Performance Monitoring Report: Counseling/Student Support Services & Special Populations

Counseling Services & Special Populations Purposes Defined
Provide counseling services necessary to enhance the success of students.
Offer educational programming and supportive services for special populations to address barriers prohibiting participation in education and employment.

April 17, 2018
FVTC conducts the Noel-Levitz student satisfaction survey every two years.

**For Whom? 2016-17 Special Populations**

- ELL Students: 34
- Academically Disadvantaged: 160
- Displaced Homemaker: 210
- Non-traditional Occupation: 1,018
- Disabled: 1,125
- Single Parents: 1,525
- Minority: 2,527
- Economically Disadvantaged: 4,042

**At What Cost? 2016-17 Student Services Funding Sources**

- Contracting: 5%
- Grants: 17%
- FVTC District Funds: 72%
- Cash Match: 6%

**Student Satisfaction**

- Registration Effectiveness: 5.57 (2015-16), 5.66 (2017-18)
- Admissions & Financial Aid: 5.36 (2015-16), 5.49 (2017-18)
- Support Services: 5.29 (2015-16), 5.43 (2017-18)
- Academic Advising: 5.55 (2015-16), 5.74 (2017-18)

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2017 FVTC Board Rating of Performance: 4.6 of 5.0
Counseling Services and Special Populations
Report Details

Overview

The College serves a population that is widely varied with regard to ages, interests, goals, and abilities. We need to be ready to help everyone who walks through the doors, regardless of the skills they need or the barriers they bring with them. In many cases, people who are not working in sustainable jobs at a time when the unemployment rate is at or below 3% are those without the necessary skills. Sometimes, individuals have significant barriers that need to be addressed in order for them to be successful. People come to the College with hopes for better lives, and we provide them with the pathways and support to get there.

In 2017-18, College enrollment has continued to decline, yet the challenges to helping students access education and successfully earn credentials have increased in complexity. This report contains evidence of the many layers of support that is offered for students to keep them in school and progressing toward graduation and jobs.

What We Do & For Whom

Student Services provides support for students through all aspects of their college experience, starting with their first contact and extending through graduation and beyond. Counseling services and support for special populations covers wide ranges of day-to-day activities, varying from transactional and information-related services to relational support services. These activities provide the assistance needed by students in order to receive credentials and obtain employment.

Admissions and Recruitment

Attracting students to the College is the first step toward meeting their educational needs. Creating awareness of offerings and assessing interest is quickly followed by assisting students through the application process. Student support needs often begin at first contact, particularly for students who are undecided about their future educational paths, or experience barriers to even considering education.

Figure 1 details the number of prospective students in the application and admission stages over the past three academic years. A significant area of focus at all points in the process continues to be maximizing conversions from Applicant to Enrolled statuses. Attention is given to getting students set on the appropriate pathway with the appropriate support systems in order to increase their likelihood for success.

The admissions process is continually scrutinized for improvement and streamlined for ease of use, as well as to provide the right types and amounts of up-front career and advising support.
Initial Academic Assessment and Placement Services. Placement of students appropriately into courses is critical to their academic success. Entering students complete the Accuplacer to assess academic skill levels, and students requiring remediation enroll in the Program Prep courses to improve their skills in order to be successful in programs. Many General Education options are now being offered in a format that allows students to take their Program Prep course concurrently with the General Education course to avoid the possibility of an additional semester of school.

In addition to the Accuplacer, a non-academic survey called Factors Affecting College Success (FACS) is part of the academic assessment process to further identify barriers or obstacles that could prevent enrollment and persistence in a college program. Recent survey results reveal concerns about academics (for example, study habits, unsuccessful history in school, uncertainty in academic skill), career pathway uncertainty, financial issues, and personal concerns. Students who identify these concerns are targeted for interventions that assist with their resolution. Additionally, referrals to other resources are made earlier in the enrollment process to address barriers that may prevent students from entering or persisting in college. Counseling and Advising Services staff work with these and other students to create Master Advising Plans (MAP).

Student Financial Services. The most critical issue facing almost every student continues to be the ability to pay for college. Student Financial Services provides in-person assistance with obtaining financial resources. The Financial Wellness Center and $ALT (a non-profit student assistance program) provide free in-person or online assistance for students at the points when they need it most – financial aid warning or suspension, disbursement of funds, and at graduation when facing loan repayment.

Figure 2 shows the history of Pell Grants, both the average amounts awarded and the number of students receiving them. The number of students receiving financial aid of all types mirrors enrollment with the average Pell Grants awarded over the last two academic years remaining flat. Over the last three years, 54% of FVTC program students have received federal loans, and the average amount borrowed was $10,698. Incremental increases in awards continue to be offset by the increases in the overall cost of education for our students. The average unmet need for FVTC financial aid recipients in 2016-17 was $7,207. In recent years, more students seem to have financial needs. The challenge continues to be making college affordable for all students and providing all front line staff with information and resources to assist students.
Counseling & Advising Services

Figure 3 illustrates how Counseling & Advising Services meets the variety of needs for the general student population and prospective students who have academic, career, personal, financial or transition needs. While an increasing number of students have multiple needs (for example, personal, financial, mental health), they consistently require the most assistance with academic advising. FVTC counseling staff address the personal and mental health needs of our students while Academic and Resource Advisors and Counselors offer academic and general advising services.

In addition, Counselors offer Career Development Workshops and individual career counseling sessions to assist students and prospective students in choosing the right program. During the 2017 Academic Year, 342 new students entered programs after completing the career counseling process.

Students experiencing academic difficulty are connected with services through our Academic Alert, Academic Probation and Academic Suspension processes. Academic Alerts allow faculty and Student Services staff to work together to assist struggling students. Students who go on academic probation are required to complete academic success plans and, in some cases, successfully complete a College Success class. The expected outcomes of these interventions are multi-fold: increased engagement with a College staff member, increased successful completion of subsequent semester courses, and increased
persistence to graduation. Academically suspended students petition for re-entry into programs and create success plans with Counseling and Advising Services staff. Once approved, students may continue in their programs and may be case-managed for persistence. Based on data resulting from the interventions during Academic Year 2017, 63% of the students receiving services who were on Academic Alert, Academic Probation, or Academic Suspension successfully completed courses in a subsequent semester with a 2.0 GPA or above or attained a credential.

**Services for Special Populations**

By statute definition, “special populations” include emotionally challenged, physically and learning disabled, academically disadvantaged, economically disadvantaged, English Language Learner (ELL), minority, incarcerated, displaced homemaker, single parent, and those who are working toward a non-traditional occupation (NTO). Figure 4 illustrates the number of students that fit into the “special population” classification. Student Services staff are able to use this data for outreach and other program development. With increasing demands for accountability and compliance with respect to these groups, Student Services staff continue to develop and improve on processes and technology for managing caseloads and tracking progress.

![Figure 4: Special Populations Students (Enrollees in Program Courses)](image)

Source: FVTC data warehouse query; NTO data from WTCS Portal Report CUI545; 2017-18 data is as of 3/7/18; Includes dual credit students

**Disabled Students.** Over the past ten years, the number of FVTC students identifying with specific disabilities has more than doubled. Educational Support Services (ESS) staff members provide these students with transition services, specialized intake services, testing/other accommodation, and individualized case management services. ESS staff members continuously broaden their knowledge of existing and new adaptive and assistive technologies to meet the needs of these students. Auxiliary aids for students with disabilities include, but are not limited to: screen readers and magnifiers, assistive listening devices, speech to text software, smart pens, adjustable tables, and interpreter services.

**Minority Students.** The College is committed to serving a diverse student body and offers a variety of services through the Diversity and Inclusion Services Office. Diversity and Inclusion Services staff work to ensure equity and cultural understanding while connecting students with the necessary resources needed.
for their success. In 2016-17, FVTC continued to serve an average of 2,500 minority students in program courses, a consistent average for the last three years.

Diversity and Inclusion Services works to maintain a welcoming and inclusive campus climate by developing and delivering cultural programming to increase cultural competency among students, staff, and faculty.

**Veterans.** A steady number of veterans, their children, and/or their spouses have enrolled at FVTC (Figure 5) since 2012-13. Veterans in transition are often in need of significant coordination of services and intensive support. Our full-time Retention Coordinator – Veteran Support provides this support and service coordination to student veterans and their families. The data indicates this population will continue to remain strong and need services from a variety of resources.

![Figure 5: Enrolled Veterans/Veterans Receiving Funding by Academic Year](image)

**Targeted Focus in 2017-18**

In 2017-18, 66% of the student population are part-time students taking less than 12 credits a semester while 33% are full-time students taking 12 or more credits. Part-time and full-time students’ needs vary, including what services they need to be successful. FVTC is committed to serving all students, but efforts focused specifically towards part-time students include: program plans extending past 2 years with less than 12 credits each semester, tutoring services on Saturdays, working with programs to offer classes during evenings and weekends, and making part-time students more aware of the support services and resources available to them at the College. Moving forward, FVTC will continue examining the needs of part-time students because they make up a large part of our student population.

**Student Satisfaction with Student Services**

Figure 6 shows student satisfaction results for program students from the 2018 Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory conducted in fall of 2017 for the categories related to Student Services. Overall category results of the survey compare more favorably to the 2016 FVTC results. Notable jumps in the average rating for safety/security, academic advising and counseling, and others from the FVTC 2016 results to 2018 reflect the positive impact of improvements connected with initiatives undertaken at the College.
At What Cost

Figure 7 shows that District funds comprise the greatest support to the Student Services Division budget and primarily support direct service faculty and support staff in the division. WTCS grant support includes state funds for targeted services and federal “pass through” funds (Carl D. Perkins program), which make up the balance of funds for operations.