

**Counseling Department**  
**Annual Unit Plan for Academic Year 2017-2018**  
October 2016

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## **Describe Department/Unit**

### **Mission/Connection to College Mission**

The goal of the Counseling department at Cerro Coso Community College is to facilitate student development in the areas of basic skills, career and academic planning and completion, and transfer preparedness to four year institutions. The counseling staff is committed to providing quality services and meeting the changing needs of our diverse student populations at all sites by continued involvement in college wide activities, outreach programs in the community, and implementing new strategies that focus on increasing student retention and success.

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## **Report on Improvements Made and Gaps Identified in the Prior Year**

### **Student Equity**

#### **Persistence rate, successful course completion**

##### **Population:**

Ethnicity: African American

##### **Analysis and Plan:**

African-American students are much less likely to persist from semester to semester and successfully complete their courses in their first year. The use of our new technologies and targeted outreach and in-reach will provide opportunities to engage African-American students and develop new strategies for improved outcomes.

### **Access**

##### **Population:**

Socioeconomic Status: Economically Disadvantaged

##### **Analysis and Plan:**

Foster Youth - The college does not have a consistent strategy for identifying and reaching out to foster youth. As this is a high-risk group, we need ways to improve access and develop strategies around improved identification and support for foster youth. We will develop outreach materials and support activities specifically designed to reach this population of students.

## **Outcomes Assessment: Overall Report**

The Counseling Department has made a number of improvements in the preceding academic year as a result of outcomes assessment. These improvements occurred in both instructional and non-instructional areas. The Director of Counseling & SSSP started in November 2015 and was able to assess areas of strength and need within the department. Improvements have been made by evaluating existing processes, making modifications where necessary, and providing professional development to the staff and faculty in the department. The Director has worked closely with the Vice President of Student Services and the Department Chair(s) to identify needs and implement improvements. The department identified additional areas of improvement needed that relate to the SSSP Plan, the completion of core services, the Student Equity plan, and other efforts to improve student success,

retention, and completion. In order to increase the number of students completing core services, the department has implemented a number of strategies including the introduction of new technologies, improvements to services, staffing changes, training, and proactive outreach and student support services.

The department continues to invest significant resources in increasing the number of students completing the required core services. Staff and faculty have worked together to increase the number of new students fully matriculating and increasing the number of existing students completing core services that they may be missing. The following overall report on outcomes assessment focuses on a number of initiatives that have been developed and implemented to promote core service completion. Overall, the completion of core services has increased in all areas (assessment, orientation, counseling, education planning) and the number of students who have fully matriculated has increased as well. Students who have fully matriculated (completed all core services) demonstrate significantly better outcomes than those students who have not completed any components. This college data is reported in the attachment "SSSP Data and Updates".

New technologies were implemented and additional training on existing technologies were provided. The department moved from the development phase to the implementation phase with EAB Navigate, a student-facing onboarding platform. After pilot and testing phases in fall 2015, the platform was fully implemented in Spring 2016. According to utilization reports, students are using Navigate to plan their classes. The students completing the intake survey have been less than the overall utilization so the team has strategized ways to increase the student's use of the intake survey in Navigate. Communication will be sent to the students to promote the completion of this survey and tie its benefits to the completion of a long-term education plan. In fall 2016, students will also be able to use Navigate to register for their classes.

The Counseling Department continues to use SARS for scheduling and its Early Alert function and Banner as its Student Information System. Staff and faculty received additional training on using these technologies and how to properly reflect counseling contacts to ensure MIS data is being recorded accurately. The use of SARS Early Alert has been challenging as it has not worked reliably. Our Early Alert Counselor continues to work with the vendor and our district to get it functioning properly.

It had been identified that there was a need to involve faculty in the completion of core services and provide them a tool to aid them in communicating with students about the need for matriculation. A Faculty Guide to SSSP was developed to meet this need and distributed to faculty at Flex days and at all sites. The department has also developed Basic Skills presentations and Class to Career workshops which are provided to students in the classroom setting. The department is in the process of evaluating these presentations and making improvements where necessary. Class to Career presentations focus on career planning, career exploration, and Cerro Coso programs linked to careers. The core components (orientation, assessment, and education plan) are highlighted and the completion of a long-term education plan is strongly encouraged. Other topics covered include drop dates, financial aid requirements, campus resources, and registration information. This program has gained momentum and has started to expand to all class, not just CTE classes. For example, last year a non-CTE faculty member asked counseling to give a presentation based on one of the associate degrees for transfer. Rather than linking the classes to a career the presentation linked the classes to a transfer degree. This prompted us to expand the Class to Career presentations to be used in all areas.

The Counseling Department made some changes and improvements to the new student orientation for both the on-ground presentations and the online orientation. This included making required additions per Title V and Title IX requirements. The college's orientation has been identified as something that needs further updating and to be more attractive and relevant to all students. This aligns with the SSSP plan and the college is contracting with a vendor to re-design our existing orientation into an interactive, web-based student orientation and tracking system.

In the area of assessment and placement, the department made some significant changes and improvements over the past year. In addition to the further use of multiple measures to maximize student placement, a focus on assessment preparation was developed. When students sign up for an assessment, they are encouraged and given resources to prepare for the test. It is highly recommended that they do not take the assessment without proper preparation. Through preparation and the use of multiple measures, counselors/advisors have been able to maximize student placement. The branching profile within Accuplacer was also reviewed and modified.

In the past, the Counseling Department had provided online counseling to students who were at a distance. This service was interrupted due to issues in its implementation but it was still identified as a need. Over the past year, after meeting with staff and faculty, the department has now revised the online counseling form and intake process. The process is in place and counselors are assigned daily to conduct online counseling. Further development of online counseling will be done over the next year with the introduction of new technologies such as Cranium Café or Confer Now.

Further improvements were made in the department by hiring permanent staff and adjunct faculty. There had been several vacant positions which have all been filled at this time. Where possible, the department has been able to hire faculty and staff that are representative of the student population based on diverse pools of applicants. Additional improvements were made by identifying training and professional development needs for staff and faculty; both seasoned and new. Training has occurred through regular all-

site counseling meetings and through professional development conferences including areas such as transcript evaluation, assessment preparation, use of multiple measures, reporting, data collection, outreach, online counseling, SLOs, student success, processes, and policies. There are areas for additional and ongoing training that have been identified for the upcoming year including career counseling, transcript evaluation, supporting basic skills and dual enrollment students, and more.

The department developed some improved outreach activities to new and existing students in order to increase student engagement and completion of core components. One of the foundations of these activities is the idea of meeting students where they are at and being more intentional and proactive in our outreach efforts. Some of these activities include mobile counseling, classroom presentations, workshops, open houses, meetings with the high schools, and awareness events. Outreach to high schools and community partners is one area that has grown and will continue to develop at the main campus and all of the sites. Counseling, in collaboration with other departments, is also trying new activities to increase student engagement and retention. This has coincided with an increase in our dual enrollment and concurrent student population. As this population continues to increase, the need to establish, revise, and solidify policies and procedures has been identified. Increases in the dual enrollment population have been significant at the East Kern and Lake Isabella sites. In addition, we have had an increase in students needing counseling services through classes offered at California City Prison and Tehachapi Prison.

The department has recently evaluated the probation and disqualification interventions used for students experiencing academic challenges. The goal is to incorporate more high-touch services at an earlier point in time to promote student success and prevent progression along the probation/disqualification continuum. New procedures for students who are placed on Probation 1 have been implemented including requiring the completion of a long-term education plan and workshops through Student Lingo. Students are receiving letters from the Director of Counseling & SSSP outlining their status and requirements for next steps and registration.

In the instructional area, the need to develop a method of assessing SLOs was identified. SLO data being collected was based on the number of students who completed a particular assignment rather than assessing if the student met the SLO. This was a department issue that was addressed in the 2015-2016 COUN C101 courses by collecting a survey to determine if students met the course SLOs. While the survey satisfied the collection and assessment of SLOs, the department noticed that the five SLOs for COUN C101 and the course description was too complex and not capturing the true essence of COUN C101 – Tools for College Success. The course description and SLOs were revised and is currently undergoing review at CIC for planned implementation in 2017-2018. While waiting for approval, the department decided that the survey is not fully assessing the SLOs. Therefore, it was determined to provide the same assignment and rubric in the fall 2016 semester for COUN C101 to capture SLO #1 “Articulate an educational goal and describe the pathway to meet this goal”. In the spring 2017, the department will provide the same assignment and rubric to capture SLO #2, #3, #4, and #5.

The development of PDEV C100 – “Student Success Career Pathway” was completed for the 2016-2017 academic year and is currently being offered as a dual enrollment class at California City High School, Tehachapi High School, and is being offered as an articulated class at Mammoth High School. The plan is to offer PDEV C100 at other service area high schools who would like to participate in dual enrollment or articulation. The department is currently working on an articulation agreement with Bishop Union High School for implementation spring 2017 semester.

Cerro Coso is offering dual enrollment classes at Burroughs High School (BHS), California City High School (CCHS), Mojave High School (MHS), Boron High School (BHS), and Tehachapi High School (THS). In 2015-2016 THS offered six dual enrollment classes in the fall and seven dual enrollment classes in the spring semester. CCHS offered one dual enrollment class in the fall and two dual enrollment classes in the spring semester. BHS offered one dual enrollment class in the spring semester. Currently in fall 2016, THS has increased their dual enrollment classes to 14, CCHS to four, and BHS to three. The counseling department plays a significant role in dual enrollment, because the current process involves counselors and educational advisors to go to the high schools, provide presentations on dual enrollment, discuss the process, provide significant follow-up, meet with students, and process the “Concurrent/Dual Enrollment” forms. Our plan, in collaboration with the Career Technical Education dean, is to develop a process, such as a handbook and/or website with resources for high school instructors/counselors, parents, and students. In addition to resources, a step-by-step procedure will be available online that explains the process of signing up for dual enrollment classes. While the process will be available online, the counseling department will still be very involved with the dual enrollment program and will provide additional support to students, by connecting them via class presentations and email.

## **Outcomes Assessment: Gaps Identified in Prior Year's Assessments**

**Students who have participated in counseling services will express a high degree of satisfaction with the quality of services.**

**Type:**

AUO