



Contact Center Program Review

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Reviewers

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Summary

The Contact Center (CC) at Salt Lake Community College (SLCC) receives inbound calls and inquiries for the College, assists with targeted outbound enrollment and other campaigns, and supports online success coaching for students enrolled in two or more online classes within their first year. Based upon the self-study provided by the Director, the CC values “collaboration, community, inclusivity, learning, innovation, integrity and trust.”

Despite its 20+ year history, its purpose and mission is not well known across the College, due to recent changes in organization and leadership, as well as new personnel and services. Formerly associated with University Marketing & Communications, the department reports to the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management within Student Affairs. Other departments reporting to the AVP of Enrollment Management include: Admissions, Concurrent Enrollment, Financial Aid & Scholarships, Registrar & Academic Records and Scheduling & Academic Support Services.

The external review team was asked to evaluate the CC to provide additional context to the non-academic program review with consideration for the following:

- Alignment and contribution to SLCC mission, vision and goals
- Systemic integration of services across departments
- Quality, efficiency and effectiveness
- Customer service and collaboration
- Congruence with SLCC values
- Commitment to diversity and inclusion

The external review team was also asked to provide context for best practices taking place at other, similar institutions, to ensure that SLCC’s approaches are in line with external standards of practice.

Over the course of two and half days, reviewers met with constituents from a variety of departments from across the College. Professional representatives included both those holding leadership roles in Enrollment Management specifically, as well as staff from various departments including OIT, eLearning, Advising, Orientation, Learning Advancement and MySuccess. Due to COVID pandemic restrictions, these meetings took place remotely via Zoom. In those conversations, several themes emerged highlighting areas of commendation and improvement.

Themes

Access to/use of the right tools - Some of the processes that CC staff are currently using could be enhanced with better tools and procedures, to reduce workload, duplication and foster more collaboration.

Better college collaboration and communication - The CC is often one of the last entities to learn about changes in procedures, upcoming events or other information.

Importance of accurate information - Due to the vast amount of information across the College, the CC relies heavily on information found on the SLCC website and departments to address questions and make referrals.

Limited Capacity - Due to increasing call volumes, growing number of outbound campaigns, complex questions and the increased support for closed offices, additional staffing is needed.

Explore a possible name change - The CC name is not well recognized or used. With many who refer to the CC as the former name of "Call Center" and with the inclusion of online success coaching, exploring a name change is worth consideration.

Department mission and strategic plan - The CC does not have a defined mission or strategic plan to determine direction and measure performance.

Clarity of procedures and training - With call center personnel taken from other departments, there is an expectation that questions will be addressed by the CC. Procedures and training are needed to identify service expectations.

Success coaching placement - With success coaching personnel across various departments and a growing catalog of online offerings, the College may need to revisit the organization placement of online success coaching.

Balancing technology and human connection - With the recent launch of the chatbot and other technological resources, it will be important for the CC to effectively balance technology and a human connection.

Commitment to diversity and inclusion - There is a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion within the CC, as well as those that they serve.

Student-centered focus - Supporting students is a central focus of the CC and its personnel.

Recommendations

Based on our meetings with department and organizational leaders, other stakeholders and partners, as well as our review of provided documents, the following is a list of recommendations for each theme:

Theme	Recommendation(s)
Access to/use of the right tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Secure a better CRM to coordinate student engagement and service across the College, including the CC. ● Explore the use of two-way texting to connect with students and other constituents. ● Enhance the functionality and maintenance of the chatbot by hiring a chatbot coordinator in the CC.
Better college collaboration and communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Work with College partners to revise processes to ensure that web information is updated regularly. ● Establish regular meetings with key stakeholder groups and departments to learn about upcoming events and new information. ● Educate the College on the mission and services provided by the CC.
Importance of accurate web information and events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Request all college events to be included on the SLCC master calendar and that the CC be made aware of events outside of regular business hours. ● Create a centralized knowledge base regarding FAQs, contacts and events. ● Identify a liaison within each department office to address issues or questions and report outdated web information. ● Request that web information be required to be updated regularly to remain active on slcc.edu.
Limited Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase staffing for the outbound and OSC teams, with an emphasis on bi-lingual language expertise. ● Establish an Assistant Director to directly supervise each CC team. ● Cross-train inbound and outbound teams. ● Propose performance-based funding (portion of student retention and re-enrollment tuition monies) to expand services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Require 2-business day advanced notice from departments needing the CC to provide phone support.
Explore a possible name change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If the Online Success Coaching (OSC) team remains associated with the CC, consider a name change that reflects the mission of the department. ● If the OSC team is moved out of the CC, keep the Contact Center name. ● Research peer institutions for possible names, including “One-Stop” or “Virtual Services”.
Department mission and strategic plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clarify the mission of the Contact Center, including creating a mission statement that is referenced and reviewed regularly. ● Develop a 2-3 year strategic plan with performance metrics. Ensure that the plan aligns to college strategic goals and activities. ● Identify 3-4 operational and aspirational peers in which to benchmark operations, funding, organization and best practices. ● Organize and distribute an annual report to the College community to increase awareness of the CC and its impact.
Clarity of procedures and training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish clear procedures for all teams to increase service consistency and accuracy. ● Cross-train inbound and outbound team members to expand support and awareness and explore the possibility of combining the teams organizationally and/or functionally. ● Organize regular training/information sessions with CC personnel. Record for later viewing and access for anyone unable to attend.
Success coaching placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Organizational placement of the OSC team be reviewed and aligned with other success coaching activities across the college. ● Extend OSC beyond the first year through completion, as capacity allows. ● Incorporate success coaching support for students enrolled in an online program. ● Share student input with Faculty, Advising, eLearning

	<p>and other interested stakeholders to improve the online learning experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Revise the budget structure of the OSC Team, as the funding is currently associated with multiple sources that may not be sustainable.
Balancing technology and human connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Follow up on chatbot unanswered questions with a human contact. A test was conducted and no human follow up took place. ● Provide a human contact option via the chatbot to the CC. ● Avoid creating metrics that limit call duration. Some departments indicated that CC staff were directed to keep calls to a certain duration.
Diversity & Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue the commitment to supporting diversity and inclusion in all forms, including language support, accessibility, technology, etc. ● Ensure that diversity continues to be an area of focus for new personnel to accurately reflect the audiences served and in the local community.
Student-Centered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recognize and reward CC personnel who go the extra mile in supporting students or other constituents. ● Ensure that students continue to be the primary focus of the CC and its mission. ● Ensure that the CC personnel are representative of the students they are serving. ● Expand bi-lingual support and services.

Conclusion

In summary, the CC is to be commended for its commitment to teamwork and collaboration with each other and partners, a student-centered focus, alignment and support of the college mission, effective transition to remote work, and the leadership and vision provided by the Director. With these areas of strength and the recommendations mentioned above, we are confident that the CC will play an effective role in advancing SLCC towards its vision of being "...a model for inclusive and transformative education, strengthening the communities we serve through the success of our students."