

## **II.B. Student Learning Programs and Services**

**The institution recruits and admits diverse students who are able to benefit from its programs consistent with its mission. Student support services address the identified needs of students and enhance a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, learning, and success. The institution systematically assesses student support services using student learning outcomes, faculty and staff input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services.**

**II.B.1. The institution assures the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance achievement of the mission of the institution.**

### **DESCRIPTION**

The Los Angeles Southwest College student support services areas are an essential component in the ability of the college to meet the goals of the college's mission statement. Student success is a primary concern of Student Services, and the various student support areas work together to help students achieve academically and help students recognize social responsibility.

Student Services support student learning and provide such services as Admissions and Records, Financial Aid, Counseling, Health Services, and Matriculation. In addition, special program areas such as Extended Opportunities Program and Services (EOP&S), Greater Avenues for

Independence (GAIN/Cal WORKS), TRIO, Athletics, and Associated Students Organization (ASO) enhance the opportunities and services that support student success. The following are some of the services available to students:

- **Office of Admissions and Records** processes applications, collects grades, and issues grade reports. The office also processes grade challenges and grade changes. The college's admissions policy is publicized in the general catalog, the Matriculation Handbook, and discussed during community and high school recruitment.
- **Matriculation Office** assesses the students' level of mathematics and English skills to assure accurate placement in those classes. Assessment of a student's readiness follows the admissions process step and includes various validated placement tests in mathematics and English. The student may decide not to take the test and "challenge" the placement level testing through a clearly outlined process. A non-English speaking student has the option of enrolling in English as a second language (ESL) curriculum. The assessment center administers the Combined English Language Skills Assessment (CELSA) test for placement in credit ESL classes.
- **Office of Financial Aid** packages student applications for financial aid to serve the needs of lower income student for school-related purchases, including but not limited to books, school supplies, and transportation. Additional Cal Grants, fee waivers, Student Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), and scholarship programs encompass the financial aid programs at the college.

The staff in financial aid are trained to assist students and adjudicate eligibility and must disqualify some students from financial aid benefits because of prior loan debts, over award of aid, lack of academic progress, and low grades. The staff works with students to process appeals and makes referrals to counseling or tutoring.

- **Counselors** work with students to develop academic plans. The college counseling services assist the student in making career choices and selecting classes that lead to a chosen career. The counseling office encourages multiple visits. Fourteen counselors have individual assignments in the counseling office, GAIN/CalWORKS office, TRIO office, EOP&S office, or the International Students office. These offices give students, depending on the programs they are participating in, educational advisement, assistance in selecting majors, transfer information, and counseling to deal with personal crisis. Counselors have developed expertise in the specific requirements for their programs.
- **Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS)** facilitates the registration and enrollment processes and offers other assistance to enable students to succeed in college. Students have access to a computer laboratory, tutoring, and special arrangements for testing. In addition, DSPS students receive referrals to the California State Department of Rehabilitation for additional assessment, counseling, and financial assistance.
- **EOP&S/CARE** provides those services which assist first-generation college students to succeed in college.

Assistance includes personal and academic counseling, supplies, early registration, book vouchers, workshops, and cultural events. The Cooperative Agencies for Resources and Education (CARE) provides child care assistance, transportation assistance, personal and academic counseling, workshops, book vouchers, and benefits similar to the EOP&S program.

- **GAIN/CalWORKs** provides additional support services, including but not limited to book vouchers, counseling, school supplies, vocational training, and child care to participants in the county-funded program. The GAIN/CalWORKs program offers two unique services, the Center for Academic and Workforce Excellence (CAWE) and the Mathematics Laboratory. The laboratory programs offer GED preparation, credit/no credit classes in reading, vocabulary, grammar, spelling, and academic study skills.
- **TRIO** is three programs: Talent Search, Upward Bound, and the Center for Retention and Transfer. These programs serve pre-college students as well as college students by encouraging retention in college and pursuit of a college education. The Talent Search and Upward Bound programs offer tutoring, outreach, field trips, college fairs, job fairs, visits to four-year post-secondary institutions and special Saturday programs.
- **Student Health Center** provides a limited level of health services to students on campus. Health services include tuberculosis tests, physical exams, sexually transmitted diseases testing, pregnancy testing, and psychological counseling to name a few.

- **Associated Student Organization** and other student-driven programs provide opportunities and leadership training for students. These student clubs include the dance club, the soccer club, and the gospel club. Programs work in unity with the student's opportunity to learn in a supportive environment.

In addition to the structured student services programs, the college offers many other ad hoc services to support student success:

- **Help Desk** informs students of classes, financial aid, scholarships, and general college information at the beginning of each term. College volunteers monitor the desk for four days early each semester and two days during each short term session.
- **Transfer Day** held in fall and spring is an event when the Center for Retention and Transfer invites post-secondary colleges and universities to participate in a four-hour transfer fair. Students can obtain transfer college information at this event.
- **Career Day** held each fall and spring is an event when EOP&S invites employing organizations to meet with students who are seeking employment.
- **Student Services Day/ASO Club Day** is a combined event when student services departments distribute information specific to its area. The program has a festive theme.
- **Job Fair** occurs when the Career Center invites employers to meet students seeking employment.

- **Dean's Tea** annual ceremony recognizes students who have attained academic honors of 3.5 grade point average or higher. The college gives these students personal recognition and certificates.
- **Graduation program** occurs every spring when graduates and candidates for graduation are recognized
- **Sports programs** at the college include track and field, cross country, football, and basketball. Teams participate in intercollegiate sports. Some students have been awarded athletic scholarships to four-year colleges.
- **Health Fair** presented by the science department, the ASO, and the health office, is a spring event when students and staff receive free mammograms, hypertension testing, cholesterol testing, HIV testing, and general health information.

## EVALUATION

The college has the daunting task of helping large number of diverse students and especially those who are not prepared for the college experience to succeed and to persist until they complete their goal.

On the recent survey, students were asked if student services areas were available when they needed them. Respondents answered as follows: 91 percent Registration; 89 percent Admissions; 83 percent Bookstore; 76 percent Assessment; 75 percent Business; 74 percent Counseling; 72 percent Financial Aid; 64 percent tutoring services; 62 percent campus orientation; 60 percent Transfer Center; 60 percent Career Center; 49 percent Health Services. Students were also asked if the staff in these areas were knowledgeable. Responses ranged from 86

percent to 50 percent. When asked about the helpfulness of the student services personnel, responses ranged from 84 percent to 51 percent.

When asked about the adequacy of food services, 54 percent of students responded that food services were available. Yet, when asked what they would most like changed about the campus, many responded that they would like better food service. For example, one student wrote: "I would like to see the school provide a cafeteria available where students could get a hot meal without leaving the campus or having to eat outside."

One of the major drawbacks has been the location of Student Services. Until November 2005, the college housed the components of Student Services in a number of old bungalows located throughout the campus. This arrangement had a negative impact on student retention as students were sent from one bungalow to another to complete a process and often students leave without completing the process. Students who did make it to the next bungalow would frequently not remember why they were sent or who sent them, which means they would start the information gathering process all over again. The college attempted a referral process, but this effort was also ineffective. Now student services areas are housed together in one new building, which is more convenient for students.

Another challenge for the college is the number of special programs which have additional counseling services. Recognizing this, there is an effort to coordinate counseling services between the general counseling and the counseling offered in the various specially-funded programs. In the current segregated model, information is not shared between counselors nor do students

share information with each of the counselors. As a result a student may have different educational plans and they will often select the path of least resistance, which may not be the path that will help them to reach their goal. The college is currently evaluating software that has the education plan of the student in electronic form and available to all counselors.

In addition to the counseling services, the college's orientation efforts are not as inclusive as the efforts should be. The general perception among many of the faculty is that if this up-front service were more comprehensive, the students would be more successful. In addition to this perception is the view that a more robust personal development program would address the poor performance of students. Currently, the college does not require students to attend orientation or take personal development classes.

There is a lack of coordination between the academic area and counseling which should be structured so that information about course demands and student academic challenges is better communicated in order to improve the college's efforts to meet the needs of diverse students.

The college has a small Disabled Student Programs and Services, but the demands are for the college to provide a greater breadth of services to clientele that it normally does not serve. The college has not been able to meet this need due to fiscal constraints and the shortage of adequately trained staff.

And finally, the college's practice of admitting younger students (K-12) has also created challenges of readiness for college courses. Unfortunately, many parents of secondary students who did not pass a course at the junior high or senior high

school feel that their child can make up this course at the college. In addition, because the community has a lot of single parent households, the parents are often looking for a safe place for their child to be during the summer. The college has had to institute specific admission guidelines to ensure that students who enroll in the summer are college ready and want to take college classes. The college partially meets this standard and a planning agenda is included to enhance the college's efforts.

#### **PLANNING AGENDA**

- Review and revise the orientation program and personal development classes and encourage enrollment in a personal development class by first time college students.
- Assign a counselor to each of the academic disciplines to attend departmental meetings and carry information from and to the counseling services.

#### **II.B.2. The institution provides a catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate and current information concerning the following:**

- a. **General Information:**
  - Official Name**
  - Address**
  - Telephone Number**
  - Web Site**
  - Address of the Institution**
  - Educational Mission**
  - Course, Program and Degree Offering**
  - Academic Calendar and Program Length**
  - Academic Freedom Statement**
  - Available Student Financial Aid**
  - Available Learning Resources**

## **Names and Degrees of Administrators and Faculty**

### **Names of Governing Board Members**

#### **a. Requirements**

**Admissions**

**Student Fees and Other Financial Obligations**

**Degree, Certificates, Graduation and Transfer**

#### **b. Major Policies Affecting Students: Academic Regulations, including academic honesty**

**Nondiscrimination**

**Acceptance of Transfer Credits**

**Grievance and Complaint Procedures**

**Sexual Harassment**

**Refund of Fees**

### **DESCRIPTION**

The college catalog is updated annually and includes the college location, website information, the map to the campus, the mission statement, the year-long academic calendar, fee and fee waiver information, and list of faculty, administrators, emeriti, and names of district officials. The catalog includes all requirements concerning admissions and graduation, discusses all major policies that affect the student, and explains policies that iterate law as it is applied to the campus community and campus welfare.

The college general catalog is precise, current, and accurate. It lists instructional programs, degree and certificate requirements, along with the required courses for each degree or certificate, the California State University and IGETC general education certification, admission requirements to the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), and the University of Southern California (USC) and it also details

the admission and registration process for LASC and transfer requirements information to other universities in California. Also included in the catalog are general descriptions of courses.

The catalog is given at no cost to all new and returning students who participate in the orientation program, or may be purchased in the bookstore for a nominal fee. The college catalog is available in all offices that serve students: EOP&S/CARE, Matriculation, Office of Student Services, Counseling, Library, Bookstore, and DSPS. Many of the specially-funded programs also provide additional informational handouts specific to their programs.

### **EVALUATION**

The college acknowledges the difficulty of including in the catalog every applicable regulation or policy required to be in compliance with the law. There are other publications with codes and regulations for specific programs, such as EOP&S/CARE, DSPS, TRIO, and matriculation. Referrals to the appropriate office to secure information has been the best approach to ensure that students receive applicable guidelines and policy information.

Students and counselors maintain currency with articulation modifications at the four-year level that impact the student's educational plan and transfer requirements. Articulation is in continual transition and often program changes occur each year. Therefore, the Catalog Committee headed by the Dean of Academic Affairs reviews the catalog and collects updates from the Articulation Officer, department chairs, program directors, counselors, Matriculation Officer, staff, and faculty representatives concerning the accuracy and currency of the information. The college partially meets

this standard and a planning agenda is included to enhance the college's efforts.

### PLANNING AGENDA

- Encourage more student use of the catalog.
- Utilize focus groups to solicit information regarding content, layout, and distribution of the catalog.

**II.B.3. The institution researches and identifies the learning support needs of its student population and provides appropriate services and programs to address those needs.**

**II.B.3a. The institution assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery.**

### DESCRIPTION

The admissions application includes a section that asks applicants to check the services they will need. The information is put into a data base and is used for planning and budget allocation for the components of student support services.

Interaction in the Assessment Center and the Counseling Office are a mechanism used to assist with determining student needs. After these assessments, faculty are the group with direct student contact and many of the faculty refer students to the appropriate academic support services. If the student needs are outside of the academic classroom, the instructor or counselor makes appropriate referrals to services such as the Financial Aid Office, tutoring centers, the Health Center, DSPS, or any of the other various student services offices.

Several college support services offer assistance to students. Assessment test scores initially determine their academic needs. Students with special learning issues find help in the Office of Disabled Student Programs and Services which provides them with reading assistance (Braille devices), additional testing time, use of tape recorders, magnifiers, and tutoring. A special computer laboratory is available for DSPS students only. The college offers personal development classes to help students prepare for college-level work. Counselors and tutors assist those experiencing academic difficulties in the Learning Resource Center (LRC) and the Mathematics Laboratory.

The college offers many of its services to students from their home either by phone or by computer. For instance, online services are at the academic and the admissions and records levels. The growing number of students enrolling in online classes in mathematics, English, and biology shows their success. A review of the frequency and ease of use of these online services evaluates them as being successful. Surveys also determine if the services are meeting the needs of the students. Online services in Admissions and Records include application, registration, add and drop of classes, and retrieval of grades. The online registration process has proven to be most effective, convenient, and easy to use.

### EVALUATION

Student surveys helped to provide the college with measures of customer satisfaction. The surveys completed by students have provided information that supports the finding that the college is meeting the needs of most students. Several offices in student services regularly ask the students to give input regarding their satisfaction with services.

The college recognizes that there is room for improvement. For instance, students have complained about the timeliness of financial aid assistance. Programs that assist students with the high cost of textbooks need to be marketed. The reading level of students and the high cost of textbooks are contributing factors to students withdrawing prior to completion. The college partially meets this standard and a planning agenda is included to enhance the college's efforts.

### PLANNING AGENDA

- Plan and host an all-day retreat for staff and faculty within the division to discuss and develop an action plan to address student retention and success factors.

### **II.B.3b. The institution provides an environment that encourages civic responsibility as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students.**

#### DESCRIPTION

The college offers academic and social opportunities for students to develop personal and civic responsibilities. The academic efforts include both units of study within courses and personal development classes that instruct students in life skills training. In both formats topics include time management, reading college catalogs, financial management, stress reduction, study skills, preparation of resumes, determining career choices, and preparation for job interviews. The college also offers classes emphasizing civic responsibility. From a social perspective, students find encouragement to get involved at the community level by attending community events, setting up community events, and activism at the state level.

Leadership skills are necessary for the development of civic and personal responsibility. Students can participate in the student government programs where they can develop leadership skills and a social consciousness. Elected and appointed student leaders, as well as other students, have the opportunity to participate on college committees, lead the charge on developing and implementing policies for students, plan college events, and implement budget and accounting activities.

### EVALUATION

In response to the recent student survey, 61 percent of the students stated that the college has assisted them in becoming clearer about their own values and ethical standards. In addition, 62 percent indicated an increased ability to get along with different kinds of people as a result of their experiences at LASC, while 56 percent said they had a better awareness of community responsibilities. Courses in political science and sociology often include assignments that encourage civic, political, and cultural participation. The college encourages students to participate in civic, political, and cultural activities. Despite these efforts there is a need to instill a social consciousness beyond classroom requirements.

Student government is another area for developing the students' interest social, political, and civic activities. Information gathered from the recent survey indicated that 80 percent of students admitted that they did not participate in student government. However, because of many factors (i.e. working adults with limited on campus time, a feeling of hopelessness, lack of a program to help students to get their needs met), students do not participate in elections and the various community

activities hosted by the college. This finding is not alarming

Perhaps the most important point is the lack of student involvement on the various college committees. This is critical as often committees continue in a direction assuming that they are formulating policies and programs in the best interest of students without the benefit of student input. The college partially meets this standard and a planning agenda is included to enhance the college's efforts.

### PLANNING AGENDA

- Create more opportunities for dialogue and encourage student involvement both in and out of classes for students to promote civic and personal responsibility.
- Develop and assess SLOs around civic responsibility.

**II.B.3c. The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates counseling and/or academic advising programs to support student development and success and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising functions.**

### DESCRIPTION

Counselors are evaluated on a schedule using criteria determined by the collective bargaining agreement between the LACCD and the American Federation of Teachers. Tenure Track counselors are evaluated once each five years. Probationary counselors are evaluated annually. Hourly counselors are evaluated each semester. Student evaluation forms are submitted to the evaluating committee for each counselor evaluation. Student survey forms are used to assess services and counselors.

In addition to holding an appropriate degree, counselors enhance their training by keeping current with the latest practices through reading, online training, seminars, workshops, and conventions relevant to the counseling practice.

### EVALUATION

The counseling office needs to find a process to solicit timely feedback from students and to respond quickly when students are dissatisfied. In those cases when students are dissatisfied, they often do not come forth with a concern or complaint at the onset. Instead, they typically wait until they are frustrated. Students who are upset with a counselor will usually not return, begin to self-counsel, take courses they do not need, or drop out. The college partially meets this standard and a planning agenda is included to enhance the college's efforts.

### PLANNING AGENDA

- Develop and use a system to obtain student feedback on services at the conclusion of a visit in each student services office.

**II.B.3d. The institution designs and maintains programs, practices and services that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity.**

### DESCRIPTION

Various organizations at the college sponsor activities that expose students to different cultures. Many of the classes cover content that corresponds to ethnic diversity. In addition, the Associated Student Organization sponsors events that celebrate different cultures. There are various

diversity displays that enhance student appreciation of diverse cultures.

### EVALUATION

Results for the recent survey indicated that 61 percent of student felt that the college assisted them in becoming more aware of different philosophies, cultures, and ways of life. This is significant in that the college has made an effort to plan events that focus on specific diverse populations; however the attendance at these events is sparse. The poor attendance could be a result of 1) the number of working adults who have little time for outside activities, 2) the lack of information being shared about events, and 3) the lack of a dedicated time and space for student activities. The college partially meets this standard and a planning agenda is included to enhance the college's efforts.

### PLANNING AGENDA

- Ensure that events focus on diversity and are planned far enough ahead, scheduled at a time that students and staff will be present, and tied to an academic assignment. Publicize the events carefully and thoroughly.

### II.B.3e. What processes are used to evaluate the effectiveness of practices and tools of admissions?

#### DESCRIPTION

At the district level, the admissions officers and registrars meet on a monthly basis to review admissions procedures for all nine colleges. District-wide student surveys occur from time to time. Administrators and supervisors review admissions applications annually to validate the absence of bias.

### EVALUATION

The college admissions function seem to have operated smoothly in the old bungalow setting. Now that this office has moved to the new Student Services Center, state-of-the-art technology is available and services are better coordinated.

Since the students who register are primarily first-generation students, they do not have the background to fully understand how college admission processes work nor the policies and procedures that govern this function. To that end the college needs to be more proactive in providing instructions to students and signage around campus to assist students in understanding the various functions. The college meets this standard.

### PLANNING AGENDA

- None

### II.B.3f. The institution maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provisions for secure backup of all files, regardless of the form in which those files are maintained. The institution publishes and follows established policies for release of student records.

#### DESCRIPTION

Federal and state laws govern the maintenance and release of student records. The college Admissions Office maintains a highly visible location that minimally secures all student records in a locked room and some files are maintained electronically. Due to the past temporary nature of the location in the bungalow, there was no vault to store student records. The purchase of fireproof file cabinets to house a large portion of the records minimally remedied

the securing of paper files. As a means of addressing this issue along with the limited amount of space for storage, some records have been scanned and are stored on CDs. Students give permission or prohibit the release of certain types of information on the application for admission to the college. The policies and procedures are published in the college catalog and schedule of classes.

### EVALUATION

As part of the Proposition A and AA bond funds, the college plans to address the maintenance of student records by building a location that is secure. In addition, through the college budget planning process, scanning equipment will be considered along with needed personnel to scan records. The college partially meets this standard and a planning agenda is included to enhance the college's efforts.

### PLANNING AGENDA

- Utilize technology to scan and store student records.

**II. B. 4. The institution evaluates student support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student records. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.**

### DESCRIPTION

The college relies on many sources of information to evaluate and assure that the student services programs are meeting the needs of the students. Every program must prepare and submit a unit plan annually. The plans include a self-review of the

program, which includes student data and audit reports. The plans also evaluate goals set in the prior year and set new goals for the coming year. One of the goals of the unit plans is to have each program assess itself and to improve services to students. The programs also conduct program reviews that support and/or complement the unit plans in evaluating services. Each program uses these reports to evaluate its status and make plans for changes that lead to program improvement. Most programs conduct student satisfaction surveys to also evaluate services throughout the year. The surveys provide valuable information on specific services provided or not provided (such as the value of telephones placed in the admissions office for registration purposes or the helpfulness of the financial aid staff to meet student needs). The student services areas actively engage in evaluation by:

- **Counseling Center** staff meets regularly to discuss the program and how the services can be improved. Counselors have assignments in an academic department so information can flow in both directions. Staff participates in some form of staff development activity so that the individual and the program can gain from the experience.
- **Admissions Office** program evaluates data on student registration (in-person, telephone, and on-line), then the office uses the information to enhance and facilitate the registration process.
- **Financial Aid** program uses data on students who receive aid, the length of time to process an application, the denials of financial aid, the students facing academic disqualification, et cetera, to evaluate the delivery of services and make the necessary adjustments.

- **Career Center** data on employer interest and placements help the program to provide a better service to students seeking employment.
- **EOP&S/CARE** determines student interest in the program and its services by the number of students applying to the program. If the numbers are low, the program will expand its outreach and recruitment services. If the number of students facing disqualification increases, the program can expand its counseling and tutoring services.
- **CalWORKs** collects data through the skills center to determine if the program is providing adequate and appropriate tutoring services to help the students reach their goals.
- **Health Office** reviews data of students using the services to determine if there are trends and where services can be balanced to accommodate other needed services.

In addition to all of the activities listed above, the student services programs developed individual student learning outcomes for each program during 2004-05. College-wide workshops helped the programs to develop the SLOs and develop the means to evaluate each SLO at the conclusion of the year. Since the process was completed late in the spring, the student services programs plan to conduct the evaluations at the conclusion of the 2005-06 school year. The Dean of Institutional Research and Planning will assist with the evaluation process.

### EVALUATION

All of the evaluation tools play significant roles in managing the student services programs and for improving the services.

For instance, the unit plans provide data on student success. Programs use the information, such as graduation rates, to determine how well needs are being met and where improvements can be made. For instance, the data for nursing students is used by the counseling center to help advise and guide others pursuing the same goal.

Each of programs use attrition data to determine where its services can improve or prevent future withdrawals. The college is utilizing available sources of information to evaluate its services. The college is making improvements in some areas such as graduation rates, transfer rates, and students receiving financial aid earlier in the school year. Retention continues to be a problem, and the college continues to search for a remedy to address the problem.

The various student services programs recognize the importance of the research and have made a commitment to take time to perform the evaluations. The process will be greatly improved and facilitated with the assistance of the Dean of Institutional Research and Planning. The structure is in place through the use of the unit plans, program reviews, student satisfaction surveys, and the individual programs reviews. Moreover, the college is committed to implementing the SLO program and following through with the end-of-year evaluations. The commitment to improve services remains strong. The college partially meets this standard and a planning agenda is included to enhance the college's efforts.

### PLANNING AGENDA

- Regularly evaluate and assess student service programs.