

Integrating the Financial Aid Office into the College Campus

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Background

- Three recent research projects
 - The effect of differing financial aid policies and procedures on the enrollment rate, retention and success of financial aid students at the California community colleges—Mike MacCallum
 - Green Lights and Red Tape—Deborah Frankle-Cochrane (TICAS)



Background

- Three recent research projects (cont)
 - Through the Open-Door: How do Practices Promoting Access Affect Retention at California Community Colleges—Toni M. DuBois
- Personal observation
 - Meetings and conferences
 - Counseling vs. business model
 - Adjunct faculty—Astronomy



Financial Aid Policies

- Integration into the college
- Appropriate staffing levels
- Staff training
- Counseling rather than business model
 - Students helping students
 - Minimize the bureaucracy
- Financial aid delivery
- Socioeconomic factors



Green Lights and Red Tape

- “When in doubt, give it out.”
- “We are the police officers of the Title IV funds.”
- Student focus group to review college materials
- Outreach/inreach to provide information to students
- Interoffice collaboration
- Handholding vs. taking responsibility



Through the Open-Door

- The concierge model
- Flexibility to use resources during time of greatest need
- An institutional commitment to student support services



Most Important Finding

- College policies and procedures, how we treat students, do affect enrollment, retention, and success



Current FA Initiatives

- Communicating Basic Skills and Student Success Initiative information
 - Missing information letter
 - Orientation for College Success required
 - Petition for reinstatement
 - Petition for extension of financial aid
 - FAFSA cover sheet



Current FA Initiatives

- Increased communication with students
 - Constant Contact
 - Facebook
 - Financial aid website
 - FA TV
 - SARS Call



Current FA Initiatives

- Require Counseling 1 “Orientation for College Success”
 - Expand to include assessment, orientation, and an educational plan?
- Develop a “who to go to” referral network
- Convene a financial aid student focus group to review our paperwork, website and how we communicate



Current FA Initiatives

- Support and expand student mentoring
- Include student success information in the financial aid outreach booklet
- Create a “How to Succeed Bookmark”
- Develop a Financial Aid brochure
 - FA deadlines
 - How to Succeed at LBCC



The Student as Customer

- Customers are the most important people in any business
- Customers are not dependent upon us. We are dependent upon them.
- Customers are not an interruption of our work. They are the sole purpose of it.
- Customers do us a favor when they come in. We aren't doing them a favor by waiting on them.
- Customers are an essential part of our business--not an outsider.



The Student as Customer

- Customers are not just money in the cash register. They are human beings with feelings and deserve to be treated with respect.
- Customers are people who come to us with their needs and their wants. It is our job to fill them.
- Customers deserve the most courteous attention we can give them. They are the lifeblood of this and every business. They pay your salary. Without them we would have to close our doors. Don't ever forget it.

- Sam Walton, founder of Walmart or
- Mahatma Gandhi?



The Student as Customer

- Our colleges are not businesses
- Yet customer service is a business characteristic worth adopting
- We are in the business of changing lives
- The topics of this conference are extremely important in that work
- More than just another program, we need a campus-wide commitment to customer service, student support, and student integration



CCC Structural Issues

- Funding based on seat count at census, not on student success
- No deadline for enrollment
- No mandatory assessment and placement
 - Should be mandatory with exceptions
- No basic skills/college study techniques requirement for college-level classes
 - Basic skills/study techniques academy?



Working with Other Offices

- Financial aid interfaces with most other offices at the college
 - Fiscal Affairs
 - IT Department
 - Admissions
 - Faculty
 - Athletics
 - Counseling
 - Student Life
 - Scholarships/Foundation



Amount of Time with Other Offices

- Fiscal Affairs
- IT Department
- Admissions
- Faculty
- Athletics
- Counseling
- Student Life
- Scholarships/Foundation



Relationships with Other Offices

- Fiscal Affairs
- IT Department
- Admissions
- Faculty
- Athletics
- Counseling
- Student Life
- Scholarships/Foundation



Working with Other Offices

- What is the incentive for working well together?
 - No obvious incentive
- What is the key to working together at a community college?
 - Personal relationships
 - Recognition of a common goal



Working with Other Offices

- Strategies
 - Lunches
 - Drop by an office just to say hi
 - Get to know something personal
 - Expand the relation above the petty college problems
 - Always stay positive--in public and in private
 - They are doing their jobs the same way we are doing ours



Categorical Cuts

- EOPS
 - The students who need the most help, will be getting less
 - The most researched program with strong, positive student outcomes
 - Developed in response to civil unrest in the mid-60s



Categorical Cuts

- Matriculation
 - There is such a gap between high school and college
 - High need for knowledge about college
 - Know the least about college
 - The one program designed to bridge that gap for all students--slashed



Categorical Cuts

- DSPS
 - Minimum federal accommodation requirements must be met for these students
 - Accommodations are critical for the success of these students
 - Their success is part of the overall student success of the institution



Solutions

- Do more with less
- Work together in Student Services
- Scale up EOPS services to all students
- At LBCC all activity is focused on instructional support
- How can a beleaguered Financial Aid Office do more?



Thank you for your attendance



Discussion