

## **Administrative Response to Program Review - ROOTS Program**

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The Roots program staff created a well-written and extremely thorough program review, and Miriam Friedman conducted an excellent presentation on January 16, 2008.

### The program review deserves commendation for the following:

- summarizing the mission, numbers served, program components, and student characteristics.
- describing accomplishments during the past three years;
- presenting the data in a clear and attractive format, with photos, charts, quotes from students, and colorful graphics;
- using all 13 CAS standards for TRIO program components to rigorously self-assess and document how well standards are met; focusing staff discussions on 122 program components and applying a 4-point scale.
- describing efforts to carry out continuous program improvement, using an Advisory Committee and other planning and communication strategies;
- describing an array of marketing activities;
- including an informative array of program materials in the appendices
- providing charts in the Appendix indicating that a very thorough self-assessment was done by staff, using the CAS standards;
- providing recommendations for PCC in general, based on what has worked well for ROOTS.

### The ROOTS staff has made significant contributions to PCC by:

- describing and documenting the array of services that foster academic success for at-risk students;
- documenting high rates of persistence and good academic standing since 2001-02;
- contributing to the expansion of retention best practices outside the ROOTS program, such as mandatory advising for DE students, Course Progress Notification process, MOTT Program, free CG classes, and the CG 105 Scholarship Class;

### Areas for Improvement

In follow up discussions, Miriam Friedman indicated that she had not seen the Student Services Program Review planning document. This explains #1, 2, and 3 below.

#### 1. Problems and current issues were not described in specific terms.

The main body of the report gives a concise description of how the program works, and it presents a very impressive success story. Embedded in some of the sections were recommendations, and they implied ongoing efforts to refine an already very strong program. However, it was not clear if these were related to findings that pointed to specific challenges. For example, on p. 27, it stated, "Recruitment remains a challenge." How so? (In follow up discussions, Miriam Friedman indicated what some of the issues were,)

As we discussed, the purpose of the program review is to identify problems and current issues, in addition to outstanding aspects, and to indicate themes emerging from the quantitative and qualitative data.

#### 2. Findings and Recommendations were not clearly related to each other.

The charts entitled CAS Self-Assessment on pp. 40 and 41 list 17 "Findings." Six of these are stated as recommendations (e.g., "Make program mission more visible and intentional," "Expand access to leadership opportunities.").

The other 11 findings allude to problems identified by the self-assessment, but there is no discussion beyond these brief notations. For example, Part 9 (Equity and Staffing) says: "Difficult to remedy imbalances in student participation and staffing." This is an intriguing statement. What are the imbalances? Some might be obvious (e.g., "Does not serve distance learning students."). Others could have been elaborated on in the main report.

### 3. Staff professional development activities were not included.

Staff members' names and titles were included, but other program reviews have also included their attendance at conferences, workshops, or classes, leadership positions, publications, awards, college and community service (committees), and/or classes taught.

### 4. Charts differed slightly.

Parts 9 (Equity and Access) and 10 (Campus and External Relations) are scored as "Well Met" on p 40, but "Fully Met" on p, 41.

### 5. More input from students, faculty or staff would be helpful.

On p. 37 (Findings/Assessment & Evaluation), survey tools for students are mentioned: "Our recommendations are to:

- Re-evaluate survey tools
- Develop timeline for more intentional, ongoing student surveys
- Develop pre-and post-test instruments
- Work with Institutional Effectiveness to gain deeper analysis of data."

A "Program Exit Survey" is also included in the Appendix.

The inclusion of data from these surveys, plus input from faculty and staff would also strengthen the document. Other program reviews have also used focus groups to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

## Program Review Recommendations

We commend the staff for their careful self-assessment, and for the many recommendations to improve internal program operations. There were also three important recommendations for PCC:

1. Develop a cohort model for first-year students to foster peer-relationships, create opportunities for student involvement, and enhance student development and retention.
2. Implement a limited case management advising program for all first-year, degree-seeking students.
3. Create a full-time Financial Aid Advocate position to develop and implement financial aid literacy and self-advocacy programming for PCC students, perhaps in the form of a free, credit-bearing CG class.

We need to keep these recommendations in mind as we continue to promote mandatory advising for entering students, and expanded orientation/first year experience activities. The ROOTS program has demonstrated that they are important and should be extended to as many students as possible, and especially to those who meet TRIO program requirements.