

## **TRiO Student Support Services Strategic Planning Priorities 2015-2016:**

- 1. Engage in needs assessment of current staffing model for student support.**
- 2. Utilize data to inform process to provide recommendations on job descriptions and staffing model for TRiO SSS program.**

### **History of TRiO Programming at Seattle Central College:**

TRiO Student Support Services had been a program at Seattle Central College for over 43 years, assisting first-generation, low-income students and students with disabilities with their graduation and transfer needs. In July 2015, the program was refunded by the Department of Education to continue to provide services to this population at Seattle Central for the 2015-2020 academic years. Currently, TRiO SSS at SCC is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest program on the West Coast and the largest non-university program on the West Coast.

Data generated from our college's Institutional Researchers noted that **76%** of students who enrolled at Seattle Central College in 2013-2014 were TRiO eligible (Strategic Initiatives & Institutional Research, Seattle Central College 2014), meaning a significant number of our student population identify as first-generation, low-income and/or has a documented disability that impact their college experience. These identities have implications for our college and how we are preparing ourselves to provide the necessary support for our student's successful degree attainment and transfer to a 4-year institution. A large numbers of SSS students at intake in our 2014- 2015 project stated *they did not feel confident* at all in their ability to do well in their math (**50%**) and English (**23%**) classes. Research shows that upwards of **80%** of students placed into developmental courses will not have received college-level credit even after three years (Bailey, 2010). This severely jeopardizes each SSS student's completion and transfer process into four-year institutions and future opportunities for success.

### **TRiO Staffing and Services Model:**

TRiO SSS is an incredible asset to Seattle Central College helping counteract the above-mentioned issues by working with our institution's most diverse, at-risk student populations, assisting them with personal counseling, tutoring, advising and other resources to support their degree completion and transfer to a Bachelor's program. Our program currently has a **30%** success rate in degree completion and transfer each year, a rate of 5 times that of the college's non-TRiO student population (Strategic Initiatives & Institutional Research, Seattle Central College 2014). This demonstrates that TRiO indeed works as an effective retention and completion program for our students and the campus.

Currently, our program is staffed by three full-time, non-tenure track Faculty/Counselor positions working on a 9-month contract at 30 hours per week who work directly with students to provide them support. However, due to the nature of the Faculty/Counselor contract and our limited budget, these positions are absent from the campus and unavailable to TRiO SSS students during school breaks and summer quarter. Although the college is experiencing an enrollment crisis, TRiO SSS has been having the opposing issue of not being able to meet student needs/demand for services fast enough due to the overwhelming numbers of TRiO eligible students at SCC. This past summer 2015, TRiO SSS had over 160 students actively enrolled in the college and the program, substantially more than in previous years. According to our most recent student survey, **83%** of respondents stated it would be extremely useful for them to have access to TRiO services throughout the summer and **67%** reported they would like TRiO

service support during the breaks. Not having staff on-campus to address student's advising, degree completion and transfer needs is disjointing for the students and does not allow the program to operate to its maximum effectiveness for student success. Particularly during critical enrollment and drop points before the quarter begins, this model does not allow for TRiO SSS direct service staff to be available to address student registration, financial aid and other issues.

Two weeks ago one of the Faculty/Counselor positions became vacant when a FT staff member resigned to return to school. This provides the new Director and the project with an important Strategic Planning opportunity to assess the 12-month needs of the TRiO SSS program and engage both staff, faculty and students in the process of re-envisioning this position to meet the needs of our student population. After speaking with the Dean of my Department and arranging for a temporary counselor to be hired by the program to meet student needs during Fall Quarter 2015, I am working to engage in a pointed needs assessment process to consider the current staffing model against student and program needs and address gaps in service. In mid-October our Institutional Research office will provide us with further data to help inform our decisions and I will begin leading staff/faculty and students in discussions surrounding the needs assessment and our staffing model. However, since this poses a potential change to a non-tenure track Faculty/Counselor position, I want to inform the President's office and Cabinet before any changes are proposed to ensure transparency and accountability with the Union and our Administration.

Please feel free to contact myself or Brigid McDevitt, Dean of Student Resources, if there are any questions or concerns. We look forward to communicating our findings and next steps in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Ariana Cantu, MSW  
Director, TRiO Student Support Services  
Seattle Central College  
1701 Broadway  
Seattle, WA 98122  
Office | 206-934-2962  
<http://seattlecentral.edu/trio/index.php>