**ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE**

**PROGRAM: Career Resource Centers**

**DATE: April 15, 2011**

**Opening Remarks:**

We thank you for putting a great deal of time and thought into your Program Review report and presentation. It was a very thorough and informative analysis, and we recognize the work involved in evaluating your services.

The comments included in this report were submitted by others who attended your presentation. We look forward to further dialogue about questions, challenges, and recommendations noted below.

**Commendations**

1. Excellent presentation. It was clear that the PowerPoint and presentations had been well-planned, and they presented the information clearly and engagingly,

2. Clear, concise written description of the Mission and Goals, History, Service Standards, Services, Resources, and Organizational Structure, including the significant differences between the campuses.

3. Good list of learning outcomes and activities, and indication of attempts to use surveys and focus groups to assess learning. The video clips of a student user illustrating what he was learning was impressive.

4. Information provided on how staff carried out activities to meet service standards.

5. Survey results indicating the numbers and types of users, resources and services being used, and self-reported high levels of satisfaction with services.

6. Connecting challenges and recommendations to research and survey data.

7. Impressive array of documents in the Appendices section (e.g., professional development activities, hand-outs, list of career assessment tools, career trends, survey items and results, etc.)

**Questions/Areas for Further Consideration:**

1. Recommendation #8 asks for guidance from the Deans of Students as to

whether consistency between the CRCs is needed or whether each Center’s current structure and service focus should be maintained based on individual campus needs. We appreciate this question, and will begin this discussion, not only about CRC’s, but also other services areas that have different names and different structures. We would need more data in order to evaluate options. Consistency would seem to make sense, in terms of offering the same core services on each comprehensive campus. But what are the reasons for maintaining the current variety? What data would be useful and possible to gather regarding the pros and cons of the current variety vs. a more standard approach? Are students concerned or confused about differences between campuses, or the language and process we use? Does one model produce better outcomes?

2. We need to clarify the most effective ways to assist a larger number of “undecided” students with career exploration and creating a “job plan.” What role should counselors play? What roles should Career Resource staff play? What career assessment tools work best? How do we gather objective and subjective data to shed light on this? What might be the impact of a new Answer Center approach, and changes in the first year experience.

3. We also need to consider whether there an optimal adjacencies between career resources, staff employment and co-op ed and how it relates to the bond program.

**Suggestions/Observations/Challenges:**

1. While data was provided about the numbers served, it would have been helpful to see trends during the years since the last program review.

2. Student survey results indicated a high degree of satisfaction with services, and increased self-knowledge and career-related knowledge. These are important outcomes. However, it would be instructive to know about students’ developing a specific career plan as a result of services received. Even more instructive would be data on how services contributed to gainful employment.

3. Our CCSSE data indicates that there is a discrepancy between how important “Career Counseling” and “job placement assistance and how often students use these services. How can we close this gap?

4. For all student services areas, we are beginning to move beyond statements like, “Our Centers can have a significant positive impact on student retention by . ; ; “ We want to see more evidence to support this assumption.

5. Accreditation standards now ask us to show how results of assessments of programs and services areused for improvementby informing planning, decision-making, and allocation of resources and capacity. What improvements have been made based on past assessment? Recommendations in the report are thoughtful and relevant, but also need to be linked to the data gathered and the assessment of it.

**Recommendations**

We appreciate the relevant and feasible recommendations in the report! We encourage the staff to initiate as many of these as possible, and to create an action plan and timeline for doing so.

Recommendation #6 includes a proposal for a new staff position dedicated to developing community partnerships with local organizations and businesses to develop volunteer, job shadow, and informational interviews opportunities, particularly focused on the undecided student. This would need to be part of a budget initiative, and have strong enough support from decision-makers. More data on the effectiveness of this approach at PCC would help to make the case. Can we demonstrate that students engaged in these activities clarify career goals, persist to completion, and move into gainful employment more frequently than students who do not take advantage of these opportunities? If so, perhaps we should initiate a broader discussion of cooperative education, service learning, and other experiential approaches as a best practice, and how to work with faculty to promote it.

Recommendation #9 calls for establishing a Career Resource Center at Southeast Center. A proposal needs to be developed and carried forward by the Southeast leadership team. This proposal makes sense in terms of offering consistent services at each comprehensive campus.

Additional ideas from the Deans of Students:

Engage Career Center staff from across the district with the First Year Experience programming in order to integrate intentional career planning outcomes and interventions for students

Support stronger intentional programming with DE curriculum.

Include representation from the Deans of Students on a CRC advisory board.

Explore creation of an external advisory board, which might address the need for the new staff position on community partnerships.

Explore more intentional connections with partnership universities; explore grant possibilities.

Experiment with online delivery of services using Learner Web or similar software.

**Closing Comments**

We commend the impressive amount of work done to produce this excellent report. We applaud the collaborative process, willingness to gather student input and ask critical questions, and begin to assess student learning more intentionally. We encourage CRC staff to be active and innovative in gathering data on service outcomes as well. Many departments are looking at how to report on meaningful, verifiable outcomes, and using data to improve retention and student success. While receiving feedback directly from students is important, it needs to be balanced with more objective measures.

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