

Peer Team Report
On
STAR Student Support Services

Sherrie Padilla
Rodney Schilling
Maria Valenzuela
Linda Harmon, Chair

April 2010

Peer Team Report

On

STAR Student Support Services

Area 1: Mission

The mission statement of the STAR program states specifically its' goals and objectives. It lays out the focus of its programs and the population served. It has aligned itself with the Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILO's).

Area 2: History

It was found that the entire program staff participated in completion of this self study report. Since they had just recently finished their grant renewal report, they were able to utilize much of the same information to validate this review.

This program is funded through the U.S. Department of Education by grants. These initially began in the 2001-2002 school year and have continually been awarded through August 2010. If this year's grant is awarded, the program will be able to continue for another five year cycle. The population serviced by the grant is mandated at 160 students per year to provide consistency.

The Peer Team has found that over the past four years, the STAR program has instituted and undergone multiple changes in policies as well as personnel. Policies and personnel have been added to provide more complete services. Students are oriented to the program, their needs assessed, and their responsibility requirements are established.

Area 3: Curriculum

The STAR program does not offer degrees or certificates to its participants.

Area 4: Student Support and Development

The students selected and served by this program must meet strict criteria. To be eligible, the students must be first generation students, low income students, or have a documented disability. Once selected, they must consent to a Participation Agreement Contract. In addition, they must be enrolled in 9 units per semester and complete the program in 4 years per cohort.

After reviewing, the Peer Team found that accurate information about the program and its policies is well published in the catalog and on the website. The

application for the program is also available on the website. Contact with the students is done in person, by letter, phone and email to communicate program information needed by the student to be successful.

The diversity of the STAR student population reflects the community college population. This population includes older returning students, new high school graduates, and English as second language students. This program provides appropriate comprehensive services to disabled students. Selection of the STAR student for the program is done via the application. A Student Score Care is used to evaluate each applicant's eligibility and need. Their ranking determines their acceptance.

The STAR program works well with other campus programs such as the Learning Center, Job Placement Center, Financial Aid Office and the Career/Transfer Center. This collaboration provides the students with a complete well-rounded program to finish their education.

Area 5: Data Analysis and Environmental Scan

According to the fall, 2008 student census, the student population numbered 15,180. Of this number, 12,945 would qualify for the STAR Program. That is 85.3% of our student population that would qualify as low income, first generation, or documented disabled. Of the total student population in this group, 47% were low-income, 75.4% were first generation, and 6% were disabled.

Of the students numbered in this census, 36.7% of the total student population was both low income and first generation students. Low educational attainment and low income goes hand in hand. The National Center for Education Statistics reports that students from low income families are six times more likely to drop out of school. In order for these students to be successful in obtaining a college degree, they need additional support and encouragement.

The Peer Team found that review of the recommendations made during the 2006 review outlines the strides made to improve the program. Many online forms are being utilized to make the program paperless. Mentors are making more personal contact with STAR students to encourage students to make use of all provided services and to be more accountable for their program. Student mentors receive training in the Learning Center and also Customer Service training.

Area 6: Student and Program Learning Outcomes Assessment

The STAR program created a student survey to assess the program and the student progress toward meeting the program and learning outcomes. There are six items used to assess the effectiveness of the program. Every area except one was

scored at over 81.5% in agreement. The one low area was about the advisor helping with decisions about academic and career goals based on career interest and academic success. On initiation, response to the survey was minimal but each subsequent semester is showing growth in the responses. Utilization of this information assists the staff in improving the services to meet their objectives

Area 7: Collaboration with Other Programs

Collaboration with other programs on campus is vital for success of the STAR program. The director meets bi-monthly with directors of other programs in Student Services sharing program information as well as the needs and successes of the program. The STAR students are encouraged to make use of all campus services. Budgetary cutbacks in some areas have made some programs difficult to access.

Area 8: Outreach Activities

While the STAR program is marketed to outside agencies as well as campus programs, it is not allowed to recruit at any agency or high school. It does ensure that information is available and visible for campus outreach programs to promote. Information has been presented to individuals and groups through high school orientations, presentations for specialized majors such as the Registered Nurse Program and through the Alpha Iota Honors Society.

Area 9: Goals and Objectives

The STAR program has established four goals for the program. They are:

- A persistency rate of 65% of students served from one academic year to the next.
- 75% of all enrolled program participants will stay in good academic standing.
- Of new participants served each year, 30% will graduate with an associate degree or certificate within four years.
- 20% of new participants served will transfer with an associate degree or certificate within four years.

While these goals may seem ambitious, the Peer Team found that with the commitment observed of the staff and students, each one is attainable.

Area 10: Long Term Resource Planning

As the STAR program resources are limited, allocated funds are not adequate to expand services. While they only serve 160 students per year, their student participation is growing and their space is becoming quite cramped. Presently their space allows only 26 students to be in the center at once. These students have signed a contract to utilize the services and occasionally, there is no space for the students. Having a larger area for student usage would allow for an expanded computer area which would require more computers. Currently, there are six computers for 160 students. This is insufficient for their needs.

Area 11: Recommendations and Comments

The Peer Team has found that their resource planning is completely founded in fact and their needs are valid. As a team, we therefore recommend that they need:

- Expanded space for utilization of services provided by the program
- More computers for work area to promote student success
- More personnel to provide mentoring and guidance

This designated group of students deserves to have the aid and assistance that the STAR program provides. We as a community should strive to make this available.