

Program Review Administrative Response

Margaret Carter Skills Center

Overview:

It was great to see the Skills Center faculty and staff present to their first program review Fall term 2009. Clearly, much work was done internally by reviewing your program goals, examining your curriculum, and assessing the needs of students, the community, faculty and facilities. The program review is an excellent first step that will serve as a benchmark for your future program reviews. It is evident that the Skills Center courses provide a strong foundation/stepping stone for approximately 60% of your students going into Apprenticeship or Career Technical Education programs. It was also great to see strong community support for the Skills Center as evidenced by community members who attended the presentation.

The Skills Center has a long history of providing a "bridge" for our students to local employers and non-profit organizations, as well as a "business-partnership bridge" for PCC to establish connections and partnership with employers and other local, state and federal non-profit organizations. Finally, it is evident that you have a solid "esprit de corps" among your students, faculty and staff that the program is transforming lives.

Written Report:

Your written report was well-organized and included a brief Executive Summary, the Margaret Carter Skills Center mission, its history and accomplishments. Several **best practices** were identified in your written report including:

- Alignment of Skills Center goals to the PCC mission
- Skills Center Course mapping to PCC's Core Outcomes
- Applied Teaching and Learning through contextualizing reading, writing and math skills according to students' employment and educational goals
- Infusing technology literacy into Communication and Math classes
- Responsiveness to scheduling classes to meet the needs of Skills Center students (times/locations)
- Data Collection/Student Tracking
- Staff Diversity that reflects the student population including hiring staff who were former students
- The majority of students the Skills Center serves are male; whose participation and attendance level has decreased in post-secondary education

Recommendations for Program Improvement

Your recommendations for improvement provide a very practical list of "to-do items for the Skills Center Faculty and Staff. Although the Grants Office can help you identify grant opportunities, the Skills Center faculty and staff will need to develop a comprehensive plan that outlines how funding would be used to meet program goals and student outcomes.

One of your recommendations request that class size not exceed 16:1. Based on the number of students you enroll in Skills Center Classes (between 50-70 students per term) your current faculty, academic professionals, and management staffing levels far exceed levels in other developmental programs at PCC. We do understand the value in keeping class limits small due to limited student access to technology, faculty and staff.

Areas for Improvement/Concerns:

Skills Center faculty and staff need to continually assess and make on-going program adjustments and improvements. The intent of the program review is to help faculty and staff see assessment as **their responsibility**.

Skills Center faculty and staff need continuously analyze and evaluate program goals and student outcomes attainment. The following areas should be explored:

1. **Communication**-- improved/enhanced communication (among the Skills Center faculty and staff, and with students and the greater college community),
2. **Partnerships**-- stronger, more intentional relationships with internal and external networks including but not limited to:
 - Internal: ABE/GED, DE and ESOL departments, Aviation Science & Aviation Maintenance Programs (about the Airway Science Simulation Lab), Computer Application Systems (CAS) Student Learning Centers, Occupational Skills Training (OST) program and Career Pathway Certificates of Completion –both non-credit and credit pathways (housed at the PCC SE Center);
 - External: Job Corps, POIC, Portland Youth Builders (and other alternative high-school completion programs);
3. **Pre-Post Skill Assessments** -- In addition to using CASAS as a student pre & post skills assessment inventory, we encourage you to explore using ACT Work Keys Assessments in Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information and Locating Information that could benefit Skills Center students and help them to pursue a National Career Readiness Certificate that would document Skill Center students' employability.
4. **Grants** -- Pursuing grants as a means of funding is a short-term solution. The Skills Center needs to find a steady revenue stream through contracts with employers and non-profit agencies.
5. **Contracts as a Funding Source**-- What services does The Margaret Carter Skills Center provide students and employers it serves that will provide funding through contracts from local employers or partnerships with other non-profit agencies?
6. **Survey Results**—many students did not reply to several of the questions in your survey which indicates that they are NOT currently pursuing post-secondary education beyond the training they received through the Skills Center and also indicate they have current training needs. How do you reach out to them?

Concluding Remarks

All of the administrators who read the report and attended your presentation would like to thank you for your efforts and congratulate you on completing your first program review.

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