**2017-2018 Non-Academic Program Review**

**Program Review Documents should be completed and submitted to the appropriate dean/reporting supervisor and the assessment coordinator no later than June 30th, 2019.**

**Executive Summary**

Student Support Services (SSS) TRIO is a federally funded grant program that began at Coconino Community College in 2010. Since then, TRIO SSS has served over 2,660 students over the last 10 years and has stewarded Coconino Community College’s strategic plan and core values. By increasing college retention and graduation rates through a learner centered environment, TRIO SSS has focused on empowering students to achieve their individual goals.

**Program Overview**

TRIO is a nationally funded grant program served out of the Department of Education. TRIO has been serving students since the 1960’s when it was first signed into legislation during the war on poverty under the Lyndon B. Johnson administration. Since its inception, TRIO has grown to become 8 different TRIO programs that help various student age-groups move through the academic pipeline. TRIO Student Support Services or (SSS) is now focused on student success at the college level.

Through a grant competition, funds are awarded to institutions of higher education to provide opportunities for academic development, assist students with basic college requirements, and to motivate students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education. Student Support Services (SSS) projects also may provide grant aid to current SSS participants who are receiving Federal Pell Grants. The goal of SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants. Grants are awarded on 5-year grant cycle. Coconino Community College’s second SSS grant program is currently on year 3 out of 5 in the cycle.

Federal regulations state that all SSS projects **must** provide: academic tutoring, which may include instruction in reading, writing, study skills, mathematics, science, and other subjects; advice and assistance in postsecondary course selection; information on the full range of student financial-aid programs and benefits; resources for locating public and private scholarships; and assistance in completing financial aid applications. Additionally, TRIO SSS provides education or counseling services designed to improve financial and economic literacy and assist students in applying for admission to graduate and professional programs; assistance with enrolling in two-­year institutions; and counseling on applying for admission to four-year institutions and their programs for obtaining financial assistance.

The SSS projects ***may* also** provide individualized counseling for personal, career, and academic information; activities and instruction designed to acquaint students with career options; exposure to cultural events and academic programs not usually available; and peer mentoring components. SSS projects may also provide grant aid to current SSS participants who are receiving Federal Pell Grants

***Mission.*** The mission of the SSS program is to provide opportunities for academic development, assist students with basic college requirements, and to motivate students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education.

***Objectives and Annual Reporting.*** The goal of SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants. The Department of Education must approve all goals laid out in the initial grant proposal and competition awarding process, these goals must be ambitious, but realistic. Realistic goals are usually no more than 5% higher than the objectives set forth by the host institution. All grantees funded under the SSS program must submit an *Annual Performance Report* (APR) as a condition of the grant award. Two year institutions must keep student records for a period of (4) years The report must include current and prior-year participants including prior-year participants no longer enrolled.

The purpose of the APR is to:

* Determine the grantees’ compliance with requirements of program
* To assess the extent to which grantees have met their approval of goals and objectives
* To calculate prior experience points
* To generate data on the SSS program as a whole for periodic publication in response to Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) and the Higher Education Opportunity

The CCC SSS grant has the following objectives that measure retention and graduation rates of its participants, and each year these objectives are reported annually to the Department of Education through the APR.

***OBJECTIVE 1.******Persistence Rate****:* 48% of all participants served in the reporting year by the SSS project will persist from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or earn an associate’s degree or certificate at the grantee institution and/or transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year institution by the fall term of the next academic year. The intensive services in the Plan of Operation are chosen from strategies that have proven in research studies to increase the retention of eligible students in SSS. CCC’s model of services offers intensive and structured services in the first year, with required and quality academic assistance support academic progress and development of non-cognitive factors. Support systems have been built into the program to ensure participation including services to meet identified needs as well as monitoring, incentives, community building and financial assistance.

***OBJECTIVE 2: Good Academic Standing Rate:***89% of all enrolled participants served by the SSS project will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution. In the Plan of Operation for this SSS program are methods proven to bolster academic performance to ensure a large number of its participants obtain cumulative GPAs above 2.0. As stated on in the Plan, particularly in the first year, these methods include realistic course advising, career development, learning skills improvement, and tutoring. In addition, SSS coaches assist in solving problems in students’ lives outside of school as well. Involvement in and monitoring of each student’s academic progress will make sure that no participant falls behind.

***OBJECTIVE 3:******Graduation/Transfer Rate****:* ***1***. 18% of new participants served each year will graduate from the grantee institution with an associate’s degree or certificate within four (4) years*,* ***AND* *2*.** 15% of new participants served each year will receive an associate’s degree or certificate from the grantee institution and transfer to a four-year institution within four (4) years.

In order to achieve the (3) objectives, the TRIO SSS plan contains high-contact and goal-oriented coaching, academic advising/career development and follow-up, academic assistance, and a very strong transfer preparation element. All are supported by sufficient resources allocated so that SSS staff can remain in contact with the students throughout their stay at CCC, ensuring graduation and/or a smooth transition to a 4-year school.

Current Progress on Set Objectives

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Standard Objectives | Year 1  2015-2016 | Year 2  2016-2017 | Year 3  2017-2018 | Year 4  2018-2019 | Year 5  2019-2020 |
| Funded to Serve | 140 | 144 | 144 | N/A | N/A |
| Persistence Rate | 78% | 73% | 77% | N/A | N/A |
| Good Academic Standing | 94% | 90% | 90% | N/A | N/A |
| Degree/Cert Attainment Rate | 60% | 54% | 44% | N/A | N/A |
| Degree/Cert AND Transfer Rate | 36% | 25% | 29% | N/A | N/A |

**Changes and Improvements Since Last Review**

SSS at CCC has not undergone a formal program review since its institution at the college. However, in June 2016, SSS hired an external consultant through the Nosotros Education Center to visit the CCC SSS program and conduct a *Compliance Assessment Report*. The purpose of this review was to:

* Determine Project compliance with applicable TRIO program laws, regulations, and policies;
* Assess the Project’s performance and progress toward achievement of its approved objectives;
* Assess proper Project management and provide technical assistance as needed and;
* Determine the adequacy of fiscal accountability at the Project level and institutional oversight.

Data for the Compliance Assessment was collected through an on-site assessment of all available documents, forms, participant files, and financial records as well as interviews with the following Project staff at the Project office located on the CCC campus in Flagstaff, Arizona:

Veronica Hipolito, Dean of Student Engagement

Brian Francis, Director of Academic Advising and Student Engagement

Carlos Gonzales, SSS Project Director

Katherine Radics, SSS Project Administrative Assistant

Randi Axler, CCC Grants Accountant

Participant files were reviewed to validate individual project eligibility, selection, services provided, and individual progress on project objectives. Financial documents were also reviewed to determine whether grant funds were spent on reasonable, allocable, and allowable costs. The following Project components were examined and assessed as part of the Compliance Assessment:

A. Administration

B. Programming (Activities & Services)

C. Reporting & Evaluation

D. Fiscal Operations

Based on the Assessment Compliance Review, changes were made to the areas that required action.

In October 2018, Arizona State Auditors conducted an internal audit of TRIO SSS reviewing both financial and participant files for compliance accountability. This audit was successfully completed and no required actions or penalties were assigned.

**Personnel, Facilities, Resources, and Funds**

***Personnel.*** The SSS professional staff will consist of a Director with a caseload of students, a Retention Specialist with additional duties of coordinating mentoring and overseeing the database, and a Learning Specialist who will coordinate the tutoring and other academic support activities. Both of these specialists will have a caseload of students as well. Hourly Learning Assistants will provide tutoring. The Department of Student Affairs reception desk and staff will oversee clerical functions of the SSS program.

The plan of operation’s success is heavily dependent on professionally trained personnel whose functions relate closely with the accomplishment of the objectives: The Director, the two Specialists, and academic support personnel. When hiring for the program, a strong preference for persons with background similar to SSS participants will be preferred.

All positions require:

* Demonstrated commitment; ability to communicate; and experience working with disadvantaged individuals, ethnically diverse individuals and groups, and persons with disabilities
* Experience in advising, teaching, or supervising individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, including first generation, low-income and/or disabled students.
* Strong oral and written communication skills

The TRIO staff will be able to participate in a number of both internal and external (statewide and national) professional development opportunities to help increase their knowledge in grant regulation, budgeting, retention, and serving underrepresented groups of students. TRIO staff are integrated fully into the CCC culture and work closely with various departments and committees on campus. TRIO staff attend the following professional development opportunities:

TRIO Specific Trainings and Networking Opportunities:

* Arizona Women in Higher Education (AWHE) Conference
* TRIO Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) Courses, webinars, and trainings
* First Generation Symposium at Northern Arizona University
* AZ WESTOP Chapter meeting (regional affiliation and networking conference)
* WESTOP Regional Annual Conference

CCC specific internal committees and initiatives:

* Director, Jessica Laessig sits on the CCC Retention Committee, New Student Orientation, First Year Experience, Assessment Subcommittee, and the CCC Common Reading Committee
* Retention Specialist, Becky Pineda currently serves on the Employee Events Committee and Advising Operation subcommittee, and she also served on Palate to Palette committee
* Learning Specialist, Kim Shaw is the current Chair of the CCC Wellness Committee and served on the Diversity Committee
* SSS staff visited the Page Campus for the “Get the Scoop” event
* All SSS staff participate in Department of Student Affairs Staff meetings
* All SSS staff participate in HR days, employee events and Student Affairs Staff Meetings

According to federal regulation, TRIO SSS programs *are not allowed to exceed 4%* of their staff salaries for professional development.

***Facilities.*** SSS will be housed and integrated with CCC’s Department of Student Affairs whose staff provides local and distance services from the Lone Tree campus. SSS will serve CCC campuses located in Flagstaff and Page. Utilities, maintenance, security, and custodial services are included for SSS at its campuses.

In addition to the technology mentioned above, CCC campuses function with special accommodations for SSS students with other life obligations by providing electronic contact and walk-in academic advising.

CCC has committed ADA-compliant and conveniently located space on the Lone Tree campus in Flagstaff to house the central offices of the SSS project. SSS will have three professional office spaces for a total of 550 square feet and access to facilities in the Student Center. The Student Center will provide direct proximity to Career Services, Student Life, Academic Advising, CCC2NAU, Disability Resources, Placement Testing Services, Tutoring and academic support services and the student computer lab. Facilities on the other campuses include meeting spaces for in-person and electronic communication for confidential conversations and group activities at the Page campus.

SSS is proud to have a personalized space for TRIO students. Our goal is to provide a welcoming place for students to study, converse, receive tutoring, and, in general, a designated place to call their own on campus. In 2016, the TRIO SSS office space added color and wall decals to add a more personalized touch to the space. The office also has several canvas prints of previous TRIO Alum who we are proud to showcase.

***Equipment and Supplies.*** CCC will provide office furniture for the office spaces and access to duplicating and mail services. CCC will provide access and training for the Banner information system.

The grant will budget for adequate key supplies to conduct the program, such as office supplies, software, reference materials and textbooks, academic resources for college skills, and paper.

***Future Needs****.* According to advising best practices outlined in the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education, “The design of facilities must guarantee the security and privacy of issues as they deal with FERPA, office structures that allow students to over hear what should be a private conversation between an advisor and student should be avoided and considered in the design of office structures. For conversations requiring privacy, staff members must have access to a provided space.” (CAS, 2012). In the current TRIO SSS office the Learning Specialist’s office is a cubicle with no ceiling. Conversations between the Learning Specialist and advisee can be heard throughout the common study space, which is often occupied by TRIO students, and accessing private rooms on campus is not always guaranteed on short notice. Moving forward, it would make sense to add a ceiling to the Learning Specialist space to ensure the privacy and confidentially of conversation per the CAS standards. TRIO Federal regulations prohibit spending grant money on construction needs, therefore a future need would indicate that the college pick up the cost of making this cubicle private, secure, and in alignment with CAS best practices.

***Finances.*** By far the greatest portion of the budget —85% —funds personnel (Staff & Benefits, Learning Assistants, and Mentors) who provide the administration and intensive services required for student success. The remaining budget pays for tools and training to support their work, as well as SSS Supplemental Grant Aid for participants, cultural and educational enrichment, and activities to assist students to integrate into college. As shown in the following budget chart, all items requested will support the program objectives and program plan in the most cost-effective manner.

TRIO SSS programs run on a 5-year grant cycle which operates from September 1st through August 30th of each year. The initial proposed budget of $220,000 was approved and awarded in 2015. Over the last few years, the Council for Opportunity in in Education (COE), TRIO’s lobbing partner in Washington D.C., has fought to allocate more funding for existing SSS programs. In Grant Year 3 and 4, an increase in federal budgets was approved by congress and an additional 4% of funding has been awarded to SSS programs. Each year CCC collects a revenue of 8% of the grant as “indirect costs” and this goes directly into the CCC General Fund.

**CCC TRIO SSS 2015-2020 Grant Awards and Increases**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grant Year | Awarded | Federal Increases | 8% Indirect Costs that go to the college’s general funds |
| Grant Year 1 | 220,000.00 | Base Line | 17,600 |
| Grant Year 2 | 220,000.00 | Base Line | 17,600 |
| Grant Year 3 | 232,265.00 | .05% increase | 18,581 |
| Grant Year 4 | 242,136.00 | .04% increase | 19,370 |
| Grant Year 5 (projected) | 242,136.00 | No increase (projected) | 19,370 |

**Internal Partnerships and Collaborations**

***Internal Partnerships.*** CCC has also made a significant commitment of College personnel to the SSS project. In addition to the contributions below, all personnel refer prospective students to SSS.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Commitments of Personnel | |
| Academic Advising | The Academic Advising Coordinators will provide ongoing training on Academic Advising including information on best practices, college tools and resources, degree planning, graduation applications and the Arizona General Education Curriculum. |
| Disability Resources | The Disability Resources Coordinator will refer eligible students, provide training to SSS staff on best practices in working with students with disabilities, consult on student issues or concerns and provide recommendations for student |
| CCC2NAU Manager | The CCC2NAU Manager will coordinate with students’ SSS advisors, and provide updates on progress and participation of SSS students participating in the CCC2NAU program. |
| Budget Office | The budget office will set up a budget in the Banner information system, provide training for the SSS budget manager, provide supervision for the CCC budget process and assist with report generation. |
| Institutional Research | The Institutional Research office will provide data reports on eligible students, retention data and other data needed to inform the success of the program. IR staff members will provide expertise in analyzing the data collected. |
| IT Office | The IT office will provide technical support, maintenance and technical training to SSS staff. The SSS program will have access to the services offered by the IT help desk. The IT office will provide technical support for the utilization of distance technology services. |
| Financial Aid Director | The Director of Financial Aid will supervise and coordinate the distribution of SSS grants to students. The Financial Aid office will provide training and consultation services to SSS staff. |
| CAVIAT/Dual Enrollment Coordinator | The CAVIAT/Dual Enrollment Coordinator will promote the SSS program to students, provide lists of participants, and refer eligible students to the program. |
| Banner Student Module Administrator | The Banner Student Module Administrator will set up attributes for collection of data in the Banner system. The Banner Administrator will provide training and access to the student information system. |
| Faculty | Faculty will collaborate with SSS on referral of students, Early Alert notifications, mentoring and consultation on student needs. Instructors of the identified first year courses will coordinate on Instruction for Supplemental Study Sessions. Faculty invite TRIO staff into their classrooms for short presentations on SSS program requirements and eligibility. |
| Other Office Support |  |
| Office | Type of Support |
| Admissions and Registrar’s Office | The Admissions Office will assist in identifying eligible students through the admissions process by including a question on the admissions application indicating first-generation status. Student information will be provided to the SSS office. The Banner Student Module Administrator will provide technical support and training for utilization of this student information system. SSS will have direct access to the Banner Student Modules to monitor student registration, academic performance and financial aid status. |
| Financial Aid | The Office of Financial Aid will provide information and training to SSS staff regarding financial aid policies and procedures, as well as working with referred SSS students. |
| Data Collection and Analysis | The Institutional Research will provide identification of eligible students, generation of institutional reports and assistance with analysis of data. |

***External Partnerships and Collaborations.*** The TRIO SSS program has created many relationships and partnerships with external organizations and agencies since its conception at CCC in 2010. TRIO regularly schedules volunteer opportunities for staff and students in the way of “service learning projects” with local non-profits and community agencies.

TRIO SSS Service Learning Projects and affiliated Organization:

* Boxing food at Flagstaff Family Food Center
* Serving hot food to 300+ families at the Flagstaff Family Food Center
* Trail clean-up and maintenance at the Flagstaff Arboretum
* Trail construction for CCC Facilities
* Garden bed clean-up and maintenance for CCC
* Trash pick-up day with Phi Theta Kappa on Rt. 66

Due to federal regulations, TRIO SSS is not allowed to use funds for travel/outreach to students who are not enrolled in at CCC. Therefore, TRIO relies heavily well-developed relationships with current CCC staff and advising partners to help promote and reach out on behalf of TRIO SSS. Disability Resources and the CCC Recruitment Coordinator reach out to high school students several times a year to help bridge the connection from High School to the College level.

TRIO SSS regularly schedules educational/cultural field trips to help students obtain extensive transfer preparation and information about future Universities they may intend to transfer to. Field trips are chaperoned, typically run every spring, and include both in-state and out-of-state partners. TRIO SSS offers these specialized field trips to provide exposure to students who might not otherwise have the opportunity to experience these types of education/cultural experiences. With the combination of expected volunteerism through service learning projects and educational/cultural experiences, TRIO SSS is able to make a positive impact on the lives of students in the program.

TRIO SSS Student Academic and cultural annual field trips include:

Educational and Cultural Experiences:

In state:

* Arizona State University
* University of Arizona
* Northern Arizona University
* Grand Canyon University

Out of state:

* University of Las Vegas
* Dixie State University
* Fort Lewis College
* University of Albuquerque

Cultural Experiences:

* Bodies Exhibit – Las Vegas, Nevada
* Titanic Exhibit- Las Vegas, Nevada
* Broadway show- Las Vegas, Nevada
* Zion National Park- Utah
* Grand Canyon National Park- Arizona
* MeoWolf Art Exhibit- Santa Fe, New Mexico

**Review of Provided Services**

***Individual tutoring.***Learning Assistants will be hired by TRIO SSS to provide individual, specialized learning assistance by appointment for SSS students when they need more intensive help. One-on-one sessions via online video conferencing will be provided for students at a distance. Learning Assistants will act as tutors for specific classes or will provide remediation in reading, writing or math, as described below. According to 2017 study done by Magnolia Consulting, students reported that seeking help with homework assignments was the number one reason to seek out tutoring services.

Students most frequently saw tutors for **help with homework**, **understanding terms and concepts**, **preparing for tests**, and to **improve study skills** (n=18)

Source by Magnolia Consulting

***Remediation.*** While students placing below college level in reading, writing or math attend developmental courses at CCC, they often still do not do well enough to move on to the next level. Such SSS students will work one-on-one with subject-specific tutors.

***Study Groups.*** SSS staff will facilitate the formation of study groups, both for academic assistance and creating connections on campus. Groups can be formed with students at the Page campus over Zoom. The Learning Specialist will oversee the formation of these study sessions and have a Learning Assistant scheduled for a specific time during the day. These study sessions will be advertised and promoted within the SSS program so that program participants are made aware of study sessions.

***Early Alert.***CCC’s Early Alert process through the Starfish system will allow faculty or other personnel to contact SSS via a computerized form when they suspect a student is having problems, particularly within the first three weeks of a semester, but also any time. The form will indicate whether or not the student is attending class, turning in assignments, having computer difficulties, financial issues or social issues. After soliciting more information from the initiator if necessary, the student’s assigned SSS Specialist will discuss the situation with the student by phone or in person to adjust services or add referrals. The Specialist will then follow up with a contact within two weeks for each student and again at the midpoint of the semester.

***Learning Skills.*** The Success Navigator Assessment, designed to help programs identify at-risk incoming students through a holistic view of critical facets, is provided as a module in the student’s Canvas course and is used as a basis for further advice and follow-up with their SSS Specialists and Learning Assistants. During individual contacts and tutoring, staff will continue to assess and monitor participants’ progress toward proficiency in the learning skills required for college.

***Academic Advising and Course Selection.*** SSS students will be assigned to a SSS staff person (Specialist or the Director) who will function as a coach and academic advisor. They will assist their students to create an education pathway to an associate’s degree and/or transfer for a bachelor’s degree based on the student’s expressed needs and goals and needs determined in their Canvas and AZCIS assessments. Such a structured pathway reduces unnecessary courses, reduces costs for the students and offers a direct plan for completion of the student’s goal.

The SSS staff will use an intentional, proactive and action-oriented coaching approach to advising, monitoring progress and communicating via the college’s DegreeWorks program and the Starfish Early Alert Program. Through these avenues, the adviser/coach can gather information from instructors and students on attendance, grades, academic needs and social concerns and to problem-solve and provide referrals for service and intervention. In addition to scheduled in-person meetings, the SSS coach will reach out via technology (email, phone, social media) to make contact at least once every two weeks (for first-year students, and three times a semester for upper classmen), to check in and to provide motivation and support before situations become unmanageable.

***Financial Aid Counseling and Financial Literacy.*** Since adequate financing for school and living is crucial to obtain a college education, especially for low-income students, all SSS participants will obtain in-depth knowledge about financing their college education, managing finances, and assistance with the financial aid process.

***College Exploration Field Trips and Cultural Experiences.*** At least once each year, SSS staff will coordinate workshops with Transfer Admissions Offices from NAU, Arizona State University and the University of Arizona about academic programs, transfer requirements and their admissions processes. CCC has transfer programs with all three public universities and the benefits of participation will be shared with students.

***Summer Bridge Institute.*** To connect students as early as possible with college and the Student Support Services program, participants recruited into SSS in the summer prior to their first year will be encouraged to participate in a one-day Summer Bridge Institute hosted at the Lone Tree campus. In an engaging day of activities, students will feel welcome and become familiar with the campus, its college culture, academic programs and staff, as well as build relationships with peers and current students.

***Career Development.*** All new participants will use the Arizona Career Information system (AZCIS) as part of their assessments. Results will assist in discussing career options with their Specialist during preparation of their Individual Action Plan. Use of these assessments will lead students to career clusters and job titles within AZCIS for further exploration (or information, if they are already decided on a career). Participants will then use the AZCIS “Occupational Search” to research information on the indicated career clusters and job titles, both specific to Arizona regions and other states as well. Specialists will coach project participants to explore areas in which first generation, low-income, and disabled persons are under-represented such as medical, professional and engineering careers. Results of exploration will be discussed with the SSS coach at the next meeting. In addition, students will be referred to the CCC Career Services for career advising such as job-search strategies, resume building, cover letter composing and filling out job applications, where applicable.

***SSS Supplemental Grant Aid.*** A student grant, funded by SSS and titled the “I Will Succeed” grant, will provide much-needed funding for low-income students, as well as serve as an incentive to participate in other advantages of the SSS program. The amount is $1800 for three awards annually and may be prorated for less than full-time attendance. At the end of year, a Student Recognition Ceremony will be put on by the Department of Student Affairs where the recipients of the TRIO Grant Aid will be awarded and recognized.

***Mentoring Program*.** As part of the first-year initiative, SSS students will be assigned a mentor who may be faculty, staff or a student at CCC. In addition to the requirement of *I Will Succeed* awardees to mentor, as part of their SSS activities, second-year students will be encouraged to mentor first-year students. An SSS Specialist will have the responsibility for the mentoring activities. Mentors will be recruited prior to each semester and will receive orientation/training in the first week of the fall semester. Responsibilities will be to contact students at least three times a semester, be available to answer questions, make referrals, and attend events on campus.

***Student Demographics.*** In accordance with the Department of Education thisSSS project will identify 144 participants from the Page and Flagstaff campuses, of which at least 2/3 or 66% will be low-income and first generation, or have a disability. The remaining 1/3 will be low-income or first generation, or have a disability. At least 1/3 of the participants with disabilities will also be low-income. Again, this is mandated by the Department of Education for all SSS programs. The SSS project has continually met and/or exceeded its required eligibility goals as documented in the chart below.

Source CCC SSS Access Database

In addition to meeting and exceeding eligibility requirements, the SSS program at CCC has consistently served a high percentage of students of minority ethnicities. The SSS program consistently serves close to 30% Native American students and about 19% Hispanic Students. For reference, CCC enrollment of Native American students is at 20% as of Fall 2018. This is an important demographic as students from minority backgrounds typically have a greater need for support services and face higher dropout rates than their white peers. It’s important to note that in regards to gender, SSS has a lower proportion of male students to female students. There may be many factors that play into the gender disparity. This statistic is interesting to note and could be an opportunity for specific targeted outreach in the future.   
Source CCC SSS Access Database

Source CCC SSS Access Database

***Support of Faculty and Staff.*** The SSS program recognizes that outreach and strong partnerships with faculty on campus is important for the retention of program participants. In December of 2017, TRIO SSS conducted research through Magnolia Consulting to help the program staff better understand how CCC Faculty members perceive the quality and utility of the TRIO program in supporting students. Of the faculty members solicited for the survey, 27 responded. The data below presents the survey findings. The majority of respondents were part-time faculty.

Respondents had most frequently heard about TRIO from other **CCC faculty or staff**, from **in-service days** or from **their students.**

The majority of respondents **had referred** their students to TRIO.

For those who had referred students (n=18), most frequently cited reasons included **useful services**, **helping students succeed** and **positive feedback** from students about TRIO.

# Awareness of TRIO Services (n=26) Faculty were most aware of **academic advising**, **tutoring** and **study skills assistance** services offered by TRIO. The majority were not aware of many other services offered.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No |
| Academic advising service | **76.9%** | 22.2% |
| One-on-one individualized tutoring | **76.9%** | 22.2% |
| Study skills assistance | **61.5%** | 38.5% |
| Assistance with Financial Aid (FAFSA) and Scholarship applications | **50.0%** | **50.0%** |
| Peer mentoring program | 46.2% | **53.8%** |
| Assistance with transfer to 4-year university | 42.3% | **57.7%** |
| TRiO Club | 38.5% | **61.5%** |
| TRiO study space | 34.6% | **65.4%** |
| Computer lab | 30.8% | **69.2%** |
| Career exploration/ major & course selection services | 23.1% | **76.9%** |
| Financial management education | 19.2% | **80.8%** |
| College field trips/tours | 15.4% | **84.6%** |
| Laptop loan program | 15.4% | **84.6%** |
| Calculator loan program | 3.7% | **96.3%** |

Respondents were **interested** in learning more about the following TRIO services:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Count |
| College field trips/tours | 10 |
| Assistance with transfer to 4-year university | 8 |
| Career exploration/ major & course selection services | 8 |
| Laptop loan program | 8 |
| Peer mentoring program | 7 |
| TRiO study space | 7 |
| Calculator loan program | 7 |
| Financial management education | 6 |
| Computer lab | 6 |
| TRiO Club | 5 |
| Assistance with Financial Aid (FAFSA) and Scholarship applications | 5 |
| Academic advising service | 4 |
| One-on-one individualized tutoring | 4 |
| Study skills assistance | 4 |

The above findings from Magnolia Consulting helped the TRIO SSS staff better understand areas of improvement in faculty relationships.

Strong partnerships with faculty have a positive influence on the SSS program in the following ways:

1) Recruitment of student into TRIO

2) Early Alert intervention of at-risk students

Since this study, SSS staff regularly make it a priority to reach out to faculty one-on-one to explain our program in detail and help them understand our eligibility requirements. SSS staff connect with faculty through New Faculty Orientation which is conducted twice a year to help onboard and familiarize new faculty to college processes and resources for students. It’s important that faculty on our campus see the value and can speak effectively of the TRIO program with their students as they are a key referral source for TRIO participants. In the future, SSS staff would like to invite Faculty to SSS Staff meetings as an opportunity meet, connect, and share cross-share valuable information.

**SWOT Analysis**

***Areas of Strength.*** There are many advantages for participants that are in the SSS program such as one- on-one support, college resources, grant money, peer-to-peer community and support. Overall, the SSS program does well at helping students with academic advising, providing personalized tutoring for students in need of additional academic support, helping student explore colleges and universities, and providing a community and sense of belonging for students through our intentionally designed space and curriculum. The SSS staff model respect, engagement, and compassion when working with each other and students. The staff regularly come up with new programming ideas and methods for best practices modeling flexibly and open-mindedness. The SSS program fosters quality connections, which results in good academic performance and higher retention as seen through program objectives and surveys. The SSS program strategically uses empowering and inclusive language to build confidence and destigmatize the label of first-generation students, by referring to participants in the program as “TRIO Scholars”. The SSS program has made it priority to align its initiatives and values with the host institution’s strategic goals. At the heart of this model is its staff. The SSS program is only as good as the staff in place. Having staff that not only can connect with their cohort of students, but also, just as important, are able to connect with each other is the backbone of having a successful program.

***Areas of Weakness.*** Aspects of the program that can be improved or streamlined would be the collection and use of paper timesheets. Current payroll procedures require a signed paper timesheet submitted by all hourly staff. With the multitude of peer mentors, learning assistants, and SSS staff, the on-time collection of timesheets is almost impossible and requires SSS staff spend time trying to communicate deadlines and submission of timesheets instead of spending valuable time creating meaningful connections with their cohorts of students. An electronic timesheet process would help streamline this process. This process is an external process that should be considered for the institution as a whole and would greatly cut down on timesheet errors and time required to track and collect. The SSS Mentoring program continues to struggle in gaining traction. While not a required SSS service, this initiative was written into the 2015-2020 grant proposal. There are many factors as to why this mentoring program is unsuccessful in recruiting and retaining students. These factors include being a rural, commuter campus with a high population of non-traditional learners, and many students either do not have the time or see the value in connecting with a peer mentor. Communication through email and mobile technology has seen lack luster engagement. Institution wide social media outlets are seldom used by students and promotion of SSS events are poorly attended. Lastly, because grant regulations prohibit spending funds on food, apparel etc., many workshops that are provided by staff are poorly attended, again due to many of the same factors as with peer mentoring. However, when food and gifts are being offered at these events or workshops, students are more invested in showing up. Many SSS programs around the country have worked out special agreements with their host institution allowing them to keep or recoup a percentage of their indirect funds which can then be put into a auxiliary account and used towards these types of programming details which would really enhance the services provided to students.

***Areas of Opportunities***. Aspects of the program that could be expanded upon in the future would be building strong relationships with other departments at CCC and networking with other 2-year SSS programs locally and nationally. TRIO SSS should further its annual evaluation and assessment measures not just on an as-needed basis, but each year the program should conduct an internal review and disseminate findings to all key stakeholders. TRIO SSS can strengthen its paperwork process, with the potential of more opportunities to move into electronic processes of form, files, etc. This program could use its finding on gender distribution and specifically target and outreach Male students in order to increase their numbers in the program. Due to the Magnolia findings, it’s imperative TRIO Staff work diligently at keeping close connections with Faculty which serve as recruiters and early alert messengers to the TRIO program. SSS staff need to make it a priority to find ways to connect with CCC faculty. The last couple of years, TRIO funding has been increased by the government which has allowed us to use these additional funds to expand our peer mentoring program and made it possible to take students on additional field trips to help them explore both academic and cultural experiences, but more funding in the way of discretionary funding could be utilized. Again, as noted above, many other TRIO programs are given back their indirect costs which are put into an auxiliary account and used for food and other non-allowable items for program participants. Each year CCC collects a revenue of 8% of the grant which is collected as “indirect costs” and goes directly into the CCC General Fund, this money, even a portion of it, would help make a lasting impact in the ***quality*** of programming that SSS offers its participants. Other institutions of higher education have personnel in the way of Grant Managers/Writers, which is an effective way of bring in additional funds to the college, but also could provide a channel for an auxiliary fund account directly for TRIO SSS to use as discretionary funds. Lastly, another area for opportunity and growth is expanding our services and time commitment to the Page and 4th St campuses. We are required to visit their campuses each semester. Going forward, TRIO can use this as an opportunity to strengthen our partnership with Page and 4th St staff, faculty, and students.

***Threats.*** The nature of running a federal grant program means that the program is always at the whim of the federal government and their jurisdiction. This means having to run a program with many federal regulations and policies. It might mean losing federal funds altogether, or a mandated increase in participants for the program. All of these requirements could lead to detrimental outcomes for the program and its students. Lastly, the overall health of the host institution comes into play as well. If the host institution is experiencing a loss in enrollment, that too can have a ripple effect and will be felt in the TRIO SSS program. If an institution does not value the work of TRIO, dedicated office space can be pulled away, again threatening the lively hood and sanctity of the TRIO program being able offer a welcoming and connected space for its students.

**Recommendations and Future Directions**

***Recommendations***. As TRIO SSS moves into its new grant cycle (2020-2025), it will be imperative that the program continually evaluate ways to improve recruitment and retention. Ideally, participants should be recruited early in the year and SSS staff should have full and equal cohort ratios. SSS staff will need to be committed to increasing their presence on campus and developing stronger, more intentional relationships with staff and faculty to aid in recruitment and retention efforts. Having these developed relationships could act as internal early-alert system to help SSS staff identify students in need. The program should consider ramping up its coordinated service learning projects for students. This service learning component helps students feel connected to the community, connect to their peers, and gives them a sense of purpose through the act of giving. One-on-one tutoring plays a key role in recruiting students and helping students through their demanding coursework, and without this key element, the SSS program would not run or feel the same. In addition, the same can be said for the intentionality of staffing. Having staff that are compassionate and willing to dive into deep conversations is fundamental in developing trusting relationships with students in the program, and this “high-touch” advising style is vital to the retention of our students. Ensuring appropriate staffing levels to maintain this level of mentoring and advising must be considered, not just for the retention of students but also to avoid turn-over in the staff. In theory, the TRIO SSS program is a well-oiled machine when all the staff and resources are in place. Its reputation on campus is what drives its recruitment. The steady and capable staff are the glue holding it together and they are what will lead to the success and longevity of the program in years to come.

***Five-year purview***. Five years from now this program will be thriving and potentially expanding. All program objectives set forth in the grant will be continuously met and/or exceeded. Staff will maintain a strong pulse on their particular cohort’s needs and situations. Policies and procedures will be revaluated and adjusted to the scope of the project and staff will be stepping into a new grant proposal and laying the framework for another five-year grant to come at CCC.