

# Student Services 2010-2011 Assessment Summary

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### **Access Services**

Access Services focused their assessment on two outcome measures – students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities related to their accommodations and faculty and staff knowledge of the role of Access Services in serving students with disabilities.

During spring 2010, the staff distributed surveys to all students registered with Access Services. The survey results indicate that students strongly agree with the following statements:

- 58.3% know how to request their accommodations in the classroom
- 26.5% had a better understanding of their disability
- 68.8% were able to inform their instructors of their need for an accommodation
- 57.1% know how their disability affected their class work
- 55.6% believe that they can advocate for themselves in college
- 55.6% could identify the campus resources they need (to be successful)

Guided by the findings from the survey, Access Services staff implemented several new support programs for students including a quarterly “New Student Orientation” for students requesting accommodations, a “tip sheet” for students on how to dialogue with instructors about their Letter of Accommodation, and a significantly improved “Letter of Accommodation” that is clearer for both faculty and the student that now includes a place for the instructor to sign that he or she has discussed the accommodations with the student.

The results of the survey sent to faculty and staff regarding their knowledge about Access Services indicated that there was a strong interest in learning more about learning and physical disabilities as well as accommodations. To address this request, Access Services now coordinates quarterly workshops, distributes a monthly “Did You Know?” email focusing on issues related to disabilities and accommodations, and distributes an evaluation after all workshops to measure the effectiveness of the presentations and materials.

### **Admissions/Entry Services**

The Admissions/Entry Services department completed an assessment that evaluated the effectiveness of the Registered Nursing Information Session in preparing students to complete their RN application forms accurately and completely. The staff compared the applications of students who attended one of the sessions compared to students who did not attend a session. It was determined that the information session did not appear to better prepare students to submit a complete and accurate application packet.

The results may indicate that the current Information Session presentation is not the optimal way to communicate details about how to prepare an RN Application packet. On the other hand, the assessment may have been too narrow in focus. The Information session may be effective in communicating the RN curriculum, the professional rewards and challenges of being a Registered Nurse, and/or the pre-requisites for the RN program. The Admissions staff members plan to continue to explore ways to effectively communicate to the hundreds of students who are preparing and applying to Highline’s RN program.

### **Financial Aid**

The most significant assessment conducted by the Financial Aid (FA) Department was to observe student behavior as a barometer that the method for distributing Financial Aid checks to students was not working in its current form. The distribution of student’s financial aid checks has been a real challenge at Highline Community College. In the past the distribution was done on the first day of class which resulted in long lines, additional staff coverage and even a security guard to help maintain civility. As the lines grew longer, students were waiting outside in the inclement weather so the distribution was moved to the gymnasium. While not a formal assessment, the staff from the Budget Office and Financial Aid observed the student stress and frustration with the process.

With collaboration between the two departments, the decision was made to mail the financial aid checks directly to the students. After mailing the checks, the FA staff observed a significant change in student satisfaction. A follow-up survey was distributed to 125 students to ascertain whether the feedback from students mirrored the observations. Of the 125 students surveyed, 123 were significantly more satisfied with the new procedure of mailing out checks. In addition, the FA staff and the Budget department were

not busy dispensing checks and were then free to assist students with their questions on the first day of the quarter.

Student Employment's assessment regarding the need for more training and orientation to support Highline's work study students employed in Student Services informed the development of a work study employee orientation program offered in the fall of 2011. More than 40 work study students participated in the training that focused on informing staff the mission of Student Services, communicating in a respectful and professional manner, working with our diverse student body and dealing with "challenging" customers. Follow-up assessment indicates that the content and presentations during this series of sessions was very positively received and that student workers had a significantly better understanding of their role and responsibilities.

During the 2009-10, Student Employment staff assessed the quantity and variety of job-posting methods employers use were very good so future assessment of this dynamic is not needed in the future.

## **Counseling**

The Counseling Department provides services for students in three primary arenas – personal counseling, career exploration and academic advising. Assessment was conducted with students seeking counseling to determine how effective the staff is in meeting the students' identified need for support.

First, students seeking academic advising to select courses, to understand degree requirements or to request general educational information reported that they had accomplished their goal. Ninety-one percent of the students surveyed expressed that they had been able to create, modify or make progress toward their educational goal because of their interaction with a counselor. Second, students seeking counseling support for a personal, career or educational concern significantly lowered their level of their self-perceived distress and/or discomfort due to the professional interactions they had with a counselor. The collected data appears to confirm that students using the services of the Counseling Center are making progress toward achieving their goals and are reducing their level of distress related to their concerns.

Future assessment will focus on the utilization of the Counseling Department services by student ethnicity/race to determine if Highline students believe that the department is culturally relevant and sensitive to the diversity of Highline's student population. In addition, the Counseling Department will be collaborating with the Educational Planning department to identify the needs and concerns of Highline's "undecided" or exploratory students who make up more than 25% of our total (degree/certificate seeking) enrollment.

## **International Programs and Grants**

During the 2010-11 Assessment Cycle, International Student Programs (ISP) collected data on student's understanding of maintaining their VISA status, office efficiencies in generating I-20 documents, and the effectiveness of the mandatory new student College 100 orientation class.

To begin, the observed improvement in the international student's understanding of maintaining their I-20 status can be attributed to this issue having a greater prioritization in staff communication with their

students. The staff now emphasize VISA issues in their personal student advising meetings and the College 100 class content.

With regard to our progress in generating I-20 documents, there has been success in generating these documents within two working days with a clearer attention to identifying challenges and developing solutions when necessary. It has been noted that while I-20's are being generated within two days, there have been issues with the coordinating and tracking of student information among various data bases. ISP staff will explore ways to coordinated data more effectively and produce periodic reports to better track where students are in their progress from application to graduation.

And finally, the ineffectiveness of the content, delivery and structure of the College 100 Orientation course was made very apparent from the focus groups that were conducted with students. To address these concerns, a Welcome Team comprised of current international students has been established and they are taking an active role in the new student orientation planning and implementation. While this new model is a work in process, the initial feedback indicates that students are more engaged in the class and that the information is being communicated more clearly to students. As ISP continues to improve this course, the staff will be identifying learning outcomes that align with the college learning outcomes and will design better assessment tools to measure student learning. In addition, the staff will engage an ESL instructor who is knowledgeable about instructional design to help staff strengthen the course experience for the international students.

In addition, a data base has been created that tracks recruitment agency contract renewals, information updates, and the timely accuracy of invoicing to measure office efficiency and effectiveness. This tracking has identified that 90% of agency invoices were paid within three weeks of billing and that agency satisfaction with Highline remains high. At the same time, there is a need to refine Highline's recruitment and marketing approaches since the international student market is changing rapidly. Currently, ISP is working on tracking our international student admissions growth, determining student achievement as well as retention, and defining support services that will facilitate student graduation rates.

During the upcoming year, ISP will use our 1010-11 assessment results to make improvements in our programs and services. Adjustments to the International Student Programs Department will be ongoing as assessment continues and improves.

## **Educational Planning and Advising Center/ High School Programs**

As the department completes a second year of assessment, it is evident that the process is now fully integrated into our staff planning and programs. Staff members share in the assessment implementation and development of our programs and services.

Highlights of the 2010-11 assessment include the following:

- Despite the record numbers of students seeking advising from EPAC and HSP, the satisfaction with the actual advising experience was very high even with extended waits to meet with an

educational planner. Ninety-five percent of the students indicated that their advisor was very helpful and very clear in communicating.

- Our goal to increase the number of students with a faculty advisor has been achieved with a 13% increase from 2009 to 2011. By the end of spring 2011, over 66% of degree/certificate seeking students have a faculty or staff advisor assignment. Our next goal is to assess the number of students who are actually meeting with their assigned advisor for support and academic planning.
- The survey results from 549 RS students (60% of the Running Start population) indicate a very positive satisfaction with participation in this program. Approximately 33% of the RS senior students will have completed an Associate degree when their eligibility is over and another 35% plan to continue their education at Highline after they graduate from college. Clearly RS students are graduating at rates that significantly exceed the rates of our general degree seeking students.
- After two years of assessing pre and post learning during our New Student Orientations, it is clear that this program is valuable to the student's college preparation. In fall 2011, Educational Planning expanded the variety and number of Orientation programs and increased participation by over 20% from the previous fall. However, as we begin the upcoming year, we are now fully focused on moving to a mandatory attendance model particularly for students who have never attended college prior to Highline.
- Several of our assessments with students on and off academic probation indicated that students are not monitoring and/or understanding the calculation of their college GPA. To respond to this challenge, our planning sheets include space to record grades, our advising sessions include more candid discussion on the importance of academic achievement, and the EPAC website will be posting a "how to calculate your GPA" feature that includes a calculator.

As Educational Planning and High School Programs staff plan for the upcoming year, we will incorporate student focus groups to gain a deeper understanding of how students are experiencing their education at Highline.

## **Multicultural Programs**

The Multicultural Services (MCS) and Intercultural Center (ICC) assessments from 2009-10 and 2010-11 have resulted in significant changes in services and programs. Through the improvements made this year MCS and ICC staff believe that they are now better meeting their departmental goals.

Utilizing the feedback received from Highline student leaders who mentored high school students of color at the "Students of Color Opting to Reach Excellence" (SCORE) Conference; the MCS staff redesigned the training for the Highline student mentors. The redesigned training curriculum emphasized the following: facilitation skill building, the mentor role and expectations and Washington State data on the Achievement Gap. A follow-up survey distributed after the training revealed that the student mentors felt more prepared for their role as mentor and more confidence in their facilitation skills.

The MCS/ICC department also worked to address two significant gaps in our programming from the 2009-10 assessment – our outreach to the Lesbian/Gay/Bi-Sexual/Transgender (LGBT) college community as well as our outreach to the Asian/Pacific Islander campus community. During the 2010-11, the MCS/ICC expanded our programming and assessment that focused on the LGBT and API communities. A Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Questioning, Intersex (LGBTQ*i*) Task Force was launched comprised of faculty, staff and students. The Task Force established an aggressive agenda for

the academic year. For the purposes of programing and assessments, MCS focused efforts on the creation of campus “Safe Zones”. The department’s Safe Zone accomplishments for the year included:

Revamping the Safe Zones curriculum. The staff developed a tiered series of trainings geared to the “novice” (100 level), the individual with some understanding of LGBTQi issues (200 level) and the individual with a deeper appreciation and knowledge of LGBTQi issues (300 level).

Offering eight Safe Zones trainings during 2010-11. (three campus-wide trainings during Professional Development Day, National Coming Out Day and Unity through Diversity Week, four department trainings with Enrollment Services, Financial Aid, Counseling and TRIO and one training with a Sociology 101 class)

Overall the MCS/ICC assessment process proved successful in terms of improving services and meeting our departmental goals.

## **Registration and Records**

The Registration and Records(R & R) Department’s assessment focused on their online communication with students and tracking the number of students applying for graduation.

From November 2010 to November 2011, the R & R staff tracked the number of visits, number of unique visitors, number of page views and the time on the Registration website. From the results, it was determined that there has been an increase of website access. This increase is even more significant since June 2011. Knowing that the R & R site is used regularly by our students, the department plans to begin sending periodic email messages at strategic times in the Registration cycle (quarterly schedule available, registration dates, last day to drop or add classes, etc.) to direct students to the website for additional information.

By tracking the number of students that applied for graduation over the last few years, the department has seen an increase in applications for certificates as well as degrees. The increase in applications for certificates can, in all likelihood, be attributed to the college’s decision to eliminate any application fee. Nonetheless, it appears that the R & R Department’s efforts to notify degree seeking students who have completed 45 credits toward their degree, that the students should now apply for graduation has been successful. The department significantly exceeded its goal of increasing degree graduation applications by 10%.

## **Student Programs- Center for Leadership & Service**

The result of the 2010-11 assessment initiatives has fueled a number of programmatic changes for the Center for Leadership and Services (CLS). A focus of the assessment was to identify how student engagement and leadership correlates to student persistence and academic success.

The CLS department studied how the academic achievement (GPA) and persistence of the most involved student leaders compared with students who were moderate users of departmental services and a control group of transfer students not utilizing the CLS services. Although there were minimal differences between the groups related to academic achievement, the persistence rates were significantly higher for

the students who were actively involved. Specifically, moderate users of the office services were 14% more likely to persist from fall to spring than the control group. In addition, 100% of our most involved students persisted from fall to summer while only 33% of the control group persisted for the same period. It is apparent that the staff can say with confidence that involvement in leadership programs does contribute to student success particularly in regards to retention and persistence. With this validation of the strong relationship between student retention and participation in campus programs, the staff plans to enlarge our opportunities for deeper engagement and involvement at Highline. To more intentionally address the academic achievement needs of our CLS student participants, the staff plans to focus more time in promoting and supporting educational excellence.

In addition, the CLS staff assessed the effectiveness of their Servant Leadership training and curriculum. The results from this assessment verified that the most involved student leaders had the clearest understanding of the Servant Leadership principles and they could articulate how these principles inform their approach to leadership and engagement. As the department plans for the future, the staff plans to increase the participation of moderate participants especially the club leaders in more advanced leadership training.

In conclusion, it is apparent that Highline's vibrant leadership programs and trainings are meaningful to students as they develop their understanding of what it means to make a positive difference in their campus today and their community in the future.

## **Women's Programs/Work First Services**

The Women's Programs (WP) Department assessment of service delivery and student learning provided valuable information for future program planning. Our assessment focused on the effectiveness of our orientation/information programs and intake advising sessions with the students participating in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The assessment revealed gaps in the students' understanding of WorkFirst education information and their ability to demonstrate college navigation and registration skills. In addition, the assessment provides a baseline of data that the department can use to continuously make adjustments and improvement in our programs and advising sessions.

By tracking new TANF student responses to an advisor administered survey on the student's selected educational pathway and program requirements, it became evident that the students were not retaining and/or understanding the information provided in the WorkFirst Orientation program. The student's lack of retention of the Orientation content meant that the student was not adequately prepared for their one on one advising appointment. The WP staff responded by implementing a pre-advising workshop to review the information on the educational pathway and TANF program requirements so the students were better prepared for their individual appointment with a staff advisor. The success of the pre-advising workshop has resulted in a more productive initial advising session for both the students and the advisor. The WP staff plan to continue to require student attendance at a pre-advising workshop prior to meeting with their advisor.

The Women's Programs staff also assessed the effectiveness of the Orientation program in imparting information on class registration and navigation with the Highline online tools. A pre-test of student knowledge was conducted during the Orientation program and a post-test administered at the intake

advising session. Using a mini-keyboard, students were observed navigating the “steps to register” online. From June to December 2010, eleven students were assessed as an initial sample and then from January to June 2011, 471 new students were assessed by demonstrating their registration skills on the mini-keyboard. By actually demonstrating their registration skills, staff could observe where there was confusion or mastery and students were empowered to take more ownership for their education. From the information gleaned from the advisor observations, the department made refinements in the orientation content and communications.