Student Services 2011-2012 Assessment Summary

Access Services

Access Services focused their 2011-12 assessments on the utilization of technology to provide accommodations and support to students with learning and physical disabilities. Current procedures for the Alternate Text Format (ATF) were evaluated using a focus group and a "satisfaction survey" with students who are using this accommodation. From the information gleaned from the students, staff and a review of Best Practices, it was determined that greater efficiencies and enhanced clarity of the process was needed. Verification with instructors about the book and edition needed for the class together with a more streamlined form should provide a more effective service as well as cost savings. In addition, it became apparent that some students prefer reading their PDF format books on the computer while others prefer listening to audio books. Access Services staff plan to partner with our campus Achieve Program to launch a new software program, "Read/Write Gold" which can read PDF books to students while displaying the text on the computer. This software should better serve the variety of student learning preferences.

Second, Access Services met with the Library and Instructional Computing staff to inventory the current technology and software that is available on the campus. It was discovered that some equipment was outdated, not in an accessible location or not usable due to the location. In addition, not all of the staff knew where the equipment was located and/or how to use the equipment. To address these concerns, Access Services staff members plan to update the equipment and assure that

the equipment is placed in accessible locations. Instructional Computing staff will maintain a current inventory list that will be posted on the Access Services website. Access Services will also pilot a program to be more proactive in connecting students to the technology and equipment they need.

Admissions/Entry Services

Admissions staff members have the responsibility to establish the Residency status of students as a determinant for accurate tuition rates. Because the residency status is such an important matter for both the college and the students, the Admissions staff focused their assessment on this issue. Two variables were considered in the assessment process: staff knowledge of residency variables and the student's experience of the residency interview and process.

To test the staff's knowledge of residency requirements, assessments were conducted using a questionnaire, an individual interview by the director and a role play residency interview. The assessments were conducted before and after the residency training. It was apparent that with the enhanced focus and frequency of training came greater clarity of expectations and understanding of the process. In the future, the department plans to incorporate one "residency activity" into their staff meetings at least once a month and also some discussion about residency into their staff retreat time.

For students documenting their residency, it was apparent that they experienced a more efficient process with less ambiguity about what they needed to provide for residency determinations. The enhanced clarity resulted in lessening the student anxiety and improving the customer service. It is apparent that the staff's clarity has resulted in fewer appointments and protracted time to determine residency status.

Financial Aid

With the recent reductions in work-study money available, the department identified the need to provide cross training to students working in the Student Services Building so the student workers could support more than one office or department. Also, there was an identified need to conduct training for student workers on the Campus Community, the role of Student Services, Customer Service, Privacy Policies (FERPA and confidentially) and Multiculturalism. The belief was that this knowledge and training would translate into a more effective, successful Highline employee.

Training was provided by Student Services professional "experts" through four sessions required of all work study students employed by Student Services departments. A survey administered to all participants demonstrated that the student had a better understanding of Student Services and the various departments. In addition, the student workers experienced a sense of community with the other workers and felt that they could move more readily from department to department when needed. The training will continue into the upcoming year with additional training needs addressed. A quarterly timeline will be developed keeping a balance between the student and their work commitment in the forefront. Students' attendance will be monitored with limited make-up time available.

Student Employment also continued to survey students who attend the required Work Study Orientations. From the previous assessments, it was evident that students did not fully understand the work study program and the steps needed to get employed on campus. In the upcoming orientation offerings, more focus will be placed on these issues and concerns.

Counseling

The Counseling Center staff selected two primary areas of exploration and assessment. First, the counselors examined whether the population they serve reflects the demographics of Highline's student population of degree and certificate seeking students. Second, the staff gauged their effectiveness in providing personal, career and educational counseling using a student self-report.

As a result of the assessment, several demographic groupings were identified as being underserved by counselors – males, Hispanics and Asian Americans.   Specifically, the results indicate that although males comprise 42% of our student population, the male clients seeking counseling represented only 20% of the total caseload. Similar disparities were seen among Asian American and Hispanic students seeking counseling. For the future, the staff looks to outreach to the underrepresented students with a counseling spokesperson that is male and/or Asian and/or Hispanic. When conducting future hires for the counseling department a concerted effort need to be made to hire from these under-represented groups. This challenge may be partly remedied with counseling graduate interns.

The pre and post self-reports from students regarding their experience with counseling, provides evidence that students experienced a lessening of discomfort/stress and improvement as a result of their counseling treatment.

International Programs and Grants

International Student Programs (ISP), working within the International Programs & Grants Department in Academic Affairs, participates in the Student Affairs assessment process since the department's primary responsibilities is to provide services to students.

During the 2011-2012 assessment cycle, ISP focused its assessment on three key issues that include the following:

1. Student success in obtaining and meeting with a faculty advisor prior to registration for their second quarter and registering for at least 12 credits,
2. Office efficiency in producing I-20s and answering INT emails within two working days,
3. Creating a new student data base to assist with recruitment decisions.

First, our research indicates that students did obtain faculty advisors and meet with them prior to their second quarter. While it was difficult to verify that the students were in 12 credits, a significant number of students were registered in the appropriate number of credits to maintain visa status.

Second, the data clearly indicates that the department's goal of responding to INT emails within two working days has been achieved. In addition, there are now processes in place to identify challenges

and find solutions quickly in order to minimize any protracted I-20 production. However, there have still been some challenges with the INT account accessibility without undue time spent by staff. Despite the increased efficiency in producing I-20's there have been challenges coordinating and tracking student information among the various data bases. ISP will bring in an ACCESS expert (BTECH faculty) to troubleshoot our data bases and train the new front desk employee on its use. We will continue to work on this challenge during our upcoming assessment cycle.

Third, ISP did establish a new student data base. Our expectation was that the new student data base could significantly improve our marketing decisions. Unfortunately, the student data base has limited utility in defining new countries to focus marketing efforts. The data base indicates where Highline has leverage for recruiting but does not produce adequately the data necessary to identify new strategies for admission and communications. Nevertheless, additional resources were identified that provide meaningful recruitment information including the Community College Initiative Program and the Community College Faculty and Administrators Association. ISP is also tracking enrollment trends using resources such as the Open Doors survey that is administered to all international students. These resources and others will inform our marketing priorities in the future.

Educational Planning and Advising Center/ High School Programs

Assessment conducted by the Educational Planning and Advising Center (EPAC) since 2010 supports the value of an orientation experience for new students. Pre and post assessments have demonstrated that an orientation experience is effective in disseminating the general information needed to navigate the college as a new student. In addition, students have expressed that they feel positively about their orientation experience via a satisfaction survey. Armed with our assessments and a review of the professional literature, Educational Planning and Advising staff have moved from assessment to action.

Beginning July 1, 2012, all new students who have not attended college previously will be required to attend a new student orientation program or view an online orientation program.   Newly developed pre and post assessments and satisfaction surveys are already in place for the mandatory online and in person orientations. The department will be tracking the academic success and persistence of students who attend the orientation during the upcoming year.

In addition to the orientation initiatives, the EPAC and High School Programs (HSP) team have examined a number of other issues related to academic advising and student success. The results of these assessments are highlighted in the following:

Academic success of students enrolling in 19+ credits. With the support of Registration and Records, EPAC conducted a review of the grades and class completion of 249 students that registered for 19 or more credits in one quarter. Students with a cumulative GPA of less than a 2.0 attempting 19+ credits earned a quarterly GPA of .80. Students with a cumulative GPA between a 2.0 and 2.5 earned a quarterly mean GPA of a 2.0. The evidence clearly indicates that students who are marginally performing academically may not be well served by approving their request to enroll in 19+ credits.

Educational Profile of Student Vets. With a growing enrollment of veterans, an assessment was conducted to begin to understand how these students are faring at Highline so staff could better meet their needs. Of the approximately 200 student vets, 60% are earning at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA and only 7% are on academic probation (a percentage that is slightly less than Highline's general student population). Over 65% of the students are planning to transfer to a university with the most popular intended majors including Nursing, Business, and Computer Science. However, about 27.4% of the students were undecided about their intended major. It appears that developing some program and/or service to assist student vets in clarifying their career direction would be beneficial.

Student understanding and utilization of the Degree Audit program. Over 50 students who had completed at least 45 credits toward their degree were interviewed during an advising session to determine if they know about the Degree Audit program and felt confident about how to use this online tool. Using a rubric measurement, students demonstrated a wide range of understanding for this relatively new online tool. Particularly noteworthy was the significant number of students who do not know the name of the degree that they are pursuing even after completing 45 credits or more at Highline.

Student satisfaction with in person academic advising. 250 students who met with an EPAC or HSP advisor completed a five item survey to determine how they experienced their advising session. The results indicate that 92% of the students felt the advisor was "very helpful", 92% of the students believed the advisor was very clear, 95% of the students experienced their advisor as "very respectful" and 95% of the students were "very clear" about their next steps from their advising session.

Academic Suspension Student Profile and Results of Reinstatement. Ninety-nine students were suspended at the end of spring and summer 2011. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that these students scored on the Compass at levels comparable to all students starting at Highline. This indicates that academic preparedness does not appear to be the critical issue to attribute to their suspension. However, it is noteworthy that over 70% of the students that were suspended went on academic probation during their first quarter at Highline. Clearly any intervention or early alert system is going to be most beneficial during the first quarter a student attends Highline.

From Summer 2011 to the end of Spring 2012, 43 students were tracked for at least one quarter after they were academically suspended but then reinstated by the Academic Standards Committee. Out of this group, 16% were able to earn a cumulative GPA of 2.00 or higher and the remaining students either decided not to register or did not earn a 2.00 cumulative GPA so they were suspended again. This will be an issue for the Academic Standards Committee to examine.

New Student Navigation of Student Services. Finally, in partnership with the Financial Aid and Admissions departments, EPAC staff conducted a focus group to determine how new students fared in their initial navigation with the college and its services. Feedback during the focus group indicates that students experience with Highline Community College was generally very positive. Students expressed that using the Highline website found it to be easy to navigate and self-explanatory. Students did indicate some interest in the availability of scheduling appointments with educational planners rather

than only drop-in service. The EPAC staff will explore the viability of offering advisor appointments in light of resources and student demand.

Multicultural Programs

The Multicultural Services/Intercultural Center staff conducted this year's assessment focusing on the faculty participation in encouraging students to attend Unity Week programs. Participation was defined as faculty who provided extra credit to students who attended Unity Week program/s and integrated the Unity Week program content into classroom discussions/assignments. An online survey was sent to Humanities/Social Science faculty as well as Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) faculty to determine participation rates among these instructors.

The results from the survey indicate that faculty learn about Unity Week events via the Intercampus email system. Non-STEM faculty were much more likely to engage in classroom discussions related to the Unity Week content. STEM faculty were less likely to engage in these decisions because the felt there was too much class content to cover to fit in the Unity Week Program and discussions. In addition, the non-STEM faculty expressed a much stronger interest in professional development related to diversity issues.

Moving forward, the department will continue to expand professional development opportunities for faculty and staff during Unity Week and throughout the academic year. This will also serve to enhance the departmental assessment and programing to align with the Division's commitment to the College Core Themes.

Registration and Records

The Registration and Records (RR) Department identified three critical areas for assessment that support both staff and students. For 2011-12, assessments included the exploration of the following:

1. Reduction of office lines as well as re-directing students to the web resources, particularly for registration activity and enrollment verification,
2. Reduction in the errors made on graduation applications submitted by students to ensure a more timely responses to students, and
3. Continuation of our tracking Highline web traffic using Google Analytics.

Regarding our first and third assessment priority, it appears that more information is needed to interpret the Google data, particularly in relation to the Online Services site.   However, we did make some discoveries that may help in our future assessments and program development.

- Directing students to use the web resources resulted in a significant drop with in-person class add/drop submissions;
- Front counter staff report that students who continue to process add/drops at the registration window express frustration due to registration blocks and prompts for class entry codes. Many students do not understand registration procedures and messaging.

- Requests for enrollment verifications have dropped drastically.
- The number of requests for general information from front line staff remains relatively consistent over time. This may be accounted for because of misunderstanding by various departments who do not fully understand Highline's registration procedures. In addition, English language barriers also create impediments for students. Possibly more clear and precise definitions with printed step-by-step instructions would be useful.
- Another frequent request is to print a student's schedule. Registration strongly suggests including the use of print kiosks during new student orientation.
- It may not be useful to continue studying the relationship between student email messages and web activity because multiple variables make correlating "cause and effect" difficult.

Our second assessment produced the most interesting results. By tracking the data missing on graduation applications and contacting students who submitted them, it became clear that additional advising is needed before the application is turned in and that the form itself may be part of the problem. Efforts will be made to address both of these issues. New forms have been created and a new submission process suggested, both of which were tested with the assistance of five professional technical departments. Initial reaction from faculty is favorable. Plans are underway to submit the proposal for this change to Student Affairs and Instruction Cabinets.

Student Programs- Center for Leadership & Service

Findings from 2011-12 assessment initiatives have fueled a number of programmatic changes for the Center for Leadership and Services (CLS). Again this year, 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. Unfortunately, even after several programmatic additions during this past year to intentionally boost student GPA performance, there were minimal differences between the groups related to academic achievement when compared to last year's results.

However, the persistence rates were significantly higher for the students who were actively involved. Specifically, moderate users of the department's services and programs were 11% more likely to persist from fall to spring than the control group. In addition, 93% of our most involved students persisted from fall to summer while only 68% 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. We are further exploring the strong relationship between student retention and participation in campus programs. The staff plans to scale up the community building and training environments that we provide for our most involved students in order to make them available to a broader student audiences in voluntary cohorts in order to encourage deeper engagement and involvement at Highline. We will also attempt to create cohort experiences to more intentionally address the academic achievement needs of our

CLS student participants. We hypothesize that these initiatives will help promote and support educational achievement rates in next year's assessments.

Other assessment activities were undertaken to elucidate the barriers and hindrances regarding the formation of clubs and communities of engagement. Analysis of focus group data highlighted a few weak areas that could be improved with revisions/additions to our student leader training. These improvements include greater club member recruitment, enhanced club meeting promotion, and increased leadership training around club meeting management skills to promote effective clubs. Also, we uncovered a need to further connect with club "members" (as opposed to club "leaders") as it appears our clubs are challenged in keeping members informed and engaged when compared to those in charge of the clubs themselves (e.g. club presidents, club vice presidents, etc.). Using data collected from Community and Leadership Consultants (student peer leaders that provide guidance and direction to our clubs) we have developed a series of skill competency areas utilized by our clubs that will be helpful in determining the 2012-2013 training of club leaders **and** members. This information will be used in honing our Club Leader Training curricula and promotional activities.

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 work in a community. HCC students clearly experience the positive effects of an engaged student life when they choose to get involved.

TRiO – Student Support Services

Findings from the 2011-12 assessment initiatives have led to helpful modifications in the TRIO student services and programming. During the year, the department's assessment focused on four variables critical to student success. The four variables include the knowledge and competencies related to academic preparedness, transfer and career readiness, community engagement and financial literacy. Our research has deepened our understanding of student needs and also how to best deliver the resources and services to meet those needs.

Over 100 students completed 4 quantitative tests at the point of entry and exit from the TRIO program. The quantitative tests measured academic preparedness, transfer readiness, community engagement and financial literacy and on all four variables, student proficiencies increased. Using a five point scale, students on average increased 1.5 points on their knowledge and transfer readiness and 1.0 points on average in the areas of community engagement and networking. In the area of academic preparedness, students increased their utilization of academic resources on campus, improved in time management and had a better knowledge of study skills. In the area of community engagement, students demonstrated enhanced engagement with Highline Community College as well as their intended transfer institution. And finally, students demonstrated a significant improvement in their understanding about budget management as well as knowledge of financial aid and the scholarship process. In addition to the quantitative pre- and post-tests, TRIO staff also conducted qualitative exit interviews. The results from the interviews correlated with our quantitative tests and demonstrated the increased student proficiencies.

From our exit survey and interviews, it was determined that students who successfully transferred were more specific about the skills they had acquired and the benefits of the TRIO program and their Highline experience. Additionally, students who had made a successful transfer were more likely to reach out to faculty members or other advisors than the students who had not successfully transferred. And finally students who had applied to more than one university were more likely to complete the TRIO program with an associate degree and to be enrolled in a transfer institution than the students who only applied to one university.

Our third assessment focused on the effectiveness of our Summer Bridge program when compared to a workshop model. Students who completed the Summer Bridge course had a 95% completion rate of the mandatory requirements of the TRIO program including the development of a resume and personal statement, researching and applying to college/s and participation in the TRIO program. Those students that experienced the workshop model had a 65% completion rate. From these results, the department plans to offer more class options due to the higher success and completion rate of the students.

Women's Programs/Work First Services

Women's Programs/WorkFirst services measured three learning outcomes in 2011-12 which included WorkFirst GED student completion rates, WorkFirst student Professional Technical certificate completion and degree completion rates. All three assessments delivered results which assisted the department in making mid-course corrections to our current service delivery model and informed future program improvements.

Our need to collect Workfirst GED completion rates and WorkFirst certificate and degree completion rates was motivated by a recent change in the State Board's WorkFirst program that focuses on students' educational progress using critical "tipping points" (i.e. the completion of 15 or 45 credits). The WorkFirst staff had anecdotally observed that students had difficulty completing their educational pathway. However, the actual data collection of WorkFirst GED student completion rates was tracked by Instruction but never before available to the department. Tracking this outcome opened an opportunity for Student Services to improve cross-communication with Basic Skills Instruction staff on new ways to identify retention strategies needed for this special population.

The results from our GED completion tracking demonstrated that the graduation rates were actually much lower than expected which spurred discussion within the WorkFirst Implementation Team to better utilize existing GED classes that focus on quick entrance and exit strategies for GED students. We made this change during the latter end of the reporting period because early data provided evidence of the dismal numbers of WorkFirst students attempting and successfully completing all five GED tests for Reading, Writing, Math, Science and Social Studies. We will continue to collect data on this outcome as this provided a baseline for us to measure in future reporting periods.

Lastly, Women's Programs measured the number of WorkFirst students who completed 30 or more college level credits at the end of the reporting period and who successfully applied for a certificate or

degree. We utilized our newly developed quarterly mandatory advising sessions as our vehicle to collect survey results in addition to fully utilizing a home-grown data tracking tool using integrated WorkFirst (DSHS) and SMS data. This tool provides a historical look at students' activities over the course of one academic year.

This outcome confirmed our mandatory advising is working by motivating students to become more aware of their educational progress. However, students still did not fully grasp the steps including the necessary paperwork needed to complete a credential posting on their transcript.   During the reporting period, we met with the Registrar's office and now have a plan in place to ensure this step in a student's educational experience is monitored more closely by both the WorkFirst and Registration departments. Again, we will continue to monitor this outcome as this year's assessment provided a baseline for us to continue measuring in future reporting periods.