group counseling meetings or workshops for students in the major programs of study

To date, a number of collaborative activities have taken place between the counselors and professors within the various departments, including planning meetings with department chairs, participation in advisory board meetings to gather input from business leaders in the community, conference attendance, information meetings with students within major pro-



grams to discuss educational goals and career options, and group counseling for students by major.

In addition to working more closely with instructional programs, this counseling model is contributing to broader discussions within the Counseling Department, recognizing the potential of serving more students through group presentations and small group workshops based on common majors, educational and career goals. The implementation of this pilot project has been especially timely, given the anticipated changes in direction for addressing the core services of the Student Success Initiative. The required core services include: assessment, orientation, counseling/student education plans and follow-up services for students at risk.

Special thanks to our counselors involved in the pilot program: Phil Gottlieb, Lydia Macy, and Levora Mathis-Payne and department co-chairs, Marco Godinez and Frances Moy. Additional thanks to all of the academic program professors that have contributed their time, expertise and collaborative spirit toward the anticipated success of this pilot program.

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