

Student Services
Departmental Goals and Assessment Plans 2014-2015

Department Name: First Year Experience (FYE)

Departmental Goals for 2014-2015

1. Collaborate with Academic Affairs to establish a college-wide First Year committee, focused on developing and sustaining high-impact initiatives for first-year students.
2. Continue to update the NetConnect, CampusConnect, and QuickConnect presentations, and through them, disseminate first-year experience (FYE) materials relevant to the needs of new students.
3. Create a sustainable and strategic organizational structure in the FYE department using Talent Management guidelines.
4. Create a professional development plan for professional staff. Hire and train the four new advisors, and administrative assistant.
5. Define the curricular and co-curricular elements that make-up the First Year Experience at SLCC and market this with students, staff, and faculty.
6. Create a dashboard for FYE budgets, including historical trends, and major expenditures.

Project Title: Needs-Based Assessment about Students in Early Academic Alert

Methodology: In order to create a strategic, scalable, and sustainable program to serve first year students in academic alert, a needs-based assessment took place to understand why students fail in their first year. In understanding these trends, existing SLCC data was used. If needed, data would have also been collected from students through focus groups or student surveys. Once these students' needs have been fully analyzed, recommendations will be developed for a new program.

Plan/Timeline: Data was gathered from students who placed in academic alert in the fall of 2014. This list of students was used to identify the conditions and demographics of the students in academic alert. Initial recommendations to support this group of students were drafted by the end of the semester spring 2015 semester. An intervention will be built around the needs discovered from this analysis and a program will be piloted in the fall of 2015 (with students who placed in academic alert in the spring of 2015). The pilot will be assessed for effectiveness and improved upon for the new 2015-2016 academic year.

Results/Findings: The data gathered from the list of students in academic alert was not sufficient to determine all the root causes leading to academic alert. However, we were able to identify specific areas that merit further examination and will do so with the spring 2015 data. Some of the themes that were discovered in the initial data mining are listed below:

- The data indicates that students of color are disproportionately falling below satisfactory academic progress during their first year at SLCC. Latino, Native American, African American/Black, and Pacific Islander students are *disproportionally* overrepresented among the students on academic alert. In an effort to boost retention and completion numbers for students of color, future efforts should be cognizant of this discrepancy.

	Headcount (n=1,733)	Percent in Academic Alert	Percent enrolled at SLCC (fall 2014)
African American/Black	80	5%	2%
Asian	53	3%	4%
White	1,003	59%	70%
Latino/a	398	23%	15%
Native American	28	2%	<1%
Pacific Islander	63	4%	1%

- Furthermore, the data also indicates that students pursuing a General Studies program are more likely to be in academic alert than those in other programs. Yet, certain programs of study were disproportionately represented in the academic alert lists. More examination should follow, specifically to see if there is a correlation between certain programs of study and academic alert status.

Program of Study	Headcount (n=1,733)	Percent in Academic Alert	Percent enrolled at SLCC (fall 2014)
General Studies	713	41%	51%
Business (and business management)	198	11%	8%
CSIS and Networking	98	5%	4%
Criminal Justice	73	4%	2%
All Engineering degrees	71	4%	3%

Degree Type	Headcount (n=1,733)	Percent in Academic Alert
Associates of Science	1076	62%
Associates of Applied Science	328	19%
Associates of Arts	209	12%
Associates of Pre-Engineering	60	3%
Certificate of Completion	36	2%

Actions Taken (Use of Results/Improvements): Although we are still in the process of gathering data, in the interim, an email communication reaching out to all students who fell into

academic alert has been sent. The email invites students to come in and visit with a First Year Experience Advisor. During these meetings the advisor will work with the student to determine the underlying causes of the failing grades. Once this data has been collected, the student and advisor will work together on an action plan that will move the student towards satisfactory academic progress.

In partnership with Academic Advising, a series of workshops will be created to respond to the specific challenges students in this group face. Initial topics include, managing time, family challenges, finances, work challenges, personal challenges, and major/career uncertainties. These workshops will be worked into the individual action plans of each student. The workshops will assist the student in self-assessing areas of improvement, while connecting them to resources to facilitate this growth.

We will continue to analyze data using the spring 2015 list of students in academic alert. Specifically, we are interested in understanding the Math and English placements of students in academic alert, the type of student they are (e.g., FY, FO, TM, RM), their gender, residency status, and if they are first generation students or not, and lastly the number of credits attempted. We believe this information can help us gain a better understanding of this group of students, facilitating our ability to provide early detection, intervention, and support services aimed at reducing or eliminating the number of first year students falling below satisfactory academic progress. As we move forward in the 2015-2016 academic year, our department will continue to build our program using the information collected, while partnering with specific academic programs and faculty to scale our reach.

Other:

Draft of Email communication:

Dear [*Student*],

Your [*semester and year*] GPA indicates you had some academic difficulties this semester. Because of this, your current academic standing with Salt Lake Community College is listed as “Academic Alert,” this means you have fallen below the required 2.0 GPA. For your upcoming semester, SLCC’s First Year Experience office wants to support you and help you succeed and make this a better academic semester for you.

What you may not know is that your GPA does affect your financial aid and registration options. We are here to help you return to “Good Standing” academically and to help you through the troubles you faced last semester.

Please come in to visit with Erin Stirling or Tung Thantrong, your First Year Experience Advisors. They can help you plan out your next semester, tell you about resources you may not have known about, give you tips on how to manage your time, put together an action plan, and so much more.

Please schedule a 20-minute meeting with them today!

[*Contact info*]

First Year Experience Office
Salt Lake Community College
Redwood Campus, STC 256
801-957-4299

Sincerely,
[*Signature*]

Project Title: Why do Students Complete an Orientation but do not enroll in Courses?

Methodology: This project seeks to understand the reasons why a student would complete an orientation either in-person or online, but not enroll for classes. In order to understand these reasons, a short survey was drafted and e-mailed to students, alongside some small incentives for completing the survey. The results of the survey have helped us determine gaps in our programs, and assisted us in making improvements upon our services.

Plan/Timeline: The survey was developed prior to the start of the spring 2015 semester in consultation with FYE and Student Services staff. Data from the various calling campaigns was used to frame some of the survey questions. A list of students who attended orientation but did not register for classes was compiled after the last day to add classes for the spring semester. The survey was administered to students soon thereafter. Results were compiled and shared with stakeholders in spring semester. Recommendations will be implemented in subsequent orientations for the new academic year.

Results/Findings: A total of 114 students completed the online survey. Of those who completed the survey 80% completed the NetConnect orientation (n=91) and 20% completed an in-person orientation (n=23). Of this total, 36% of students had registered for courses, but later dropped them, and 60% of students never registered for courses.

Below are the top four reasons why students changed their minds about attending SLCC after they began the SLCC enrollment process:

1. New students could not find the information they needed to matriculate (34%)
2. New students felt our tuition and fees were too expensive (30%)
 - a. 60% of students who registered but dropped their classes attributed their decision to this reason
3. New students had problems with the financial aid process (25%)
4. Classes new students wanted were not available (21%)

Further inquiry about the challenges new students in this study encountered revealed problems with transferring credits into SLCC and problems with the residency process.

In spite of the institutional challenges or life obstacles students faced, 76% of them (n=81) said they would return to SLCC in the future.

Actions Taken (Use of Results/Improvements): The results of the survey were shared with the majority of Student Services departments, and staff from Institutional Marketing. First Year Experience will be working with these departments on the implementation of these recommendations and on ameliorating the challenges students faced while enrolling at SLCC.

The following recommendations will guide the work of the First Year Experience office in the 2015-2016 academic year.

- Since many students did not know what steps they could take to change their residency status, adding a “how to” sheet to the materials students receive upon enrolling at SLCC, may help students understand how to change their residency status if they feel it is erroneous.
- Financial Aid was a big obstacle as well. Attaching FAFSA workshops to QuickConnects would allow a “one-stop” shopping for our students who are unsure about the financial aid process. It will also allow our students to make a connection with the department making it less nerve wracking to approach the department.
- Individualize the information students receive at orientation to better match the needs of students, with special attention given to transfer students and non-traditional students since this is the largest group of students who completed an orientation but did not begin classes.
- In partnership with the Contact Center, create campaigns to reach out and service students who completed an orientation but who have not registered for classes after a certain period of time using the results of the survey to support this population of students.

Project Title: Determine the Needs of New Pacific Islander Students

Methodology: Pacific Islander student enrollment and fall-to-spring retention rates have been declining over the past three academic years—with an all time low in the 2013-2014 academic year. This project seeks to understand the reasons for this trend. This needs-based assessment plan convened professional Student Services practitioners and faculty who work with Pacific Islander students to determine what barriers exist in the enrollment and retention pathway of first-year Pacific Islander students. Existing data about Pacific Islander students was primarily used. Some new data from Pacific Islander students was also collected.

Plan/Timeline: Staff and faculty who work with Pacific Islander students were identified prior to the beginning of the fall 2014 semester. During the fall semester, meetings took place to share or review data and to brainstorm potential barriers or obstacles to Pacific Islander enrollment and retention. New student data was gathered at the onset of the spring 2015 semester. Recommendations for improvements were drafted and shared with stakeholders in the spring semester, and will be implemented in the new 2015-2016 academic year.

Results/Findings: In addition to the data gathered by First Year Experience on Pacific Islander enrollment and persistence rates, institutional data cemented the achievement gap found amongst the Pacific Islander community.

	Fall Enrollment Rates (for students who completed an orientation)			Fall to Spring Retention Rates (for students who completed an orientation)		
	2012	2013	2014	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	63%	59%	68%	60%	48%	53%
ALL STUDENTS:	68%	71%	68%	68%	68%	66%

	SLC County*	SLCC Enrollment	SLCC Awards
Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	2%	1%	<1%

* Salt Lake County college age population/students who could potentially come to SLCC

Using existing data collected by academic advisors who are working closely with Pacific Islander students, we identified four main barriers influencing the declining student enrollment and persistence rates of Pacific Islander students:

1. Lack of awareness and knowledge about the Financial Aid process
2. Placing into Developmental Education
3. Not feeling welcomed, connected, or acclimated to the college culture, including lack of self-efficacy and confidence in the academic space
4. Family obligations (i.e., lack of parent or family support for college)

Actions Taken (Use of Results/Improvements): In addressing these barriers several meetings took place with Pacific Islander advisors and allies who possessed expertise about this population. Each of the four barriers was discussed and recommendations were drafted.

1. Lack of awareness and knowledge about the Financial Aid process:

- Develop a family support initiative, specifically targeting Pacific Islander populations. The initiative includes a two-part “Community New Student Orientation” program – that first brings the “college” to the community, and then the community to the SLCC campus. Thus creating a relationship between the college and Pacific Islander communities. Increased knowledge about SLCC and college in general delivered into the communities where students, their parents and families are will only increase awareness about the ways to finance college.

2. Placing into Developmental Education:

- Develop programming that supports students as they prepare for the Accuplacer. Add a study group or study period with tutors to FYE’s Accuplacer Tips & Tricks workshops that allow students to improve their math, English, reading, and writing skills in a supportive, self-paced, non-judgmental environment.

- Offer Accuplacer Tips & Tricks workshops to high school students prospectively seeking enrollment at SLCC or who are seeking enrollment into Concurrent Enrollment.
 - Be available to provide training on the Accuplacer placement to high school faculty and counselors.
 - Build a stronger awareness and attitude toward Concurrent Enrollment classes.
 - Create focused and specialized support, as well as a safe space, for Pacific Islander students to study for their developmental education classes in a cohort-based model.
 - Increase promotion of Learning Communities, such as Bruin Scholars, to Pacific Islander students.
3. **Not feeling welcomed, connected, or acclimated to the college culture, including lack of self-efficacy and confidence in the academic space:** At the March 2015 SLCC Pacific Islander High School Conference and at the SLCC Women in History Month events, we were fortunate enough to meet and discuss with visiting Pasifika/Pacific & International Education scholars from the University of Auckland in New Zealand; The University of Auckland being very advanced in their research and approach to Pasifika/Pacific Island Studies and serving a large and very visible Pacific community, they shared their best practices and experiences in serving their Pacific students in higher education, recommendations included:
- Establishing/expanding partnerships with several Utah higher education institutions to strengthen pipelines for P.I. students to persist through college.
 - For Spring 2016 we are working to collaborate with the University of Utah Pacific Islander Student Association (P.I.S.A.) High School Conference and join both institutions' Pacific Islander student clubs for one high school conference to further communicate a clear "bridge" between SLCC and the University of Utah. Partnering with the University of Utah will also allow those students who may not meet the university requirements to see other options here at SLCC, while at the same time, experiencing the partnerships we have with other institutions.
 - Further developing and expanding Pacific studies curriculum at SLCC
 - We partnered with the University of Utah Asia Center within the College of Humanities and Utah Valley University Multicultural Student Services' Cultural Envoy Program to discuss the creation of relevant curriculum for Pacific Islander students at SLCC. Discussions centered around the creation of a "Pacific Islander Studies" track or pathway that introduces students to a critical analysis of Pacific Peoples and cultures in the U.S. diaspora and beyond. The primary goal in offering a track or pathway for "Pacific Islander Studies" at SLCC is to encourage students to further their educational aspirations through the completion of an associate's degree and to successfully transfer to a four-year university. In order to support this goal, it is critical for Pacific Islander students and communities to see themselves represented and connected to the SLCC

campus by offering and developing Pacific courses/curriculum that speaks to, represents and privileges the voices of native Pacific Islanders. An initial step in this goal is to re-implementing the HUM 2220 – Pacific American Studies course at SLCC which was designed to further support the college’s mission of “offering programs and student support services that provide students opportunities to acquire knowledge and critical thinking skills, develop self-confidence, experience personal growth, and value cultural enrichment.”

- Discussions also surrounded better promotion of the “Experiential Language Credit Options,” and of Tongan and Samoan Language courses offered at SLCC. These courses could further encourage Pacific Islander students with foreign language competencies to take advantage of gaining academic credit that count toward degree completion, and support students’ vision of themselves as college graduates.

4. **Family obligations (i.e., lack of parent or family support for college):** We have collaborated with Utah Valley University’s – Pacific Islander/Rural Tribal/People of the Pacific (P.O.P.) ImPACT Outreach Grant to participate in Parent/Family College Nights to gather information from families. Through this experience, we decided that our aforementioned Pacific Islander family/parent “community” orientations programs should not only inform students and their families about their college options and resources, but open up communication lines and diminish cultural barriers between Pacific Islander parents, often times immigrants to the U.S., and their U.S. born students. We draw from the People of the Pacific (P.O.P.) curriculum for students to explore questions about critical communication with themselves, their parents and families. Questions include:

- What are my parent’s views of education?
- How do I involve my family with my goals?
- How do I communicate to my elders what is important to me?
- How do I negotiate family situations while meeting educational expectations?
- How can I communicate effectively with my elders while maintaining cultural respect?”