

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**

\* 1. Type of Submission:

- Preapplication  
 Application  
 Changed/Corrected Application

\* 2. Type of Application:

- New  
 Continuation  
 Revision

\* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):

\* Other (Specify):

\* 3. Date Received:

4. Applicant Identifier:

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:

5b. Federal Award Identifier:

**State Use Only:**

6. Date Received by State:

7. State Application Identifier:

**8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:**

\* a. Legal Name:

\* b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):

\* c. Organizational DUNS:

**d. Address:**

\* Street1:

Street2:

\* City:

County/Parish:

\* State:

Province:

\* Country:

\* Zip / Postal Code:

**e. Organizational Unit:**

Department Name:

Division Name:

**f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:**

Prefix:

\* First Name:

Middle Name:

\* Last Name:

Suffix:

Title:

Organizational Affiliation:

\* Telephone Number:

Fax Number:

\* Email:

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**

**\* 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:**

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

\* Other (specify):

**\* 10. Name of Federal Agency:**

**11. Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number:**

CFDA Title:

**\* 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

\* Title:

**13. Competition Identification Number:**

Title:

**14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):**

**\* 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:**

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

**Application for Federal Assistance SF-424**

**16. Congressional Districts Of:**

\* a. Applicant

\* b. Program/Project

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

**17. Proposed Project:**

\* a. Start Date:

\* b. End Date:

**18. Estimated Funding (\$):**

* a. Federal	<input type="text"/>
* b. Applicant	<input type="text"/>
* c. State	<input type="text"/>
* d. Local	<input type="text"/>
* e. Other	<input type="text"/>
* f. Program Income	<input type="text"/>
* g. TOTAL	<input type="text"/>

**\* 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order 12372 Process?**

- a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order 12372 Process for review on .
- b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State for review.
- c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

**\* 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**

Yes  No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

**21. \*By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications\*\* and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances\*\* and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 218, Section 1001)**

\*\* I AGREE

\*\* The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

**Authorized Representative:**

Prefix:  \* First Name:

Middle Name:

\* Last Name:

Suffix:

\* Title:

\* Telephone Number:  Fax Number:

\* Email:

\* Signature of Authorized Representative:  \* Date Signed:

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
BUDGET INFORMATION  
NON-CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS**

OMB Number: 1894-0008  
Expiration Date: 04/30/2014

Name of Institution/Organization

Applicants requesting funding for only one year should complete the column under "Project Year 1." Applicants requesting funding for multi-year grants should complete all applicable columns. Please read all instructions before completing form.

**SECTION A - BUDGET SUMMARY  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FUNDS**

Budget Categories	Project Year 1 (a)	Project Year 2 (b)	Project Year 3 (c)	Project Year 4 (d)	Project Year 5 (e)	Total (f)
1. Personnel	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
2. Fringe Benefits	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
3. Travel	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
4. Equipment	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
5. Supplies	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
6. Contractual	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
7. Construction	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
8. Other	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
9. Total Direct Costs (lines 1-8)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
10. Indirect Costs*	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
11. Training Stipends	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
12. Total Costs (lines 9-11)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**\*Indirect Cost Information (To Be Completed by Your Business Office):**

If you are requesting reimbursement for indirect costs on line 10, please answer the following questions:

(1) Do you have an Indirect Cost Rate Agreement approved by the Federal government?  Yes  No

(2) If yes, please provide the following information:

Period Covered by the Indirect Cost Rate Agreement: From:  To:  (mm/dd/yyyy)

Approving Federal agency:  ED  Other (please specify):

The Indirect Cost Rate is  %.

(3) For Restricted Rate Programs (check one) -- Are you using a restricted indirect cost rate that:

Is included in your approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement? or,  Complies with 34 CFR 76.564(c)(2)? The Restricted Indirect Cost Rate is  %.

**Part IV – Student Support Services Program Assurances**

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant, I certify that the applicant will comply with the following statutory requirements:

1. The applicant assures that at least two-thirds (2/3) of the students who will participate in the project will be individuals with disabilities and/or low-income individuals who are also first-generation college students; and that at least one-third (1/3) of the student participants who are individuals with disabilities also will be low-income individuals.
2. The applicant assures that the remaining students participating in the project will be either low-income individuals, first-generation college students, or individuals with disabilities.
3. The applicant assures that students served under the Student Support Services project at this institution shall receive or be offered all of the mandated required SSS services either directly from the SSS project or from other institutional-based resources.
4. The applicant must describe in the application its efforts, and where applicable, past history, in—
  - Providing sufficient financial assistance to meet the full financial need of each student in the project; and
  - Maintaining the loan burden of each student in the project at a manageable level.
5. The applicant assures that students will not be served by more than one SSS project at any one time and that the SSS project will collaborate with other SSS and McNair projects and other State and institutional programs at the grantee-institution so that more students can be served; and
6. The applicant assures that the institution's financial aid office will consult with the SSS project with respect to which SSS participants should receive grant aid and the amount of the grant aid awards should the project choose to offer grant aid.

The person whose signature appears below is authorized to sign this application and to commit the applicant to the above provisions.



Signature of Authorized Certifying Official

Gina Spaziani, Assistant Vice President for Administration & Finance  
Printed Name and Title of Authorized Certifying Official

Middlesex Community College

1-23-15

Applicant Organization

Date Signed

## Program for Student Achievement - Abstract

Middlesex Community College (MCC) requests funding to continue the Program for Student Achievement (PSA). **This program offers comprehensive, coordinated services to 100 students with documented disabilities, one-third of whom will be low-income, and all of whom will have tested into one or more developmental courses.** These students have been identified for support services because outcome studies conducted by the MCC Office of Institutional Research (OIR) dramatically show that they are experiencing significant academic problems. There has been continued growth in the number of students with disabilities enrolling at Middlesex. Increasingly, a very high percentage enter the College tremendously underprepared for academic work, have staggering course failure rates, and notably trail all other student populations in transferring and graduating. Our target population meets the Student Support Services eligibility guidelines which include disability as a category for eligibility and which allow all students to be those with disabilities (Section 646.3), as long as one-third are low-income (Section 646.11).

This SSS-Disabilities program is necessary because of the significant number of SSS eligible students who enter Middlesex each year (1297 in Fall 2013) as well as the large number of students who enter with documented disabilities, 1002 in Fall 2013. Of the 1002 students with disabilities, 772 placed into one or more developmental courses thereby demonstrating a need for targeted interventions and support specifically designed to meet the needs of student with learning or other disabilities. Information from the Financial Aid Office corroborates that at least one third of the 772 are designated low income and so the potential pool of students is substantial.

PSA will provide an extensive array of services that support the purposes of the program to improve student achievement, retention, graduation, and transfer. Major services include: intrusive outreach, tracking and intervention; academic support including metacognitive and discipline-specific tutoring; student advocacy and self-advocacy training; academic, transfer, personal and financial advising; economic and financial literacy training; and exposure to cultural enrichment activities and four-year colleges. An extensive formative and summative evaluation process will be conducted throughout the project to ensure that objectives are being met.

Middlesex Community College is responding to both of the Competitive Preference Priorities for this competition. In response to CPP, 1b Strategies to Influence the Development of Non-Cognitive Factors Supported by Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness the citation to demonstrate this standard is: Stephens, N. M., Hamedani, M. G., & Destin, M. 2014. *Closing the Social Class Achievement Gap: A Difference-Education Intervention Improves First Generation Students' Academic Performance and All Students*. College Transition. Association for Psychological Science; Sage Publishing. <http://psychology.northwestern.edu/documents/destin-achievement.pdf>

In response to CPP, 2b Individual Counseling Activities Based on Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness the citation to demonstrate this standard is: Bettinger, E. P., & Baker, R. (2011). *The effects of student coaching in college: An evaluation of a randomized experiment in student mentoring*. [https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/bettinger\\_baker\\_03\\_0711.pdf](https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/bettinger_baker_03_0711.pdf).

**MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
PROGRAM FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, SSS-D  
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**PART I: Standard Federal Assistance Face Sheet(SF 424)**

**Department of Education Supplemental Information for SF 424**

**PART II: BUDGET SUMMARY INFORMATION (ED Form 524)**

**PART III: PROGRAM NARRATIVE**

<b>NEED FOR THE PROJECT</b>	1
1. Number and Percentage of Eligible Students	2
2. Academic and Other Problems Encountered by Eligible Students	3
3. Differences between Eligible SSS Students and Appropriate Group	9
<b>OBJECTIVES</b>	12
<b>PLAN OF OPERATION</b>	17
1. Plan to Inform the Institutional Community	17
2. Plan to Identify, Select, and Retain Project Participants	18
GEPA Statement	19
3. Plan for Assessing Participants' Need and Monitoring Academic Progress	22
4. Plan to Provide Services	25
5. Plan to Ensure Proper and Efficient Administration of the Project	36
<b>INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT</b>	41
<b>QUALITY OF PERSONNEL</b>	53
<b>BUDGET</b>	56
<b>EVALUATION PLAN</b>	59

**(a) NEED**

**(a) (1) A high number or percentage, or both, of students enrolled or accepted at the institution who meet the eligibility requirements of Sec. 646.3**

The Middlesex Community College (MCC) Office of Institutional Research (OIR) reports that 65% (1,297) of the fall 2013 freshman class was eligible for services authorized under Student Support Services (SSS). SSS grants are designated for first generation, low-income students or students with disabilities, all of whom have need for academic support. Since our first generation, low-income students without disabilities are assisted through other MCC programs, including a TRIO SSS project that serves 200 students, this proposal requests funding for an SSS-Disabilities (SSS-D) project that provides services for 100 students with documented disabilities, at least one-third of whom will be low-income and all of whom will demonstrate need for academic support based upon testing into one or more developmental courses. There is a large enough pool of SSS-eligible students and significant need to justify both SSS projects. Data related to number and percentage of eligible students will focus on the specific sub-population of eligible students with disabilities testing into developmental courses. The data will clearly show significant increases in the number of these students and that they enter MCC seriously underprepared for academic work, have staggering course failure rates, and notably trail all other groups in transferring and graduating. Due to their disability(s), they need intensive, specialized services provided by disability experts to achieve academic success,

**Key data demonstrating high number or percentage of eligible students includes:**

- **1002 students with documented disabilities**, more than one-third of whom are low-income, registered with the MCC Disabilities Support Services Department (DSSD) in 2013-2014
- **A total of 77% (772) of students with disabilities demonstrate need for academic support** as defined by placement into one or more developmental courses



graduate and transfer.

The OIR and MCC Disability Support Services Department (DSSD) report that in fall 2013, **a total of 1,002 students with documented disabilities** were registered to receive services, at least one-third of whom were low-income, as estimated by the Financial Aid Office, and 77% of whom demonstrated need for academic support based upon testing into one or more developmental courses. **Therefore, our pool of eligible student participants totals 772.** Our services will focus on students with disabilities who demonstrate academic need based on testing into developmental courses since data from the OIR demonstrates that they achieve significantly less academic success than students with disabilities who do not test into developmental courses.

Further supporting the case demonstrating high number and high percentage of eligible students is the following information related to the increase in the number of students with disabilities and increase in the number of students requesting services. The chart below demonstrates that, **out of the high number of students with disabilities, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students with multiple disabilities, psychiatric, and pervasive developmental disabilities,** all of whom require very intensive services.

<b>Increased Number of Students with Disabilities Requiring Intensive Services</b>			
<b>Type of Disability</b>	<b>Academic Year 2009 - 2010</b>	<b>Academic Year 2013 - 2014</b>	<b>Percent Increase Over five years</b>
Psychiatric	256	319	+24%
Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)	56	73	+30%
Multiple – Two or more documented disabilities	179	264	+47 %
Physical – Mobility, health, sensory or traumatic brain injuries	73	170	+132%
<b>Total</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>828</b>	<b>+46%</b>

**Source:** *MCC Disability Support Services Department, 2014*

In addition to the high number of students with disabilities requiring intensive services, the **vast majority of remaining students registered and served by the MCC DSSD** have one or more learning disabilities, such as reading and specific language-based learning disabilities and executive function, auditory processing, and attention disorders. The number of these students has remained relatively constant.

**Our disabled population requiring intensive services – those with psychiatric, autism spectrum disorders, multiple disabilities, and physical disabilities, as well as those with learning disabilities - are coming in so academically underprepared, that they need the metacognitive learning strategies provided by disability support specialists.** For example, students with psychiatric disabilities are often encumbered with undiagnosed learning disabilities. Thus, simply providing supports such as extended time and distraction-reduced testing for such students does not enhance the likelihood of success. The complex profiles of the students with disabilities necessitate more support, time and resources to insure their success. Increased training and increased consultation with faculty relative to pedagogies and universal design approaches and strategies have also become significant needs.

**Clearly, Middlesex Community College not only has an increasingly high number and percentage of eligible students with disabilities, but these students are coming to the College with more severe needs that require more intensive and frequent service.**

**(a) (2) Academic and Other Problems Encountered by Eligible Students**

The following persistent problems relating to academics and other areas are commonly encountered by the *eligible target population* of students with documented disabilities who place into one or more developmental education courses, one-third of whom are low-income.

<b>Academic Problems</b>
Inadequate preparation for college-level work and low basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics
Lack of repertoire of metacognitive learning strategies
Lack of understanding of academic strengths and weaknesses
Poorly developed study skills
Lack of experience in using assistive technology
Inadequate critical thinking skills
Inadequate understanding of their learning strengths and weaknesses and impact on learning
<b>Other Problems/ Non-cognitive Factors Impacting Academic Achievement</b>
Lack of experience in self-advocacy and <i>undeveloped sense of self-efficacy</i>
Inability to organize tasks, manage time, initiate and follow-through; <i>need for skills for self-regulated learning</i>
Lack of understanding of value of education for personal and professional development, <i>need to clarify aspirations and enhance commitment and motivation</i>
Lack of belonging and sense of isolation, <i>need to create and develop social relationships and cultivate pro-social behavior</i>
Lack of confidence in abilities and potential to succeed, <i>poor academic self-concept</i>
Lack of awareness of differences in high school and college special education services, <i>need to develop college “know-how”</i>
Multiple barriers to postsecondary attendance and success associated with student’s disability, <i>need to develop coping strategies and resilience</i>
<b>Financial Problems of Eligible Students</b>
Insufficient financial resources and need to work
Lack of financial and economic literacy and knowledge of financial resources; difficulty accessing financial resources; difficulty completing FAFSA and other financial aid forms

While some of the above-listed problems are common among students meeting the broad eligibility criteria for participants targeted by SSS projects, they are particularly serious problems for those MCC students with disabilities. These students perform at a low academic level and are highly likely to leave college without graduating or transferring to a four-year institution. The problems indicating the greatest needs of the targeted population are:

**(I) Inadequate preparation for college-level work and low basic skills in reading, writing**

**and mathematics:** The previously noted large population of students with disabilities and in need of academic support (772) may have average or above average intelligence, but the students’ academic performance often does not reflect their intellectual capacity. The problems that these students experience in assimilating, retrieving, and expressing information seriously

impact most academic areas, especially those with heavy reading and writing demands. These students urgently need to develop a repertoire of learning strategies, which are best provided by disabilities support specialists, based on each student’s individual needs. Strategies also incorporate critical thinking and non-cognitive support such as study skills, time management, and organizational skills. All entering students must take the Accuplacer™ placement test in reading, writing, and mathematics. They are required to enroll in developmental courses if their skills are at a pre-college level. Students testing into developmental courses must successfully obtain a C or better in the developmental course(s), which serve as a prerequisite for enrollment in the vast majority of all other MCC college-level courses, including those required to earn a certificate or degree.

The OIR reports that in fall 2013 **a staggering 77% of all students with documented disabilities tested into one or more developmental courses**, as compared to 67% of students without disabilities. The table below highlights the significantly high percentages of students with disabilities testing into math, English, and both math and English developmental courses.

<b>Comparison of Percent of Students with Disabilities and Students without Disabilities Testing into Developmental Education Courses, Fall 2013 Cohort</b>			
<b>Developmental Course</b>	<b>Students WITH Disabilities</b>	<b>Students <u>WITHOUT</u> Disabilities</b>	<b>Percentage Point Difference</b>
<b>Developmental Math</b>	63%	51%	+ 12
<b>Developmental English</b>	66%	49%	+17
<b>Developmental Math and English</b>	51%	33%	+18

*Source: MCC Disability Support Services Department, 2014*

In addition to the high placement rate into developmental courses, the overall **failure rate of students with disabilities in developmental courses is 57%, an unacceptable academic outcome**. Certainly, much more must be done to bring the students' basic skills to a level that will make it possible for them to go on to college-level courses, persist, graduate and transfer.

**(II) Lack of repertoire of metacognitive (learning) strategies:** Studies confirm that students with learning disabilities have difficulty in reading, writing, math and foreign language (Trainen & Swanson, 2005). They often experience an **inability to efficiently retrieve information previously stored in memory**. This has a very negative impact on their ability to accurately express what they know. Well-developed metacognitive strategies aid information retrieval and provide an efficient method of acquiring, storing and expressing information and skills. When taught successfully, these strategies assist students dependent on high levels of teacher support to become independent learners, an important factor contributing to success in college.

**(III) Lack of understanding of learning strengths and weaknesses and (IV) Lack of experience in self-advocacy:** Through analysis of student self-reports that are part of the intake interview and documentation provided by a licensed professionals, the MCC DSSD staff has identified that approximately 76% of MCC students with disabilities **do not understand their learning strengths and weaknesses**; consequently, they have **difficulty in both articulating their academic needs and advocating for necessary accommodations**. For example, a student may not be able to tell a faculty member that she is strong in oral participation and good in understanding a lecture, but weak in taking notes for the same lecture and demonstrating mastery of the information on an essay test. Not being able to communicate with an instructor especially at the beginning of the college experience, sets the stage for a difficult transition into college classes. If students do not know their academic strengths and weaknesses, they are not able to be effective self-advocates. They are likely to be overwhelmed by what is being required and to perform poorly because they are not working together with the faculty member to deal with the materials in a way that is most effective for them. Students need training in self-advocacy so that they will be able to receive specialized assistance from faculty.

**(V) Differences in high school and college special education services:** MCC DSSD reports that frequently students with disabilities do not understand the significant difference between the special education services offered in high school and those available at a postsecondary institution. This misunderstanding frequently becomes clear during the MCC DSSD intake interviews. Unlike in high school when services are automatically provided, college students must take the initiative to request services and their need for services must be documented. If a student with a disability does not take the appropriate steps, it is quite likely that s/he will experience significant academic difficulty that may lead to course withdrawal and/or failure. **The striking differences between the way services are offered in high school and college moves the responsibility to the student, who is already facing many other challenges in transitioning to the college environment.** Obtaining assistance in requesting accommodations and in developing self-advocacy is critical, if these students are to succeed.

**(VI) Lack of experience in the use of assistive technology:** As part of the 2012-2013 MCC Disability Support Services Program Review, students who used accommodations were surveyed. **Only a very small percentage (5%)** used assistive technology. Staff analyzed the factors accounting for minimal use and noted that students lack awareness about the available assistive technology and how it can help, are reluctant to use assistive technology because they are intimidated by it, and lack training in using technology. The survey, usage analysis and follow-up discussion with students clearly demonstrate that MCC students with disabilities have an unmet need relating to accessing and using assistive technology more effectively. Most students with disabilities are balancing demanding personal and work schedules, along with their college studies. **Students need support to access assistive technology in a timely, on-demand basis that fits with their schedules and supports their learning.**

**(VII) Insufficient Financial Resources:** The OIR reports that more than one-third of students with disabilities are classified as low income, indicating that they face financial challenges in meeting both personal and college expenses. **Need to work:** Intake interviews conducted by the MCC DSSD indicate that 64% of students with disabilities are working an average of 21 hours per week, reflecting significant student financial need. In addition, approximately 23% percent of MCC students reported that they provide more than 30 hours a week of care for dependent children, parents, or spouses. Social security benefit for disabled adults may restrict the amount of income, through work, that these adults can receive.

While a high percentage of MCC students with disabilities are working, the DSSD also reports that some disabled students have difficulty finding employment, partly due to accessibility concerns, such as those related to using wheelchairs, blindness, and transportation. This is consistent with USDOL data that indicates that in the 16-19 year-old age range, only 13% of youth with disabilities were employed as compared to 25% without disabilities (Bureau of Labor Statistics, Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics 2013, 2014). Students with disabilities that cannot meet their financial obligations through employment may have insufficient funds to remain enrolled full-time. Many of MCC's disabled and low-income students therefore have insufficient financial means to maintain continuous full-time enrollment, and thus their opportunity for college completion and/or transfer is further jeopardized.

**(VIII) Lack of Economic and Financial Literacy Skills:** Most students graduate from high school with only minimal instruction on budgeting and personal financial management. A survey conducted by Student Affairs staff of SSS-eligible students demonstrated that the majority of students did not provide adequate responses for one or more of the following areas: factors that must be taken into consideration in establishing a budget; how to balance a checking

account that includes a debit/charge card; how to maintain personal financial records; how to manage personal debt, including use of credit cards; and an understanding of the financial aid and college loan system. Disabled and low-income students face huge challenges in navigating today’s economic climate and managing finances without understanding the basics of a budget or how to manage debt. As a result they do not understand the financial aid and college loan system, all of which supports the need for financial and economic literacy training.

The combination of academic and other problems experienced by students with disabilities, as well financial need and lack of financial literacy skills, contribute to **students failing or “stopping out” of college**. The MCC OIR reports that for the fall 2010 cohort, **28%, nearly one-third of all students with disabilities, “stopped out,” or temporarily left college**. Discussions with these students reveal that many become overwhelmed by trying to meet the challenges of their disability in addition to academic requirements. Frequently, they follow a cycle of enrolling for one or two semesters, “stopping out,” returning, and then “stopping out” again. The majority of this group does not graduate, indicating a need for services.

**(a) (3) Differences between eligible Student Support Services students compared to an appropriate group based on the following indicators:**

**(i) Retention and Graduation Rates:** The following chart dramatically demonstrates the

<b><u>Retention and Graduation Rates for Fall 2010 Cohort</u></b>				
<b><u>Differences Between SSS-D Eligible and Non-Eligible Populations</u></b>				
	<b>Students with Disabilities Developmental* SSS-D Eligible</b>	<b>Students with Disabilities Non-Developmental**</b>	<b>Percent Difference</b>	<b>Percentage Points</b>
<b>Retention</b> (Over four years)	32%	66%	52%	<b>-34</b>
<b>Graduation</b> (Within four years)	18%	37%	52%	<b>-19</b>

**Source:** *Middlesex Community College Office of Institutional Research, 2014*



differences in retention and graduation rates between students with disabilities who are eligible for SSS-D services by having placed into one or more developmental courses in comparison to students with disabilities not placing into developmental courses. **Legend:** \*Students with documented disabilities who test into one or more developmental courses, one third of whom are low-income. \*\* Students with documented disabilities who do not test into developmental courses.

Over four years, **only 32% students with disabilities testing into developmental courses are retained**, 52% less than students with disabilities not testing into developmental courses. It is of further great concern that **only 18% are graduating**, which is 52% less than the students with disabilities who are non-developmental. Finally, for the Fall 2013 cohort OIR reports that only 59% of SSS-D eligible students were still enrolled and/or had graduated or transferred within one year as compared to 79% of non-eligible students.

**ii. GPA:** The chart below **further demonstrates the poor academic achievement** of the group targeted for services as evidenced by the **very low cumulative GPA** achieved by students with disabilities testing into developmental courses. Students with disabilities testing into developmental courses demonstrated the worst academic performance of both groups with an average GPA of 2.27, barely over a required 2.0, while students with disabilities and not requiring developmental courses achieved an average GPA of 2.83, a difference of .56, which is significant.

<b>Grade-Point Averages for Fall 2013 Cohort</b>		
<b>Difference Between SSS-D Eligible and Non-Eligible Populations</b>		
<b>Students with Disabilities, Developmental Ed* (SSS-Eligible)</b>	<b>Students with Disabilities Non-Developmental Ed**</b>	<b>Difference</b>
2.27	2.83	<b>-.56 (25%)</b>

Source: *MCC Office of Institutional Research (OIR)*

**Legend:** \*Students with documented disabilities who test into one or more developmental courses, one third of whom are low income, who are SSS-Eligible. \*\* Students with documented disabilities who do not test into developmental courses.

Further, for the Fall 2013 cohort, OIR reports that **34%, of students with disabilities had a GPA below 2.0**. Students with a low GPA are in jeopardy of being placed on probation if they receive a grade of C- or below in one or more courses in subsequent semesters and also risk not qualifying for financial aid.

**iv. Transfer Rates:** Within four years, **only 1% of eligible, not-served students transfer with an associate’s degree or certificate** as compared to **6%** of students with disabilities not testing into developmental courses. This is a **substantial percentage of -83%**.

<b>Transfer Rates for Fall 2010 Entering Cohort</b>				
<b>Difference Between SSS-D Eligible and Non-Eligible Populations</b>				
	<b>Students with Disabilities Developmental* (SSS-Eligible) Not Served</b>	<b>Students with Disabilities Non-Developmental**</b>	<b>Percent Difference</b>	<b>Percentage Point Difference</b>
<b>Transfer (Within four years)</b>	1%	6%	<b>-83%</b>	<b>-5</b>

**Legend:** \*Students with documented disabilities who test into one or more developmental courses, one third of whom are low income, who are SSS-Eligible and not served. \*\* Students with documented disabilities who do not test into developmental courses.

The multiple academic challenges faced by students with disabilities who test into developmental courses clearly result in poor academic performance as evidenced by a lower cohort GPA and failure to graduate or transfer, underscoring the need for SSS-D services.

<b>Factors Indicating Strong Need for SSS-D Services for Students with Disabilities Testing into Developmental Courses</b>	
High percentage of students with disabilities testing into Developmental Math	63%
High percentage of students with disabilities testing into Developmental English	66%
High percentage of students with disabilities testing into both Dev. Math and Eng.	51%
High percentage of students with disabilities failing developmental courses	57%
Very low GPA, only slightly above 2.0	2.27
Very low four-year graduation	38%
Very low four-year transfer rate	1%
Nearly one quarter of students “stop out,” many multiple times	22%

**(b) OBJECTIVES**

<b>Objective One: Related to Persistence</b>	
<b>Objective One</b>	<b>65%</b> of all participants served in the reporting year by the SSS-D 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.
<b>Ambitious in Light of Needs</b>	This is ambitious because 77% of students with disabilities test into developmental classes and have a failure rate in these classes of 57% that often results in their withdrawing from college. Over one year, only 59% of these students persist and, over four years, only 32%. In addition, the overall GPA for these students is 2.27, barely above the minimum 2.0 required by the College for good academic standing. Our objective is ambitious when all of this data is considered.
<b>Is Attainable in Light of Services Provided</b>	Students will receive a range of services including, but not limited to, assistance with obtaining appropriate accommodations, developing metacognitive learning strategies and non-cognitive strategies, content-area

	<p>tutoring, using assistive technology, accessing services offered by external agencies, personal advising, self-advocacy training, Summer Bridge Program, Early Awareness Academic Intervention, Study and Life Skills Workshops, financial literacy training, and facilitation of engagement in student activities. Transcripts will indicate 65% persistence rate.</p>
--	--

<b>Objective Two: Related to Good Academic Standing Rate</b>	
<b>Objective Two</b>	75% of all enrolled SSS-D participants served will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing (GPA of 2.0 or higher).
<b>Ambitious in Light of Needs</b>	It is ambitious because we are serving students who test into one or more developmental courses because they do not have the foundation skills necessary for college-level work. MCC OIR reports that students with disabilities have a very high failure rate in these courses of 57%. The average GPA for the eligible cohort is 2.27, barely above the minimum 2.0 required for good academic standing. For Fall 2013 cohort, a total of 34% of eligible students had GPAs below 2.0. Given this data our goal of 75% is ambitious.
<b>Is Attainable in Light of Services Provided</b>	Services will include instruction in metacognitive learning strategies and non-cognitive, academic and study skills; content-area tutoring; assistance with selecting and using appropriate assistive technology and software, and insurance of appropriate accommodations. Students will benefit from the SSS-D Early Awareness Intervention program. Additional services include personal advising, intensive case management and outreach, and self-advocacy training. Student transcripts will indicate that 75% of participants meet performance level required to stay in good academic standing at MCC.

<b>Objective Three: Related to Graduation and Transfer Rates</b>	
<b>Objective Three</b>	<p>1. <b>25%</b> of new participants served each year will graduate with an associate’s degree or certificate within four (4) years, AND,</p> <p>2. <b>15%</b> of new participants served each year will transfer with an associate’s degree or certificate within four (4) years.</p>
<b>Ambitious in Light of Needs</b>	<p>Our students will be taking one or more developmental courses.</p> <p>Developmental courses do not carry college-level credit and do not move them towards graduation. Many students may take recommended reduced course loads because of their disability(s), which also impacts the amount of time required for graduation. Twenty-eight (28%) percent of MCC students with disabilities “stop out” from college. Finally, many community college students choose to transfer into bachelor degree programs without completing all requirements for an associate degree or certificate. Twenty five percent (25%) is an ambitious graduation objective, since the current four-year graduation rate for SSS-D eligible students with disabilities testing into developmental courses and not receiving services is only 18%. Our objective (1) exceeds this by 7 percentage points. Fifteen percent (15%) is an ambitious transfer objective, since only 1% of SSS-D eligible students with disabilities testing into developmental courses and not receiving services transfer with an associate degree or certificate within four years. Our objective (2) exceeds this by 14 percentage points.</p>

<p><b>Is Attainable in Light of Services Provided</b></p>	<p>Intensive tracking will result in a minimum of five contacts with a student per semester, enabling us to closely monitor student progress and provide appropriate interventions, as needed. The range of services will include, but not be limited to, developing metacognitive learning strategies and non-cognitive strategies, content-area tutoring, using assistive technology, and accessing services offered by external agencies. SSS-D will offer special transfer workshops for students enrolled in the program and will provide individual transfer counseling and assistance with completing required admissions and financial aid applications. SSS-D will help students identify four-year colleges that offer strong disability support services and will also help students arrange individual interviews and meetings and coach them on the interviewing process. Students will complete economic and financial literacy training to assist them in understanding how to finance postsecondary education. Transcripts will indicate: (1) 25% of new participants served each year will graduate with an associate’s degree or certificate within four (4) years; and (2) MCC Banner reports and National Student Clearing House data indicate 15% of new participants served each year will transfer with an associate’s degree or certificate within four years.</p>
---	--

**(c) PLAN of OPERATION**

**(c) (1) Plan to inform the institutional community (students, faculty and staff) about the goals, objectives and services of the project and eligibility requirements for participation.**

The following chart demonstrates how the institutional community is informed about the program and eligibility requirements:

<b>Activities to Inform Institutional Community and Students</b>			
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
Information placed in faculty/staff mailbox, on student and faculty email, voice mail, MCC mobile app, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Blog pages and MCC SSS-D and Student Services web pages	Faculty/staff Students	Ongoing	SSS-D Director
Presentation at new faculty/staff orientation	Faculty/staff	August January	SSS-D Director SSS-D Staff
Presentation of program information at Orientation and Registration Sessions for New Students	Students	August January	SSS-D Director SSS-D Staff
Presentation at monthly Faculty/Staff Meeting	Faculty/staff	Once a Semester	SSS-D Director
Presentations at Department and Division Meetings	Faculty/staff	Once a year	SSS-D Director SSS-D Staff
One-on-one meetings with staff in Admissions, Registrar’s Office, Advising Center, Student Services, Financial Aid	Faculty/staff	Beginning of each semester	SSS-D Director
Classroom Visits (several different classes)	Students	Once each semester	SSS-D Staff
Distribution of brochures to Student Activities, Admissions, Registration, Advising, Disability Support	Students and Faculty	Ongoing	SSS-D Staff

**Linkages throughout the College provide excellent vehicles for information dissemination.** Information is also disseminated through MCC’s *Disability Support Services Department (DSSD)*, *Academic Advising Center*, *Academic Division Achievement Coaches* and the *Counseling Department* during intakes, counseling sessions, and meetings with students. An SSS-D referral option is included on the MCC DSSD intake form.



Integration with the institutional community and visibility of the program is further enhanced because the Project Director reports to the Associate Dean of Student Support Services, who reports to the Dean of Students who reports directly to the Provost/Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs, who provides immeasurable support. The Vice President's regularly scheduled meetings with the College President and Division Deans provide an excellent avenue for informing the College community about SSS-D. The outreach tools listed above reach a very broad audience and ensure that everyone - from prospective students to returning students, faculty and staff - understand the program's objectives, services, and the means by which a student may participate.

**(c) (2) Plan to identify, select and retain participants with academic need**

SSS-D will enroll 100 students with documented disabilities all of whom will have tested into one or more developmental courses, at least one-third of whom will be low income.

**Plan to Identify Potential Project Participants:** Identification of potential program participants is accomplished through the following referral sources: MCC DSSD identifies potential project participants and provides them with information about the program and requirements; the *MCC Advising Center, Testing Center, Financial Aid Office*, along with division achievement coaches, refer students eligible for services based on one or more of the following: their testing into one or more developmental courses, low-income status and student self-disclosure of a documented disability; faculty and staff refer students; and students who learn about the program through SSS-D outreach activities self-refer.

**Plan to Select Project Participants:** The following steps are followed to determine if a candidate for admission to SSS-D is accepted, rejected, or placed on a waiting list: (1) Completion of a brief application that includes information about eligibility: MCC enrollment;

U.S. citizenship or residency; income; disability status; Accuplacer™ placement test results indicating student has placed into one or more developmental courses; and a statement from the student describing what s/he hopes to gain through participation in SSS-D; (2) Initial screening of applicant for eligibility by SSS-D staff; (3) An interview with a SSS-D staff member, who assesses the student's commitment to the program and recommends if s/he should be accepted into the program; and (4) Review of all eligibility documentation by the Director for acceptance.

The above steps result in a potential participant population from which 100 students, at least one-third of whom are low-income, are selected. The potential participant population includes both incoming first-year and continuing students. A waiting list is also established. Students are notified in writing of their acceptance into the program, and they are asked to sign a "Contract of Understanding" that is placed in their file. The contract clearly states the student's obligation and includes permission for SSS-D staff to contact faculty members regarding academic progress. Once the contract is signed, the student is officially enrolled in the program.

***General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) Plan:*** Throughout the recruitment, identification and selection process, SSS-D ensures equity of access and participation. SSS-D selects and enrolls eligible students without regard to race, gender, color, national origin, disability or age. To do so, SSS-D distributes program information and conducts staff outreach to students throughout the College with a special emphasis on working with the *Disabilities Support Services Department (DSSD), the MCC Adult Learning Center, Veterans Resource Center*, clubs and other programs that serve populations facing these barriers. Staff conduct special presentations, provide program materials, and meet individually with students to encourage their enrollment in SSS-D. In addition, they work with faculty and staff from the above-mentioned departments and organizations to ensure that the College offers a supportive

climate and barrier-free environment. SSS-D also honors fully the College’s commitment to pluralism and non-discriminatory practices, as described in the *Middlesex Community College Statement on Diversity and Pluralism*. (See GEPA Statement for further information)

**Plan to Retain Project Participants:** A comprehensive array of services, provided to retain participants and meet project objectives, is outlined in detail in the Plan to Provide Services that Address Goals and Objectives of the Project. Some of the initiatives to be undertaken to retain participants are:

<b>Program Initiatives to Retain Participants</b>	
<b>Intensive Case Management, Outreach and Advising</b>	To maintain contact with the student
<b>Self-Advocacy Training for Students</b>	To facilitate their ability to communicate needs
<b>Advocacy for Students</b>	To provide faculty and staff to facilitate understanding of disabilities and the advantages of utilizing universal design methods
<b>Training of MCC Faculty and Staff</b>	To ensure widespread campus understanding and support for TRIO activities and students
<b>Intensive, Specialized Outreach to Entering First-Year Students,</b>	Including a First-Year Summer Bridge Orientation Program
<b>Early Awareness Academic Intervention Program.</b>	To monitor academic progress early in the semester and provide proactive interventions
<b>Intensive Academic Tutoring,</b>	Including all levels of mathematics, English and content area tutoring using assistive technology, metacognitive and universal design strategies
<b>Non-Cognitive, Academic, and Study and Life Skills Workshops</b>	To support achievement of academic success
<b>Access to Assistive Technology Training and to Campus Technology Services, Math, Computer, and Writing Labs</b>	To ensure students maximize use of technology to support academic studies
<b>Intensive Advising and Assistance in Postsecondary Course Selection</b>	Provided by TRIO staff serving as students’ academic advisors
<b>Personal Advising</b>	Individualized counseling relating to self-advocacy, work, school and life balance. Referral to MCC licensed counselors for therapeutic personal counseling

<b>Individualized Career Counseling for students</b>	Including administering career interest inventories to support career exploration and career decision-making and coordinating additional services through the MCC Career Counseling Office
<b>Transfer Services:</b>	Activities to assist students in applying for admission to and obtaining financial assistance for enrollment in four-year post-secondary education programs
<b>Federal Student Financial Aid Programs:</b>	Information and training on the full range of federal student financial aid programs and benefits; financial aid advising and assistance with completing of FAFSA and scholarship/loan applications and identifying resources for locating public and private scholarships
<b>Financial and Economic Literacy Training:</b>	Education and counseling to improve the financial literacy and economic literacy of students, including financial planning for post secondary education
<b>Engagement of Students in Leadership and Student Activities</b>	To foster retention, development of non-cognitive skills, and academic success
<b>Exposure to Cultural Activities</b>	Not usually available to disadvantaged disabled students
<b>Student Recognition Activities</b>	To build self-esteem and confidence
<b>Collaborations with other College departments</b>	Including the Disability Support Services Dept, Academic Division Achievement Coaches, Career and Transfer Offices, Financial Aid, Counseling and Academic Center of Enrichment (content-area tutoring), Library

Another tool to enhance retention efforts is the careful tracking of students from their date of entry into the program through graduation and/or transfer by the following mediums:

<b>Tracking Mediums to Retain Participants</b>	
<b>Heiberg Student Access Database</b>	To track all SSS-D tutoring, advising, counseling, interactions, participation and proficiency in financial and economic literacy training, college campus visits, and cultural experiences
<b>Customized Service Plan</b>	Based upon Needs Assessments and long- and short-term academic, career, and life goals; plan includes areas for development and recommendations for utilizing SSS-D and College services, such as academic support and tutoring services, and career, personal, and transfer counseling
<b>MCC Banner Student Information System</b>	To support data reporting on student outcomes
<b>DegreeWorks:</b>	College wide comprehensive web-based academic advising, degree audit, and transfer articulation system
<b>Information</b>	Provided by MCC Testing Center, Financial Aid

	Office, Registrar’s Office, Enrollment and Institutional Research
<b>MCC Focus2 Career Software</b>	To provide information and individual reports for TRIO students on their values and interests related to work and linked to majors and careers
<b>Early Awareness Intervention Program</b>	To provide ongoing progress reports and faculty feedback
<b>MCC Academic Center for Enrichment</b>	To track students’ use of tutoring services
<b>Blackboard Interactive Web-based Information Program</b>	To track student use of TRIO Blackboard site
<b>MCC SARS Database</b>	To track student meetings with advisors, college wide early alert information, and utilization of MCC services

A **Customized Service Plan (CSP)** is developed for each student by the TRIO staff member serving as that student’s case manager. The CSP is a tool to monitor student progress and address ongoing need for services. Staff meet with students a minimum of five times a semester and participate in case management meetings to focus on and address specific problems and issues affecting individual students.

**(c ) (3) Plan for assessing each individual’s need for specific services and monitoring his/her academic progress at the institution to ensure satisfactory academic progress**

Each student's need must be understood and addressed comprehensively. Academic success depends not only upon academic preparedness, but also upon the presence of a secure support structure that addresses the student's financial and personal needs.

**Plan for Assessing Each Individual’s Need for Specific Services:** To develop a Needs Assessment and Customized Service Plan (CSP) for each individual, the SSS-D staff member assigned as the student's case manager conducts an interview with the participant and reviews academic, personal, and financial information. Test results, course grades, self-reported information from the student regarding academic areas of strength and weakness, information

provided by College faculty, and disability assessments are used to determine academic needs. MCC DSSD provides the case manager with a form for each student that includes specific disability related recommendations for tutoring purposes (i.e., tutoring strategy, use of assistive technology, learning strategies). The case manager, working closely with the student, also determines other areas where the student needs further assistance (i.e., selecting courses, financial aid, advising).

Based on this Needs Assessment, the case manager develops the CSP, which contains an overall needs assessment, including academic and life skill recommendations through which goals may be formulated, recommendations for support services, and actions to be taken with faculty, as well as other information, such as that pertaining to financial aid requirements. Each semester, the case manager meets with the student a minimum of five times, so that the CSP can be modified and actions taken to meet the changing needs of the student. New incoming first-time students receive more intensive services and tracking.

During the initial Needs Assessment, specific personal counseling issues are not always likely to emerge, but may become apparent shortly thereafter. When case management results in the revelation of personal issues that may be adversely affecting the student's academic progress, students may be referred to short-term counseling with a College counselor, or to long-term counseling through an outside referral source. SSS-D has mechanisms for dealing with personal issues that may present barriers to the student's success. For example, an array of workshops and self- discovery tools are available to assist the student with self-esteem issues, self-assessment, self-monitoring, self-advocacy, career and college exploration, study skills, test-taking anxiety, and time management. Student needs are also addressed as they are identified by workshop facilitators, the program's staff, faculty, or the student. The College has assigned a personal

counselor to work with SSS-D staff to offer a proactive approach and appropriate interventions for students in need of counseling services.

Each semester, the SSS-D case manager reviews the student's financial aid plan, which is developed with a College financial aid counselor. This plan ensures the maximum amount of federal and state financial aid for which that student is eligible is offered with minimum reliance on student loans. The case manager assists the student in filling out the FAFSA and other financial aid forms, helps the student file in a timely manner, and answers questions or refers the student to the Financial Aid Office. SSS-D also offers workshops to assist new students with this process. SSS-D students are coded in the Student Information System in both the Financial Aid Office and the Registrar's Office, and strict confidentiality is maintained.

**Plan for Monitoring Participants' Academic Progress:** The CSP developed for each student serves as the primary case management tool for counseling. Scheduled appointments for tutoring, transfer counseling, career counseling, financial aid advising, academic advising, and workshops are recorded and monitored. Missed appointments are followed up with a phone call and rescheduled. Students participate in the SSS-D Early Awareness Intervention system, a proactive initiative that targets and responds to academic difficulties early in semester. Academic deficiencies are addressed in the CSP with a plan of action to improve academic performance. Records of student tutoring, advising and counseling sessions are maintained in the Student Access database system. SSS-D recognizes students who are named to the Dean's List, transfer, are invited to join Phi Theta Kappa, or graduate.

Staff have online access to the college's Student Information System (Banner) through which s/he can obtain: a copy of the student's academic record at MCC; reading, writing and math Accuplacer™ scores from the MCC Testing Service; the student's schedule; current and

cumulative GPA information; and information regarding academic warnings and deficiencies.

SSS-D staff work closely with each student to develop clear action steps to address special individual service needs. Staff closely monitor student implementation of these steps, as well as their academic progress, and intervene, when necessary, to facilitate carrying out these steps and accessing services to support academic achievement.

**(c) (4) Plan to provide services that address goals and objectives of the project**

Following is a description of a comprehensive array of carefully designed activities and services offered to meet the goals and objectives of the project: persistence from one year to another; good academic standing; and graduation and transfer.

**Case Management, Student Self-Advocacy, Staff Advocacy, Faculty-Staff Training**

- ***Case Management:*** The SSS-D case management approach assures that all participants access and benefit from the extensive array of services offered by the program and college. Case management includes: (1) assisting students in identifying and obtaining additional support services that may be needed; (2) consulting with faculty and students on ways to address specific problems affecting the students; (3); helping students develop skills as self-advocates; (4) linking students with tutors, as well as academic, career, transfer, and financial aid counselors; (5) making appropriate referrals both within and outside of the college; (6) monitoring academic progress; and (7) serving as academic advisor to an assigned caseload of SSS-D participants. All case management services take place in the SSS-D offices located on the Bedford and Lowell campuses. To ensure close coordination with other services offered by MCC, the SSS-D case managers attend DSSD staff meetings.

- ***Student Self-Advocacy Training:*** It is **very important that students with disabilities learn to become effective self-advocates, since they will continue to use these skills throughout their lives.** SSS-D staff train students to be able to speak with faculty about their



disabilities, to request accommodations, and to ask for help if they are having trouble understanding course material. In addition, students receive training in conflict resolution that empowers them to negotiate satisfactory outcomes from difficult situations, rather than either shunning controversy by giving up or precipitating increased antagonism through inappropriate actions or comments. Finally, students receive and discuss information related to the practical differences between the Commonwealth of Massachusetts state law (Chapter 766), which governed the services they received in grades K- 12, and the federal laws (ADA/Section 504) that dictate the services they are required to receive in college. Students trained to advocate effectively for needs gain skills that assist them to do well in courses that in turn positively impacts retention, transfer, and graduation.

- ***Advocacy on behalf of Students:*** Staff interact with staff from the financial aid, registration, advising, and counseling offices, as well as faculty to assist students in resolving issues as they arise. Additionally, the program's staff work collaboratively with administration, staff and faculty to promote an institutional climate that complements the program's efforts to support the success of participants and fosters their full integration into the college community. Ongoing communication is maintained with the Provost, who oversees academic review; Academic and Student Affairs Council; Academic Division Deans; and the Student Assessment and Intervention Team that meets regularly to assess and support students manifesting behavioral difficulties. Staff also advocate for students with outside agencies that serve students with disabilities. Further interdepartmental connections are fostered through planned SSS-D events to which staff, administration and faculty are invited (i.e., open house and receptions for Dean's List students and graduates). The advocacy role is a vital part of the program. It occurs regularly and includes all SSS-D staff.

- ***Training of MCC Faculty and Staff:*** SSS-D staff, in addition to providing one-on-one consulting sessions with faculty regarding specific students, offer professional development programs related to disabilities, student needs, teaching strategies, awareness and sensitivity training, and legal requirements of the Americans with Disability Act and Section 504 of the Civil Rights Act. There is extensive outreach to part-time faculty, as well as full-time faculty. Through maintaining an ongoing informational program, SSS-D provides faculty and staff with a better understanding of the support that students with disabilities require and strategies for teaching that build a student's self-esteem and contribute to his/her academic success.

**Academic Support Services:**

- ***Summer Bridge Orientation Program:*** Students with disabilities frequently find it difficult to absorb all the information that is disseminated when enrolling in college, particularly if it is in written form or only explained during a brief intake interview. They may experience information “overload” and become quite frustrated. It is better if information is presented in segments over a period of time. To do this, SSS-D offers a two-day Summer Bridge Orientation Program that is held prior to the start of fall classes for new students. During the first weeks of college, staff continue to support SSS-D students who are still unclear how to navigate the college system.

The Summer Bridge Orientation Program focuses on five areas: (1) Reviewing skills required for academic success, including self-advocacy; (2) Touring campus resources; (3) Completing processes necessary to utilize campus services; (4) Understanding rights and negotiating accommodations; and (5) Training on accessing college and assistive technology. The program provides students with an overview of the many different types of strategies and services related to each of these areas that they can access to meet the challenges presented by

their disabilities. Information on all topics covered in the Summer Bridge Program is distributed to students and posted on the SSS-D website. Since the subjects covered during Summer Bridge Orientation Program are of such importance, the program is repeated on an as needed basis for those students who are unable to attend in the summer or enroll in SSS-D at the beginning of the academic semester.

- ***Early Awareness Academic Intervention Program:*** This program begins to monitor academic progress early in the semester and continues throughout the term. In addition to eliciting ongoing feedback from students, within four weeks of the start of each semester, academic progress report requests are distributed to faculty of all SSS-D participants. Since this is done electronically, the feedback occurs in a very timely manner and then continues throughout the semester. Information provided by faculty is used to customize service offerings for students to assist them in meeting academic requirements. For example, if a student is doing poorly in a course, SSS-D staff meet with him/her and identifies steps he/she can take to improve his/her performance in a particular course, such as accessing content-area tutoring. In some cases, personal circumstances may impact achievement, and the SSS-D staff member facilitates student access to services that may help to improve the situation.

- ***Metacognitive Tutoring:*** One of the most vital elements for retaining and graduating students with disabilities is metacognitive tutoring. **One-on-one tutoring is provided by a Learning Specialist trained in metacognitive strategies:** This tutoring takes place in the SSS-D offices or Assistive Technology Labs located at the Bedford and Lowell campuses. Metacognitive strategies are used to understand all curricula, as well as practicing life skills activities. Through this process, students are assisted in conducting a variety of assessments as they approach an assignment. The Learning Specialist helps the student develop strategies that

take into consideration the student's specific disability(s) and build upon the student's strengths. Due to the great difficulty these students have with basic math, reading, and English courses, the Learning Specialist provides assistance with these subjects, as well. She also helps students learn how to read a textbook, develop memorization and proofreading skills, and use word processing for writing and editing papers.

The Learning Specialist works with MCC faculty in a variety of ways. Some examples include: with the student's permission, discussing the manner in which a student's disability may manifest itself in a particular course; consulting with reading instructors on reference materials for SSS-D students; and discussing typical student writing problems with English faculty. The Learning Specialist also collaborates with library staff to conduct workshops to acquaint SSS-D students with services.

- ***Content-area Tutoring:*** If necessary, the student's CSP will also require that the student receive content-area tutoring. Tutoring takes place in the SSS-D offices, the Academic Centers for Enrichment, and MCC Disability Support Services. All SSS-D staff provide content-area tutoring, if the content falls within their area of expertise. Students also have access to an SSS-D professional math tutor and MCC professional and peer tutors who provide one-on-one, group, and computer-assisted tutoring. Students may also access to 24/7 online tutoring. Whenever possible, students requiring STEM courses are placed in those sections that include College-sponsored Supplemental Instruction (SI); the SSS-D advisor ensures that the student participates in the SI component of the course.

- ***Non-Cognitive, Academic, Study and Life Skills Workshops:*** SSS-D offers a variety of workshops each semester based on student needs and interests. **Non-cognitive workshops** that contribute to developing the academic mindsets that contribute to college success include:

Transitioning to College, Self- Advocacy, Self-Efficacy, Strategies for Identifying and Achieving Personal Goals, Connecting College Studies to Career Success, Stress Management, and Balancing Life, Work, and College Challenges. **Academic, study and life skills workshops** include: Using Library Services and Online Resources, Information on Disabilities, Study Skills, Research Techniques, Note-taking, Time Management, Understanding Financial Aid, Financial and Economic Literacy, and Transferring to Four-Year Colleges. Staff encourage student participation by highlighting specific needs on the student’s customized service plan and offering any workshop either in a group setting and/or on a 1:1 basis when it is convenient for the student.

- ***Access to Campus Technology Services, Math and Writing Labs:*** Students have access to computers, printers and scanners located in the SSS-D offices in Lowell and Bedford. SSS-D staff assists students in using the technology and software. To meet the needs of students who, at times, cannot access services on campus because of time constraints or conflicts in scheduling, SSS-D utilizes MCC’s Blackboard system, which is a web-based interactive program. In Blackboard, SSS-D has its own website, where students can access PowerPoint presentations that are used for all workshops, college forms, and information on pre- and post-activities for cultural events, links to other on- and off- campus disability services, and scholarship opportunities. The MCC Writing, Math and Computer Labs are readily available to SSS-D students, who can utilize tutorial software to reinforce classroom assignments and to complete course work.

- ***Assistive Technology Training:*** Students are introduced to equipment and software in the Assistive Technology Labs through the SSS-D Summer Bridge Orientation Program and throughout the year by SSS-D staff and/or the MCC DSSD Assistive Technology Specialist. Assistive technology labs are located in the MCC DSSD offices on the Lowell and Bedford campuses. The student's CSP indicates recommendations for use of a particular type of

equipment/software, and the case manager monitors student use through lab log-in sheets. Care is taken to provide students with the necessary training for using equipment and software in order to ensure that they derive the maximum benefit from it. Available assistive technology includes: a speech synthesizer; speech input and output systems; specialized software; reading machines; speaking computers; speaking electronic calculators; and a speaking electronic speller. To meet varied needs, the labs offer many different types of software programs and several different types of trackballs. Some of these software programs include *Kurzweil*, *Read and Write Gold*, *Dragon Naturally Speaking* and *Zoom Text*.

Assistive Technology Labs are open throughout the week. The MCC Assistive Technology Coordinator is available to students at both campuses at specific hours each week and by appointment to ensure flexible scheduling to meet student needs. Students also receive assistance in purchasing their own assistive equipment through funding provided by other agencies. By encouraging students to use the assistive equipment, the staff foster their independence and ability to use alternative methods for completing work successfully, thus reducing the frustration that can result when these resources are not used.

### **Academic, Personal and Career Advising Services**

- *Intensive Academic Advising and Assistance in Postsecondary Course Selection:* SSS-D staff, who are trained as academic advisors, provide disability-specific assistance to the students in managing their academic program, including the selection of courses and specific classes. Students are encouraged to plan an academic schedule that enables them to balance curriculum requirements with learning needs. For example, if they have difficulty in reading, they are assisted in planning a course schedule that has a balance between reading intensive courses and other types of courses. Consideration is also given to needs related to best time of

day for alertness, attention span, and class size. SSS-D staff help students select those classes instructed by faculty who are recognized for teaching to the three types of learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinesthetic). In addition, SSS-D staff facilitate the students' interaction with faculty advisors in those career programs that require faculty to be the academic advisor.

- ***Personal Counseling/Advising and Career Planning/Advising:*** SSS-D staff advise students who are dealing with personal issues that may impact their academic achievement. This may include helping students to devise coping strategies or engage in problem-solving scenarios. Students in need of therapeutic assistance are referred to MCC Counseling Services or outside community resources. SSS-D staff also offer a range of services to help students explore career options that are related to their own individual interests and aptitudes. The services are part of normal SSS-D case management and are written into the CSP. They include: instruction in using the Internet and social media for career information and job searches; developing resumes; conducting mock interviews; and, when needed, referral to an MCC Career Counselor for formal evaluation including used of the *Focus 2* guidance system.

### **Transfer Advising Services**

- ***Transfer Services:*** The College's Academic Advisors, trained in transfer counseling, advise SSS-D students. However, in order for transfer to be a reality for these at-risk students, a more intensive, persistent approach is necessary than what can be provided by one advisor. SSS-D staff in their role as case managers take a very proactive role in facilitating transfer of SSS-D students and helping them to obtain financial assistance. They work very closely with the College Academic Advising Center staff who lay the groundwork for the student. The SSS-D case managers help the student to become focused in his/her college search through their regularly scheduled meetings, which occur a minimum of five times a semester. They provide

continuous support and advice necessary for achieving successful transfer for this at-risk population. SSS-D staff and the student together research colleges through online databases. The student is able to provide a personal profile, review an alphabetical list of colleges, select from a wide range of criteria that are important to the student in his/her college search, obtain dates and locations of regional and national college fairs, and obtain financial aid information. The student selects colleges to visit and to apply to. SSS-D staff assist with completing and submitting admissions and financial aid applications.

In addition to the assistance provided by the SSS-D case manager, students are encouraged to attend college fairs at MCC and transportation is provided to college fairs taking place in the local and Boston areas each semester. Second-year students, particularly, are targeted and encouraged to attend. SSS-D staff assist students to arrange visits to prospective four-year colleges and accompany them to these visits to help ease the transition. Staff work closely with each four-year college to obtain application and deposit waivers. SSS-D staff connect students to the Disability Support Service Department and TRIO services offered at the four-year college, so that students may meet with staff from these areas while touring the campus. Through the comprehensive transfer assistance that is provided, students are not overwhelmed by the transfer process and are able to take the steps necessary for enrolling at a four-year institution.

### **Financial Aid and Financial/Economic Literacy Advising and Services**

- ***Financial Aid Advising and Assistance Completing Financial Aid Applications:*** SSS-D staff work with each student and MCC Financial Aid counselors **to develop a plan that secures the maximum amount of federal and state financial aid for which the student is eligible**, and which minimizes loans. The case manager reviews the plan with the student each year and



works with the Financial Aid Office to make adjustments, should financial aid need change.

Financial Aid workshops are held and assistance is given in completing financial aid forms, as well as in developing an organizational system so that the student does not lose papers, forms and correspondence. In addition, SSS-D advocates for students in jeopardy of losing financial aid due to academic probation and assists students in writing appeal letters. Finally, staff provide assistance to students applying for MCC Foundation scholarships (including SSS-D designated scholarships) and other scholarships offered by community organizations and corporations.

- ***Economic and Financial Literacy:*** SSS-D staff provide education and counseling services designed to improve the economic and financial literacy of students, including financial planning for postsecondary education. Services include individual sessions with participants, workshops conducted in collaboration with the MCC Financial Aid Department, online financial/economic literacy training, and presentations by community financial experts. Topics include but are not limited to: creating a budget, avoiding and managing credit card debt, financial goal setting, understanding credit scores, choosing bank accounts, debt reduction strategies, avoiding identify theft, and understanding financial aid packages offered by four-year institutions. In addition to information provided by workshop presenters, students use the online financial literacy course developed by Decision Partners, *Financial Literacy 101*. This is an interactive multimedia course with built-in assessment and personalized recommendations for each student. Students create a financial plan and monthly budget and take a comprehensive exam when they complete the course, set personal long- and short-term goals, develop a personal budget, and complete a credit card payment exercise based on their debt level. Staff work with the students as they complete the online course, which is available to all SSS-D students.

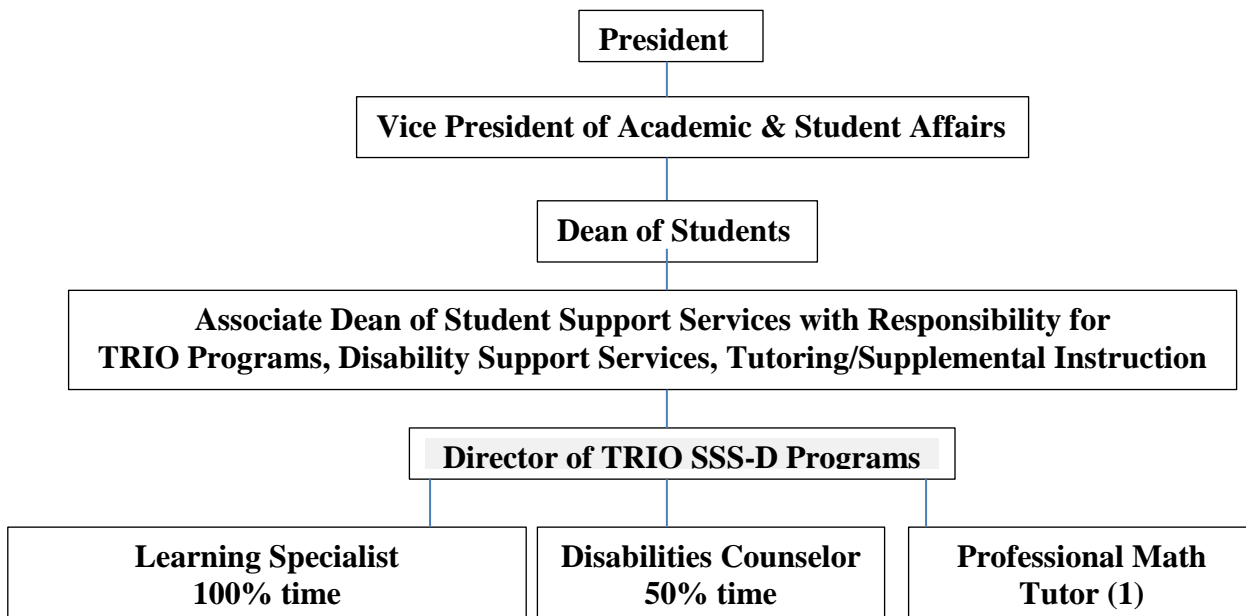
### **Engagement of Students in Leadership and Student Activities**

- ***Engagement in Leadership and Student Activities:*** This plays an important role in retaining students and contributing to their academic success. Engagement helps to foster the development of non-cognitive skills, such as those related to having a sense of belonging in the campus community, building productive interpersonal and pro-social relationships such as working cooperatively with others, setting goals, planning, problem-solving, communicating, and self-efficacy. SSS-D staff connect students to the wide range of opportunities available at MCC through the Center for Student Leadership and Engagement. These include co-curricular clubs and organizations, leadership development programs, wellness activities, and civic and service-learning opportunities.
  
- ***Field Trips to Cultural Events and College Campus Visitations:*** SSS-D provides students with opportunities to participate in at least three cultural trips per year and two college campus visits per semester. These include experiences that may not usually be available to low-income or disabled students and which contribute to student development of non-cognitive skills related to building cultural capital. Activities include trips to live theater, museums, and historical tours, with care given to ensuring accessibility factors are addressed. Discussions are held with students regarding the activity take place before and after the trip. This is particularly helpful to some students with disabilities who benefit from information about a particular activity prior to participation. College visitations include campus tours, meetings with admissions, disabilities and financial aid counselors, and discussions about admittance requirements. Visits are done on a one-to-one basis when requested.
  
- ***Student Recognition Events:*** Each year, SSS-D hosts a minimum of two student recognition events to which administrators, faculty and staff are invited. Students are recognized

for academic achievement, contributions to the college community, and graduation and transfer.

**(c) (5) Plan to ensure proper and efficient administration of the project**

**Organizational Placement:** The placement of the SSS-D project with the Academic and Student Affairs Division ensures strong collaboration with all departments serving students. In addition, the Associate Dean of Student Services, to whom the SSS-D Director reports, oversees the College’s disability support services programs, academic tutoring and supplemental instruction, and the College’s other TRIO SSS program. This reporting structure further ensures strong support and extensive resources for the SSS-D program .The following chart shows how SSS-D fits within the College's organizational structure.



**Time Commitment of Project Staff:** The Project Director (DIR) devotes 50% time to administration and 50% time to case management for 1 FTE; the Learning Specialist (LS) devotes 60% to tutoring and 40% to case management for 1 FTE; and the Disabilities Counselor (DC) Specialist devotes 50% (.5 FTE) time to student services and case management. The Tutor devotes .12FTE to one-to-one tutoring to students and small group supplemental instruction. The

following chart demonstrates how each staff member’s time is used to complete project activities.

<b>Services to Address Goals and Objectives of Project</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	<b>Time</b>
Case Management	DIR, LS, DC	Ongoing; review of student records minimum five times a semester
One-on-one consulting and training of faculty and staff	DIR, LS, DC	Ongoing throughout year
Summer Bridge Orientation Program	DIR, LS, DC	Two days in August and again during semester, if required
Early Awareness Academic Intervention Program	DIR, LS, DC	Begins between weeks 2-5 of each semester and then ongoing
Tutoring	DIR, LS, DC, Math Tutor (PT)	Ongoing weekly
Student-centered Advocacy	DIR, LS, DC	Ongoing
Student Training in Self-Advocacy	DIR, LS, DC	Ongoing
Non-Cognitive, Academic, Study and Life Skills Workshops	DIR, LS, DC, other college staff	Ongoing and 1:1 workshops to accommodate student schedules and learning styles
Access to Services through Web-based Technology	MCC IT staff	Ongoing
Assistance in Using Assistive Technology	DIR, LS, DC and MCC DSSD Assistive Tech. staff	Ongoing
Academic Advising	DIR, LS, DC	Minimum of once a semester for course selection; ongoing as requested by students
Personal Advising	DIR with assistance from MCC Counseling staff	Ongoing
Individualized Career Advising, including use of <i>Focus 2</i> Career Guidance System	DIR, LS, DC in conjunction with MCC Career Services	Ongoing
Transfer Advising	DIR, LS, DC in conjunction with the Academic Planning Center	Ongoing
Financial Aid Advising	DIR, LS, DC, MCC Financial Aid staff	Minimum once a semester
Economic and Financial Literacy Training	DIR, LS, DC	Ongoing

<b>Services to Address Goals and Objectives of Project</b>	<b>Person(s) Responsible</b>	<b>Time</b>
Engagement of Students in Leadership and Co-curricular Activities	DIR, LS, DC	Ongoing
Cultural and four-year college field trips	DIR, LS, DC	Three times a semester
Student Recognition Activities	DIR, LC, DC, Tutor	Twice a year
Administration/Record Keeping	DIR, DC, LS	Ongoing

**Plan for Financial Management:** To ensure proper accounting of federal SSS-D funds, and to ensure that these funds do not supplant institutional resources in the conduct of program-related activities, the College's Administrative Services Division establishes a restricted account in accordance with accepted fund accounting principles. Individual line-item budgets are established within this account for salaries, fringe benefits, materials, supplies, travel, etc. All expenditures against the account require requisitions and the approval of the Project Director. When authorization for expenditure is given, an encumbrance is recorded against the specific line item. The College scrupulously maintains copies of all orders, invoices, and receipts. A staff associate in Grants Management is assigned to work with the Project Director, and they are in contact weekly to review expenditures and monitor budget activities. The Project Director has up-to-the-minute access to the College's Fiscal Records System (Banner Finance), which details all expenditures and encumbrances. Funds are maintained in full accordance with accepted accounting procedures, so that auditors examining the College's accounts are able to document the proper management of all program funds. SSS-D budgets are subject to the College's annual audit reviews. The College and Project Director assure full compliance with EDGAR 34 CFR, part 75.730. In addition to the Director, the Associate Dean of Student Support Services, to whom the Director reports, and the Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs also have access to all project financial information. The process is evaluated annually, or as needed, and appropriate adjustments made.

**Plan for Student Record-Keeping:** In accordance with TRIO guidelines and EDGAR, a complete file is kept in the program office for each participating student to document services and progress toward meeting program’s objectives. The file is in a locked cabinet and only the Director, Learning Specialist, and Disabilities Counselor have access to these secured files. Included in this confidential file are: a completed application form; documentation of eligibility (income, citizenship or residency status, first generation, and disability status); financial aid records; placement test results (skill levels in math, reading and writing); Contract of Understanding; course transcripts; mid-year and year-end reviews of student progress; signed releases of information allowing SSS-D staff to confirm disability status and allow us to communicate with other service providers, correspondence; and the *Customized Service Plan (CSP)* that provides a detailed analysis of the student’s goals and the academic, financial, and personal needs that must be met and services that must be provided if the student is to achieve academic success. The CSP is updated each semester.

Case management reports from staff and logs are maintained in the SSS-D student access database that documents all services provided. Information on key project variables is also entered into the database, making it possible to generate up-to-date reports that can be used to document compliance with program requirements and to measure the program's performance and its effectiveness in meeting each of the project's objectives for each of the participants. The Director runs reports once a month to review student participation in activities. Every two weeks the Director runs a report on each case manager’s meetings with students so that s/he can follow-up immediately if a student has not seen a case manager according to recommendations. Together, information in the locked confidential file and access to the encrypted database provide comprehensive, confidential records on all students. The College is in full compliance

with the Family Education Right to Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations, and provides training for faculty, staff, and students.

**Plan for Personnel Management:** The SSS-D Project Director reports to *the Associate Dean of Student Support Services* who reports to *the Dean of Students*, who reports directly to *the Vice President/Provost for Academic and Student Affairs*. Both the Dean of Students and Associate Dean formerly served as Director of Disability Support Services and have an excellent understanding of the services and staff required to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The SSS-D Director recruits, hires, supervises and evaluates all project personnel consistent with College policies. All new staff participate in a College Orientation focusing on employee policies and procedures conducted by the Human Resources Office and other MCC onboarding activities for new employees. Confidential personnel records are maintained for all staff. Time sheets are completed weekly and approved by the Project Director.

The Director conducts staff meetings to build a strong team. Meetings include reviewing results from monthly and biweekly database reports related to delivery and use of services; providing information on new policies or procedures; conducting staff training; and monitoring progress toward the achievement of objectives. These meetings provide a forum for sharing information and discussion of practical issues relating to attainment of program objectives.

In addition to ongoing supervision provided within the reporting structure of the program, all project staff undergo an annual performance review. Shortly after being hired, each staff member works with the Director to develop a set of performance guidelines, which are reviewed and updated at the outset of each program year and then used at the culmination of each program year as the basis for his/her year-end performance review. The Associate Dean of Student Support Services uses a similar procedure to evaluate the Director.

**Plan for coordination with other programs for disabled and disadvantaged**

**students:** SSS-D staff work closely with the MCC DSSD which completes the process of student documentation as quickly as possible. This results in students being eligible for the program's identified services as early as possible so that they may receive information about the program and speak with the Director to enroll. The Director also seeks referrals from other programs for disadvantaged students, such as Educational Talent Search, Upward Bound, GEAR UP, and MCC Out-of-School Youth Development Center, all of which are offered by MCC. The program staff work closely with all other College departments and, in particular, with the Division of Academic and Student Affairs, to assist with integration of students into campus life and activities. The program does not overlap with the MCC TRIO SSS Program since both projects are serving exclusive populations; that is the SSS Program will not be sharing any students in our service population. External partnerships include: Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, MA Dept of Mental Health, MA Dept for Children and Families (child welfare agency), and MA Dept of Developmental Services.

**(d) INSTITUTIONAL COMMITMENT**

**(d) (1) Committed facilities, equipment, supplies, personnel and other resources to supplement the grant and enhance college services**

**Facilities:** The College, recognizing the value and importance of the SSS-D program for its students, has committed significant dedicated space and resources. SSS-D is offered at the Bedford and Lowell campuses, both of which are handicap accessible and comply with all ADA architectural access requirements. Both campuses feature modern classrooms, well-equipped science and computer labs, comprehensive libraries, dining halls, and student activity areas. In both locations, the SSS-D offices provide staff and students with convenient access to academic,



registration, and financial aid advisors; personal and transfer counselors; academic tutors; and assistive technology labs. The Lowell campus SSS-D initiative is housed on the first floor of the main administrative/classroom building and occupies approximately 660 sq. ft. of space. All staff are in these offices. The Bedford campus SSS-D initiative is located in a second floor office area of the Enrollment Services building and comprises approximately 147 sq. ft. Hours of scheduled services are posted. Great care is taken at both campuses to have the SSS-D staff service only SSS-D students. The Lowell and Bedford campuses are located only a short 15 minutes from each other. It is College policy to have many of the faculty and staff work at both campuses. This offers a great deal of flexibility, since it makes it possible for the SSS-D staff to work at both campuses during the week, if necessary, to effectively meet the needs of students enrolled at each campus. The value of office space, which includes desks, phones, utilities, and access to parking provided is valued at \$50/sq.ft. for a total of 807 sq.ft. or **\$40,350**.

**Equipment and Supplies:** MCC makes an extensive amount of equipment and supplies, as well as office furnishings available to SSS-D. These include, but are not limited to:

Supplies/Equipment	Available for Staff Use	Available for Student Use
Desks and chairs for staff and students	X	X
File cabinets	X	
Phones for staff	X	
Fax machines (2 – one at each campus)	X	X
Photocopiers (2 – one at each campus)	X	X
Standard office supplies and postage	X	
Resource tables and chairs	X	X
Computer access to student database	X	
Access to Internet and Wi-Fi	X	X
Computer labs and multimedia software	X	X
SARS Scheduling software for tracking all student appointments	X	
Career (Focus 2) and transfer software	X	X
Student Planners (100 per year)	X	X

**Office Supplies, Postage and Food:** As noted above, MCC provides some office supplies (paper, pens, pencils, etc.) and computer supplies (paper, printer toner) and covers the cost of mailings. MCC also provides food for student meetings, workshops, and recognition events. The total value of office supplies, paper, and toner (\$1,500), postage (\$300), and food (\$500) is estimated at **\$2,300**.

**Personnel:** Numerous College offices provide support to the project, including: Admissions; Enrollment Management and Institutional Research; Financial Aid; Records and Registration; Administration and Finance; Human Resources; Grants and Contract Management; Disability Support Services; Academic, Career and Transfer Advising; Personal Counseling; Academic Resources and Technologies; Academic Support Services; Lowell and Bedford Campus Management, Health Services; Resource Development, and Information Technology. Key staff providing a minimum of 5% dedicated time and attention to the project include: Associate Dean of Student Support Services; Senior Grants Budget Manager; Director of Financial Aid; Information Technology Help Desk Staff; Assistive Technology Coordinator; Associate Dean of Academic, Career and Transfer Advising; Director of Student Accounts; Personal Counselor; Transfer Counselor; and Achievement Coach. The value of this commitment is **\$45,654**.

**Other Resources: Professional Development:** All project staff are encouraged to attend MCC on-campus Professional Days and to apply for Staff Professional Development Funds that can support participation in other conferences, workshops, and related activities, such as an annual state conference focused on serving students with disabilities. Specific MCC professional development funds are available for the two full-time staff members at \$750 per individual. An additional \$450 each is available for part-time staff to attend workshops and conferences. The value of MCC's professional development support is estimated at a minimum of **\$2,400**

annually. MCC also covers the cost of Council on Opportunity Education (COE) dues at **\$794** annually which provides many professional development initiatives.

**Waiver of Tuition for Clients of Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission:** MCC has signed an agreement with the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission whereby it waives all tuition for students with documented disabilities who are clients of the Commission. **This is an important benefit to students with disabilities.** Based on the FY14 implementation of this waiver, we estimate that a minimum of 15 project participants will qualify for the tuition waiver at a value of \$72 a course times three courses a semester times two semesters a year for a total value of **\$6,480** per year.

In addition to the extensive support provided by the College support, the MCC Foundation designates an annual \$1,000 scholarship for an SSS-D student and also provides tickets to cultural and athletic events valued at \$850 a year.

<b>Summary of MCC Institutional Commitment of Dedicated Resources and Staff to Project</b>	
<b>Type of Commitment</b>	<b>Estimated Value</b>
Offices and Equipment to Provide Services	\$40,350
Office and Computer Supplies; postage; food; other materials	2,300
Professional Development	2,400
Council on Opportunity in Education (COE) Dues	794
Waiver of Tuition for Mass. Rehab. Clients	6,480
5% time of key MCC staff devoted to project	45,654
MCC Foundation Scholarship and support for special events	1,850
<b>Total Per Year</b>	<b>\$99,828</b>

Overall, MCC will make a significant total annual commitment of **\$99,828** to SSS-D in recognition of the importance of this program in providing eligible students with services that will contribute to their retention, transfer, and graduation.

**(d) (2) Established administrative and academic policies that enhance participants' retention at the institution and improve their chances of graduating from the institution**

In addition to the policies and procedures built into SSS-D's plan of action, MCC has the following additional Disability Specific Policies to assure retention and graduation for a high-risk population of students with disabilities.

***Reduced Course Load:*** Students with disabilities who may be more successful with a reduced course load are allowed to take fewer courses and to retain full-time status.

***Early Warning Policies:*** At mid-semester, all students who are in danger of failing a course receive a deficiency report from the Registrar. SSS-D is provided with a copy of the report, which includes the student's name, professor's name, and estimated grade. As a follow-up to this report, the SSS-D Director sends a letter to the student, and staff phone and email each student to offer assistance and to request that s/he comes in for a meeting to set up academic assistance.

***Adherence to Student Rights and Responsibilities related to Disability Services:*** To assure that disability-related needs are met in a timely and effective manner, MCC has established a well-documented policy for students to follow, if they have concerns about services and support. Students may submit requests, inquiries or complaints to the Director of Disability Support or the Associate Dean of Student Support Services. The process is described in the Student Handbook and on the DSSD MCC web page, which provides extensive information on all resources and services provided by MCC for students with disabilities and how to access these.

**Other MCC Administrative and Academic Policies Impacting Students with Disabilities**

***Academic Assessment Testing and Course Level Placement Policies:*** Students entering degree or certificate programs must be assessed in mathematics, writing and reading before registration.

The College’s testing service administers the Accuplacer™ standardized test, as well as other tests especially designed for English as a Second Language students. Students may take refresher workshops prior to taking the Accuplacer™ and are also given the opportunity to retake the Accuplacer™ after they review material. They may also take the Accuplacer™ in the MCC DSSD office to ensure distraction-reduced testing. Students testing below the required level of proficiency are placed in developmental classes. The scores become part of the student’s file and are used in developing the CSP.

***Priority Registration for all Courses:*** MCC offers SSS-D students early priority registration for all courses, ensuring that they are able to enroll in required courses each semester. Students work with their SSS-D advisor to select and register for courses.

***Strategies to Increase Completion of Developmental Courses:*** Recognizing the importance of assisting students to complete developmental courses as quickly as possible and with academic success, the College offers several sections of accelerated learning programs in English and Math for which SSS-D students receive priority registration. For the **Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) in English**, students who test into Basic Writing, a developmental course, are co-enrolled in English Composition I, a college-level course. Students are enrolled for six credits (6 hours of instruction), so that they may complete both courses in one semester. The **Accelerated Learning Program in Math** enables students who test into Algebra II (highest developmental math level) the opportunity to enroll in Math Modeling, a three-credit college-level course and a co-requisite one-credit Math Skills Development course, enabling them to earn college credit. Students testing into lower level developmental math courses are enrolled in **RAMP-Up**, a modularized accelerated approach to developmental math whereby students can complete developmental math requirements in one semester.

MCC grading policies reflect support of students whose academic deficiencies place them in developmental courses. Faculty may give an "Incomplete" grade to a student who is judged to be making good progress toward course completion, but has not been able to complete the course work during the 15- week semester. The student enters into a contract for course completion with the instructor.

***Academic Warning, Probation and Suspension Policies:*** In Fall 2011, MCC introduced a new academic progress policy that, rather than being punitive, front loads supportive interventions when a student's GPA falls below 2.0 and s/he is put on academic warning or probation, depending upon number of credits attempted. **These interventions, designed to promote student growth, self-awareness, and success, focus on the end goal of transfer, completion, and graduation.** Students on academic warning must complete an online Academic Warning Workshop which helps them learn more about college policies impacting student success. Students on probation who are eligible to enroll in English Composition I are required to successfully complete the three-credit, transferable Psychology of Success course. A one-credit General Education Seminar designed for developmental students and linked to a three-credit general education course is required for students on academic probation who are not eligible to enroll in English Composition. A student who does not raise his/her GPA to over 2.0 after being on probation for two semesters is suspended from the college for one semester. Students are notified in writing and may appeal their suspension to the Provost. Students are required to provide a letter that expresses their desire to return and include information regarding any extenuating circumstances that affected their academic performance, as well as changes they have made or plan to make to insure future academic success. The SSS-D staff member assigned as the student's case manager can assist the student with an appeal letter when appropriate.

Unusual circumstances are taken into account and offer a SSS-D case manager an opportunity to advocate for a student with extenuating circumstances.

**Fresh Start:** Middlesex’s commitment to helping students meet their academic, career and personal goals is further evidenced by the Fresh Start policy that is available to students who have attended the College in the past and were not academically successful, but have demonstrated success upon return to MCC. A student’s entire academic record for the semesters he/she previously attended MCC will be excluded from their grade point average calculation. All credit hours and grades will remain on the transcript. A notation of the MCC Fresh Start will also appear on the transcript.

**College Payments:** The Bursar/Student Accounts Office provides SSS-D staff with a list of SSS-D students in danger of being dropped for non-payment, or those students with pending/needed documents and other issues, on a monthly basis so that staff may work with students on financial aid to set up payment plans or resolve financial aid issues

**Transfer Policies:** Transfer counseling is available to all students through the Academic Planning Center and SSS-D staff. Specific transfer-related policies and services include

**MassTransfer.** This program enables a MCC student to transfer into eligible state college and university programs with minimal loss of associate degree credit. A MCC student is eligible for MassTransfer status when s/he has completed an associate degree with a minimum of 60 credit hours exclusive of developmental course work; achieved a cumulative GPA of not less than 2.0; and completed a minimum general education core, exclusive of developmental course work.

MCC has more than **100 transfer articulation** agreements with public and private colleges and universities, both locally and nationally. These agreements are designed to ease the

transfer process, allowing a student to plan specifically a curriculum that will fit a chosen program at a selected four-year college or university.

**(d) (3) Demonstrated a commitment to minimize dependence on student loans in developing financial aid packages for project participants by committing institutional resources**

MCC is committed to fostering retention and graduation among all students and is particularly to financial obstacles encountered by students, especially low-income students enrolled in SSS-D. The MCC Financial Aid Office has made a commitment to work closely with the staff and students of the SSS-D to provide financial aid packages that reduce, to the greatest extent possible, dependency on student loans. Our Financial Aid Office will fulfill that commitment by: (1) working exhaustively with SSS-D staff to ensure that all students receive 100% of the federal and state financial aid grants for which they are eligible; (2) minimizing dependence on loans; (3) assisting students with completing Financial Aid applications; and (4) providing financial aid counseling to students and their families. Students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as the primary application for eligibility determination. Specific MCC funds that can be accessed by SSS-D students are the MCC Safety Net Scholarships which reduce student loans by meeting direct expenses (tuition, fees, books and supplies). The MCC Foundation designates at least one annual scholarship for a qualified SSS-D student.

MCC participates in all federal and state financial aid programs available to public postsecondary institutions. The Financial Aid Office takes all necessary steps to assist needy students to obtain financial aid through one or more of the following federal and state grant programs: Federal – *Pell Grant, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant, Academic Achievement Grant, and Work Study*; State – *Massachusetts MassGrant, Massachusetts Part-*



*time Grant Program, Massachusetts Tuition Waiver Program, Community College Access Grant, Completion Incentive Grant, High Demand Scholarship, Foster & Adopted Child Grant, Gear Up Grant, John and Abigail Adams Scholarship and Categorical Tuition Waiver programs, such as that provided to students who are clients of Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission.* If a student’s financial need cannot be met through grants, work study, or institutional funds, the Financial Aid Office assists students in securing federal and state loans. The Financial Aid Office also assists students in calculating need based upon costs related to their disability, such as the purchase of assistive technology for home use or veterinary bills for support dogs. Finally, SSS-D staff aid students in completing applications for scholarships awarded by the MCC Foundation and other sources.

**(d) (4) Assured the full cooperation and support of the Admissions, Student Aid, Registrar, and Data Collection and Analysis components of the institution**

SSS-D has received firm commitments of support from 18 offices, including the President, Admissions, Student Aid, Registrar, and Data Collection and Analysis components of the institution. The following chart highlights the significant commitments from each office and the strong institutional support this program has:

<b>Summary of Institutional Cooperation and Support</b>	
<b>Office</b>	<b>Commitment</b>
Office of the President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicates total cash-equivalent personnel and non-personnel resources worth <b>\$99,828</b> to sustain and support the project</li> <li>• Provides cabinet level assurances of full institutional support</li> <li>• Supports the Financial Aid Office’s full commitment to cooperate and support SSS-D efforts to reduce, to the greatest extent possible, our students’ dependency on loans</li> <li>• Agrees to grant tuition waivers to students with documented disabilities who are clients of the Mass.Rehabilitation Commission</li> <li>• A minimum of one Senior Manager attends TRIO student events</li> </ul>
Office of Vice President for Administration and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigns Senior Grants Budget Manager to work with Director in administering budget</li> <li>• Support SSS-D staff in meeting all administrative and federal</li> </ul>

Finance	budget requirements
Office of Provost and Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews periodic updates on SSS-D activities and provides recommendations for enhancement</li> <li>• Ensures all academic and student affairs offices support SSS-D</li> <li>• Provides opportunities for SSS-D staff to advocate for students, including those on probation</li> </ul>
Office of Vice President of Enrollment Management, Research and Planning <b>(Data Collection and Analysis Components)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishes tight tracking and intervention mechanisms that interface smoothly with the Banner Student Information System</li> <li>• Provides SSS-D staff with complete access to student records</li> <li>• Permanently codes all SSS-D participants in Banner database</li> <li>• Provides ongoing assistance to SSS-D on gathering federally mandated baseline data collection</li> <li>• Provides assistance to SSS-D staff in developing assessment tools</li> <li>• Provides data on comparison groups for evaluation</li> </ul>
Admissions/Student Recruitment Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides SSS-D with the names of accepted/enrolled students potentially eligible for participation in the program because of a self-disclosed disability</li> <li>• Promotes the program to high school guidance counselors, potential MCC students and parents through individual meetings, open house programs, and college fairs</li> <li>• Includes SSS-D on all tours of MCC</li> </ul>
Office of Financial Aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures that students' direct cost needs are met with minimization of dependency on student loans to the greatest extent possible</li> <li>• Provides financial aid data on all SSS-D students for Annual Performance Report</li> <li>• Offers financial aid workshops for SSS-D students and families</li> <li>• Assists SSS-D students in completing financial aid applications for MCC and four-year transfer schools</li> <li>• Collaborates with SSS-D Director to administer and disburse TRIO Grant Aid</li> <li>• Assists SSS-D staff with trainings on economic and financial literacy, student loans, debit/credit, budgeting</li> </ul>
Office of Enrollment Services <b>(Includes Registrar)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides SSS-D with data on newly registered MCC students for recruitment purposes</li> <li>• Provides information on students' academic progress, particularly those SSS-D students receiving deficiency warnings</li> <li>• Provides Early Registration for SSS-D students and priority for Block Scheduling and Supplemental Instruction classes</li> </ul>
Office of Student Accounts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides SSS-D staff with a list of SSS-D students in danger of being dropped for non-payment so that staff may work with students to set up payment plans or resolve financial aid issues</li> </ul>
MCC Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designates minimum of one, \$1,000 scholarship a year specifically for a qualified SSS-D student(s)</li> <li>• Provides MCC historic home at no cost for special TRIO events</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offers complimentary tickets to MCC Foundation events, such as the Celebrity Forum, Speakers Series, and sports events</li> </ul>
Office of Dean of Students /Senior Student Affairs Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures that at least one appointee to the Dean’s Advisory Council (provides input on MCC issues and policies) is a SSS-D student</li> <li>• Hosts an annual forum involving SSS-D students and staff and the Dean of Students and her staff to ensure continuous improvement of the institutional climate for low income, first generation students and students with disabilities.</li> </ul>
Academic Centers of Enrichment/ Tutoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides tutor training to all SSS-D specialized tutors</li> <li>• Provides tutoring for SSS-D students</li> <li>• Provides data on students accessing Academic Support Services</li> </ul>
Disabilities Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refers students who may be eligible for SSS-D; provides information about SSS-D to prospective MCC students with disabilities</li> <li>• Facilitates students obtaining documentation of disabilities to receive additional services (adaptive technology, metacognitive tutoring) in addition to required accommodations</li> <li>• Provides subject specific tutoring for SSS-D disabled students</li> <li>• Provides support to students using Assistive Technology</li> </ul>
Human Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides staff orientations</li> <li>• Coordinates job search activities when vacancies exist</li> <li>• Provides trainings to SSS-D staff</li> <li>• Supports Director with employment issues</li> </ul>
Diversity Affairs/Equity Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide trainings to staff on creating an inclusive environment; trainings opportunities include those offered by nationally recognized National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI)</li> </ul>
Counseling Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assigns one licensed personal counselor to the SSS-D Program to serve in a consultant role as student issues arise</li> </ul>
Office of Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designs publicity materials including brochures, posters, booklets for SSS-D and prints those within the departments capacity</li> </ul>
Office of Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reserves at least one enrollment in all in-house professional development trainings for a SSS-D staff person</li> <li>• Provides an opportunity for SSS-D staff to apply for professional development funds to attend outside trainings, conferences, etc. up to \$750/per full-time staff person and \$450 for part-time staff person each year</li> </ul>
Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides technical support for all SSS-D hardware and software</li> <li>• Assists SSS-D students with computer and software issues</li> <li>• Provides network access and data storage, backup of data, security for all SSS-D networked information</li> </ul>

**(e) QUALITY of PERSONNEL**

MCC’s SSS-D team consists of a full-time Director with 50% administrative time commitment to day-to-day oversight responsibility and 50% real-time direct service case management. In accordance with EDGAR (75.5 1 0 c), the Project Director has sufficient authority to conduct the program effectively. Other positions include a 100% time Learning Specialist, a 50% Disabilities Counselor; and 8 hours per week of services provided by the SSS-D Math Tutor.

**(e) (1) Qualifications required of the Project Director TITLE: PROJECT DIRECTOR**

<p><b>Minimum Education Qualifications:</b> Candidate will have, at a minimum, the following education qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master’s Degree in Education, Special Education, Counseling, or a related field</li> <li>• Training in issues affecting disabled, low-income and first-generation college students</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Skills Required:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program management, design and implementation of federally funded programs related to student success and completion</li> </ul>
<p><b>Minimum Work-Related Experience</b> <i>Candidate will have, at a minimum, five years of related experience in the following areas which link to the position responsibilities required to carry out activities and meet project objectives:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program management, including managing day-to-day operations, recruiting staff and students, designing services, supervising and evaluating staff, providing professional development, overseeing direct service activities, maintaining accurate record-keeping</li> <li>• Budget management, including developing and monitoring a budget</li> <li>• Managing and reporting on federally-funded education grant programs in compliance with EDGAR regulations</li> <li>• Implementing disability support services programs</li> <li>• Providing case management to students</li> </ul>

**(e) (2) Qualifications of other personnel TITLE: LEARNING SPECIALIST (1)**

<p><b>Minimum Education Qualifications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master's in Special Education or related field preferred</li> <li>• Training in interpreting disability documentation and assessment results and developing learner profiles and learning support accommodations for students with various disabilities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key Skills Required:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of strategies and skills for tutoring and counseling students, devising learning support strategies that emphasize metacognitive learning approaches for students with disabilities, and providing case management support to at-risk populations.</li> </ul>

**Minimum Work-Related Experience**

*Candidate will have, at a minimum, three years of related experience in the following areas which link to the position responsibilities required to carry out activities and meet objectives:*

- Providing case management services, including developing Learner Profiles and Customized Service Plans and monitoring implementation
- Providing individual and group metacognitive, math and English tutoring
- Conducting workshops related to academic and life skills

**TITLE: DISABILITIES COUNSELOR (1)**

**Minimum Education Qualifications:**

- Master's in Special Education or related field preferred
- Training in reviewing and interpreting disability documentation and assessment results to develop learner profiles and learning support accommodations

**Key Skills Required:**

- Strategies of case management for persons with disabilities in compliance with educational and legal regulations

**Minimum Work-Related Experience**

*Candidate will have, at a minimum, three years of related experience in the following areas which link to the position responsibilities required to carry out activities and meet objectives:*

- Providing case management services, including developing Learner Profiles and Customized Service Plans and monitoring implementation
- Facilitating services for students with physical and/or psychiatric disabilities
- Conducting academic and life skills workshops

**TITLE: PROFESSIONAL TUTOR, MATH (1)**

**Minimum Education Qualifications:**

- Minimum Bachelor's degree Math, or closely related field

**Key Skills Required:**

- Expertise in instructing and coaching students with disabilities

**Minimum Work-Related Experience**

*Candidate will have, at a minimum, three years of related experience in the following areas which link to the position responsibilities required to carry out activities and meet objectives:*

- Teaching students with disabilities at the high school or postsecondary level
- Providing individual and group tutoring in math and employing learning strategies to meet student needs
- Providing targeted remedial work to assist students with taking math/English proficiency exams required to enter some career programs

**(e) (3) Plan to employ personnel who have succeeded in overcoming barriers similar to those confronting the project’s target population**

Working with MCC’s Human Resources Office and following College affirmative action hiring practices, SSS-D makes every effort to recruit and hire staff that mirrors the backgrounds of those of the project’s population through the following strategies:

Strategy	Description
<b>1. Advertising and Internal Postings</b>	In all internal postings and employment ads, SSS-D overtly emphasizes its interest in hiring candidates who match the TRIO profile. The MCC Human Resources Office assists us in this effort.
<b>2. Recruitment from Regional TRIO Programs and TRIO Alumni</b>	All job postings for position openings in SSS-D are distributed to staff in regional TRIO counterpart programs and college Disability Support Service programs.
<b>4. Outreach to Agencies and Organizations Serving Individuals with Disabilities</b>	Position announcements are mailed to external agencies, such as the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, the Massachusetts Resource Partnership and the Massachusetts Community College Disability Service Provider Network and uses inclusive language in job postings.
<b>5. MCC Special Programs</b>	Several other MCC partnership programs (e.g. Lowell Connections, GEAR UP) often advertise for job openings. Program directors make referrals of outstanding applicants, who fit the TRIO profile, to SSS-D.
<b>6. MCC connections to Professional Organizations that Support Equity in Hiring</b>	MCC is a member of the New England Higher Education Recruitment Consortium ( <a href="http://www.hercjobs.org/new_england/">http://www.hercjobs.org/new_england/</a> ), a non-profit consortium of over 600 colleges, universities, hospitals, research labs, government agencies, and related non- and for-profit organizations. Consortium members share a commitment to hiring the most diverse and talented faculty, staff, and executives.

When positions open, the College and SSS-D staff undertake all of the above efforts to ensure as comprehensive a search as possible for recruiting and hiring staff that have overcome barriers similar to the target population. In keeping with College hiring policies, a search

committee is formed that includes representation from across the College. All members are required to be trained in resume review and interviewing techniques that reflect the College’s policy for ensuring affirmative action hiring practices and a diverse workforce. The committee recommends two finalists to the Associate Dean of Student Support Services, who makes the final selection. Once hired, staff participates in the College’s employee orientation programs.

**(f) BUDGET, Budget is Reasonable, Cost Effective and Adequate**

Developed with program goals and objectives in mind, our budget is adequate, reasonable, and cost-effective to support SSS-D. The total request is \$240,392 to serve 100 students. Below is a detailed budget narrative.

<b>1. Personnel</b>	
<b>Full-Time Staff- SSS Funded</b>	
*Project Director (100% time - 37.5 hours per wk, 12 months)	73,289
*Learning Specialist (100% time - 37.5 hrs/wk, 12 months)	69,373
<b>Subtotal Full-time Personnel</b>	<b>142,662</b>
<b>Part-time Staff- SSS Funded</b>	
*Disabilities Counselor (18.75hrs/wk X 38 wks; 26.39 x 16 and 26.92 x 16)	15,993
Professional Math Tutor, (\$26.92/hr x 8hrs/wk. (total) x 30 wks, (7.5 mths)	6,461
Administrative Assistant, .1 FTE of a fulltime, benefitted employee	5,759
<b>Subtotal Part-time Personnel</b>	<b>28,213</b>
<b>Subtotal Personnel</b>	
<b>2. Fringe Benefits - SSS Funded</b>	
Medicare for part-time positions @ .0159	357
Fringe for full-time positions @ 30% based on FY15 fringe benefit rate; subject to change for FY16	44,526
Health and Welfare Trust @ \$750 per full-time employee x 2	1,575
<b>Subtotal Fringe</b>	<b>46,458</b>

Our **Plan of Operation** and **Quality of Personnel** sections offer complete explanations of the roles, responsibilities, and time committed to the project by each of the staff. The *Project Director* is fully funded from the SSS-D budget and splits her time in real-time direct service functions and day-to-day administrative function. Our efficient utilization of other staff

(*Learning Specialist and Disabilities Counselor*) provides a cost-effective way to provide varied and consistent services. The Learning Specialist is included because we feel strongly that the severity of the students' needs demand that they receive metacognitive tutoring by a professional who has the expertise necessary to provide these students with the learning strategies and support necessary to attain the project's objectives related to retention, graduation and transfer. The salaries of the Learning Specialist and Disabilities Counselor are determined by collective bargaining agreements. The tutor's salary is determined by the MCC wage schedule.

Our personnel salary budget is justified by the following factors: (1) the higher cost of living in eastern Massachusetts, one of the most expensive in the country, requires higher salaries in order to recruit staff; (2) the salaries are comparable to those allocated for individuals holding similar roles and responsibilities throughout the College, and they are comparable to salaries offered at other institutions in the Massachusetts state community college system; (3) the level of intensity of services is necessary to adequately support the broad range of services required by the program design; and (4) the fringe benefit rate and Medicare Tax line are required by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Full fringe at 30% is calculated slightly above the College's approved FY15 current rate of 28.86% to take into consideration an anticipated FY16 increase. It covers group insurance and retirement. The Health and Welfare Trust covers the dental plan.

<b>3. Travel</b>	
<b>Participant Travel</b>	
*Two field trips to cultural events and college visitation in Boston including round-trip train fare at \$18.50/ea x 10; subway at \$/4ea x 10; and admissions to cultural – art, theatre, and/or musical - events	525
<b>Staff Travel</b>	
Director will attend one national disabilities conference (air fare: \$500; hotel: \$300 for two nights; per diem and miscellaneous expenses \$160 for a total of \$960); \$.575/mile for 400 miles (\$) has been designated for mileage for Director and staff to participate in regional or state conferences and professional staff development training	994 230
<b>Total Travel</b>	<b>1,749</b>



The field trips are justified because they enable students to participate in enriching activities that they might not otherwise have the opportunity to do. Although this budget does not have a large amount to cover these fees, which is important because least one-third of students are low income and might not otherwise have access to these enriching activities, the Director can submit a request to the College Foundation as one possible means to assist in this expense. By attending national, regional or state conferences, the Director and staff gain information that will enable them to develop program services that foster retention, transfer, and graduation and contribute to the continuous improvement of the program. Mileage cost of \$.57.5/mile is set by College.

<b>4. Equipment (Not Applicable)</b>	
<b>5. Supplies - SSS Funded</b>	
Student Award Certificates	150
Consumable Office Supplies (printer cartridges, general office supplies, notebooks, binders, folders for students) not available through the College	1,953
<b>Subtotal Supplies</b>	<b>2,103</b>

The award and recognition supplies are required to ensure incentives for recognizing and motivating students. Consumable supplies and instructional materials are required to support project activities.

<b>6. Contractual and 7. Construction – Not Applicable</b>	
<b>8. Other - SSS Funded</b>	
Heiberg Database annual maintenance support plan	299
Copy machine maintenance agreement	300
Copy machine lease agreement	800
<b>Subtotal Other</b>	<b>1,399</b>

The Heiberg maintenance support plan is required to ensure that the database that provides detailed tracking of student services and project outcomes functions effectively. The copy machine is required for day-to-day photocopying needs. (Note: The College supports bulk photocopying of brochures, flyers, notebook material, etc.) An advertising cost is not included in

the budget because if advertising for employment positions is required, the College’s Human Resources Office will post the position announcement on online job search data bases, in addition to the contacts that will be made with other referral services listed on page 55.

<b>9. Total Direct Costs</b>	222,585
<b>10. Total Indirect Costs at 8%</b>	17,807
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$240,392</b>

This budget reflects our tireless efforts to achieve efficient integration of existing College resources and services with those available to SSS-D. MCC has committed significant office space and office resources, as well as departmental services to complement services provided by SSS-D. Thus, our budget can focus on the additional personnel required to provide intensive services to our targeted population. The budget is adequate to support the objectives and activities of the project based on the College’s extensive experience in providing services to students with disabilities and our project enrollment of 100 students. MCC is providing substantial in-kind contributions in both personnel and non- personnel areas totaling \$99,828.

**(g) EVALUATION PLAN**

**(g) (1) Applicant’s methods for evaluation**

**(i) Appropriate Quantitative and Qualitative Data**

A four-phase process will be used to determine effectiveness of service delivery, document that objectives are being met, and obtain information that will help staff improve the program. The Director will oversee annual evaluation with the assistance of staff. Each of the evaluation phases includes planning, data collection, analysis, reporting of findings, and recommendations for continuous improvement. **Phase I:** Formative Review: includes collection of benchmark data, program data, and ongoing review and analysis; **Phase II:** Summative Review: includes annual internal review of data and Annual Performance Report; Evaluation

Team Review of data every two years; **Phase III:** MCC Annual Assessment Day- Review of outcome indicators related to student success and identification of ways to strengthen outcomes; and **Phase IV:** MCC Program Review (conducted every five years) The evaluation plan, outlined below, clearly indicates the various methodologies and approaches to be used and what type of quantitative and qualitative data to be collected, including that related to required GPRA indicators regarding postsecondary persistency and completion rates.

**Stage I: Formative Review - Includes collection of baseline data and quarterly review**

The Director will establish baseline data based on project objectives and individual student goals, needs, and academic achievement to date. Baseline and ongoing comparison data will also be collected for SSS-D eligible students served and SSS-D eligible students not served in terms of retention, transfer, graduation and GPA. The data collection incorporates quantitative and qualitative reporting provided by all staff, including monthly reports that indicate enrollment levels, student participation rates in project activities, student attendance at all program sponsored events, number of contact hours by staff, and student academic achievement. On a quarterly basis, the Director will compile statistical information necessary for evaluating the program in terms of progress toward meeting its objectives. Additionally, the Director will compare actual activity reports with the plan of operation timelines. Surveys will be administered to students, faculty and staff and program participants each year, and focus groups will be conducted. Results of focus groups and surveys will also be compiled. Regular staff meetings will be used to discuss evaluation outcomes and to develop plans for program improvement.

**Stage II: Summative Review - Includes Annual Internal Review and Annual Performance**

Report - Each year, the Director will review the compilation of data on retention, persistence, graduation, transfer, grade point averages, financial aid, and other individual activity assessments

(e.g. student knowledge gained through participation in workshops) as well as information obtained through surveys, focus groups and interviews. The Annual Performance Report that will serve as an annual baseline indicator of the program’s accomplishments. To ensure continuous improvement, enhancements will be made based upon findings. In addition, all student files will be reviewed for compliance.

**Stage III: MCC Assessment Process:** MCC conducts a year-long assessment process for all parts of the College that culminates in a campus-wide Assessment Day when faculty and staff review individual program outcomes to determine the level of student success and program effectiveness. Recommendations for improving and enhancing student success and program effectiveness, based on this review, are identified. SSS-D staff participate in the full assessment process and use the findings to ensure continuous improvement of the program.

**Stage IV: MCC Program Review:** Under the direction of the College Program Review Committee and with the Evaluation Team, SSS-D will participate in a Program Review. This program review, undertaken every five years, will identify program strengths and challenges, provide recommendations based on findings, offer plans for improvement with clear timelines, and result in a report to key stakeholders including MCC senior administrators. The Counsel for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education TRIO Standards in Guidelines will be one of the tools used for the review.

**ii. Use of Baseline Data to Examine Program Outcomes:** The charts provide the details of our plan to utilize appropriate baseline data to examine in specific and measurable ways the project's success in improving academic achievement, retention, graduation, and three-year transfer of project participants.

<p><b>Objective One:</b> 65% of all participants served in the reporting year by the SSS-D 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 4-year institution by the fall term of the next academic year.</p>	
<p><b>Benchmarks:</b> Mid-year data indicates a minimum of 70% of students in good academic standing</p>	
<p>Formative Evaluation</p>	
<p><i>Types of Data and Timeline</i></p>	<p><b>Quantitative:</b> OIR Banner reports on individual student academic performance; lists of students who are listed on Early Awareness Intervention Reports (EAIR) reports, receive OIR deficiency warning, and/or fail/withdraw from courses; SSS-D log to determine student participation in services (tutoring, supplemental instruction) and other issues affecting student performance, such as loss of housing, child care – Each semester</p> <p><b>Qualitative:</b> Secure student files (both electronic and hard-copy) will capture interventions and anecdotal information; faculty and student surveys – Repeated times during each semester</p>
<p><i>Methods Used</i></p>	<p>Review of EAIR records, Heiberg database, DegreeWorks, and case management activities will document student progress</p>
<p><i>Instruments Used</i></p>	<p>SSS Heiberg Student Access Database, OIR Banner Student MIS, Student Folders, Faculty, (EAIR), Student/Faculty Surveys</p>
<p><i>Analysis and Reports</i></p>	<p>Review student progress with advisors to determine if additional services were suggested and provided to student; determine student participation in services; determine additional interventions to be undertaken with students not meeting academic requirements. Report prepared each semester with recommendations for each student.</p>
<p>Summative evaluation</p>	
<p><i>Types of Data and Timeline</i></p>	<p><b>Quantitative and Qualitative:</b> Student transcripts from OIR Banner System; SSS-D student files on DegreeWorks; Survey Reports - Annually</p>
<p><i>Methods Used</i></p>	<p>Review of transcripts indicate 70% of students are retained from one academic year to the next or graduate and/or transfer</p>
<p><i>Instruments Used</i></p>	<p>SSS Heiberg Student Access Database, OIR Banner Student Information System, Student files/DegreeWorks, Faculty Early Awareness Intervention Reports (EAIR), Student/Faculty Surveys</p>
<p><i>Analysis and Reports</i></p>	<p>Student transcripts analyzed to ensure project meeting objective; student SSS-D files, exit interviews and student survey results analyzed for those not persisting, transferring, or graduating to determine causes and to make appropriate changes; comparison of retention rates of SSS participants to SSS-D eligible not served to determine effectiveness of project. Comparison of baseline first-year to subsequent years. Report prepared with recommendations – Annually including APR</p>
<p><b>How evaluation information will be used:</b> Ongoing, semester and annual review of the information and student progress will inform individual student interventions as well as the development of new program strategies</p>	

<p><b>Objective Two: 75%</b> of all enrolled SSS-D participants will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at Middlesex Community College</p>	
<p><b>Benchmarks:</b> For each semester, review of cumulative GPA indicates percent of students in good academic standing</p>	
<p>Formative Evaluation</p>	
<p><i>Types of Data and Timeline</i></p>	<p><b>Quantitative:</b> GPA reports obtained from OIR for all students, as well as percentage of students in good academic standing; Faculty Progress Report information; SSS-D case management data on SSS-D and other academic services recommended and used by students – Each semester  <b>Qualitative:</b> Students whose GPA falls below 2.0 will be interviewed by staff as part of case management and early alert intervention – During each semester</p>
<p><i>Methods Used</i></p>	<p><b>Quantitative:</b> Review of Early Alert Intervention, OIR Banner Student Record report on GPA;  <b>Qualitative:</b> Review of case management and interviews indicated by Early Alert; DegreeWorks notes</p>
<p><i>Instruments Used</i></p>	<p>SSS-D Heiberg Student Access Database, OIR Banner Student MIS, Student Folders and DegreeWorks, Faculty Early Awareness Intervention Reports (EAIR), Student/Faculty Surveys</p>
<p><i>Analysis and Reports</i></p>	<p><b>Quantitative:</b> Analyze data results; review student follow-through on recommended interventions. Prepare report to inform further services to be provided to individual students.  <b>Qualitative:</b> Factors identified that may have impacted performance; notes in DegreeWorks indicating issues and interventions</p>
<p>Summative evaluation</p>	
<p><i>Types of Data and Timeline</i></p>	<p><b>Quantitative and Qualitative:</b> Student transcripts from OIR Banner; SSS-D student files; Survey Reports - Annually</p>
<p><i>Methods Used</i></p>	<p>Review of transcripts indicate 75% of students have GPAs of 2.0 or greater and therefore are in good academic standing</p>
<p><i>Instruments Used</i></p>	<p>SSS Heiberg Student Access Database, OIR Banner Student MIS, Student files/DegreeWorks, Faculty Early Awareness Intervention Reports (EAIR)</p>
<p><i>Analysis and Reports</i></p>	<p>Comparison of the percentage in good standing to the total number of participants and to a cohort of students SSS-D eligible but not served; determination of trends and factors impacting individual student achievement; comparison of annual data to first-year baseline date. Report with recommendations for project enhancements and APR</p>
<p><b>How evaluation information will be used:</b> Ongoing, semester and annual review of individual academic progress and GPA, DegreeWork notes on student interventions will be analyzed for effectiveness for individuals as well as for the development of new program strategies</p>	

<p><b>Objective Three:</b> 1.) <b>25%</b> of new participants served each year will graduate with an associate’s degree or certificate within four (4) years <b>and</b> 2.) <b>15%</b> of new participants served each year will transfer with an associate’s degree or certificate within four (4) years.</p>	
<p><b>Benchmarks:</b> For each entering cohort, by the end of the fourth semester, 40% are within 20 credits of graduating; each year students intending to transfer have received transfer assistance</p>	
<p>Formative Evaluation</p>	
<p><i>Types of Data and Timeline</i></p>	<p><b>Quantitative:</b> Graduation and transfer data reports; student transcripts indicating number of courses completed towards a degree or certificate; case management interventions, including information on transfer counseling - Each semester</p> <p><b>Qualitative:</b> Interview students who are falling behind to obtain input on factors impeding their progress towards graduation; students who had transfer as their goal, but do not do so, will also be interviewed by staff – Repeated times during each semester</p>
<p><i>Methods Used</i></p>	<p><b>Quantitative:</b> Review of transcripts indicate that 25% of students graduate and 15% of students transfer with an associate’s degree or certificate within four (4) years.</p> <p><b>Qualitative:</b> Review related to case management and interviews identifying barriers to student success and recommended interventions</p>
<p><i>Instruments Used</i></p>	<p>SSS Heiberg Student Access Database, OIR Banner Student Information System, degree audit information, case management records and data</p>
<p><i>Analysis and Reports</i></p>	<p><b>Quantitative:</b> Analyze data results; review student follow-through on recommended interventions. Prepare report to inform further services to be provided to individual students.</p> <p><b>Qualitative:</b> Factors identified that may have impacted performance; DegreeWorks information indicating issues and interventions</p>
<p>Summative evaluation</p>	
<p><i>Types of Data and Timeline</i></p>	<p><b>Quantitative and Qualitative:</b> OIR Banner Student MIS and Heiberg Student Access Database; notes from transfer counseling and case management as to barriers to goals and remediation - Annually</p>
<p><i>Methods Used</i></p>	<p>Obtain OIR update of graduation and transfer information at the conclusion of each year; review case management reports</p>
<p><i>Instruments Used</i></p>	<p>SSS-D Heiberg Student Access Database, OIR Banner Student Information System, Student files/DegreeWorks, Student/Faculty Surveys</p>
<p><i>Analysis and Reports</i></p>	<p>Compare graduation and transfer rate of SSS participants to baseline data and to SSS-D eligible, but not served; review all case management interview reports to determine key factors impacting individual achievement related to graduation and transfer. Prepare report with recommendations for enhancement or changes in services - Annually</p>
<p><b>How evaluation information will be used:</b> Ongoing, semester and annual review of individual graduation and transfer outcomes, DegreeWork notes on student interventions will be analyzed for effectiveness for individuals as well as for the development of new program strategies</p>	

**Compliance with Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993:** The SSS-D

evaluation plan, outlined in detail below, clearly indicates the various methodologies and approaches to be used and what type of data will be collected, including that related to required GPRA indicators regarding postsecondary persistence and completion rates of SSS-D participants. Annual Performance Reports, based on evaluation data, will be submitted to the USDE, which will use them to aggregate data from all grantees to determine accomplishment levels related to its goal of ensuring “accessibility, affordability, and accountability of higher education and better prepare students and adults for employment and future learning.”

**(2) Intention to employ evaluation results to make programmatic changes**

The program's regular and ongoing formative and summative evaluation procedures, both quantitative and qualitative, will provide a diverse body of information related to program enrollment and retention efforts, students' academic achievement levels, and program graduation and transfer outcomes, all of which will form the basis for ongoing program improvement.

The comprehensive, open, and ongoing nature of our proposed evaluation process creates an ideal circumstance for continuous quality improvement. The Project Director and staff will keep abreast of trends emerging from the evaluation process. In the event that these evaluative activities identify service deficiencies, new service needs, unanticipated results, or new trends indicative of need for programmatic change, we will be in the position to adopt an informed approach to re-think, improve, and strengthen SSS-D in order to ensure that it meets or surpasses all project objectives.

**Bibliography**

- Bureau of Labor Statistics - Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics - 2013.* (2014, June 11). Retrieved from Bureau of Labor Statistics U.S. Department of Labor: <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/disabl.pdf>
- Trainen, G., & Swanson, H. (2005). Cognition, Metacognition, and Achievement of College Students with Learning Disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 261.



## SSS Program Profile Form

**Instructions: All applicants must complete this form.** The completed form must be attached to the Other Attachments Form in the application package in Grants.gov (as a .pdf document). **DO NOT MODIFY OR AMEND THE CONTENTS OR LANGUAGE CONTAINED ON THIS FORM.**

1. Applicants currently funded under the Student Support Services Program (FY 2010-2015) must provide their current grant award number. This can be found in Block 5 of the Grant Award Notification.

New applicants should leave this item blank.

PR/Award Number (Current Grantees Only): P042A100578

Institution: Middlesex Community College

(If this application is from an institution with multiple campuses, the name of the specific applying campus must be provided on the line above.)

3. All applicants must indicate the address where this project will be physically located.

Project Address: 33 Kearney Square, Lowell, MA 01852  
Street Address, City, State, Zip Code

4. Applicants that propose to serve multiple campuses under a single grant award must provide the names and locations of all campuses/locations that will be involved in this project. Please list each service area site:

Campuses/Locations:

#1

Name Middlesex Community College

Lowell, Middlesex County, MA 01852-1901

City, County, State and Zip Code +4

#2

Name Middlesex Community College

Bedford, Middlesex County, MA 01730-1120

City, County, State and Zip Code +4

---

#3

Name \_\_\_\_\_

---

City, County, State and Zip Code +4

5. All applicants must indicate the type of project they are proposing to conduct. Check only one. There can be no combinations of project types.

Regular

Disabled Only

English as a Second Language (ESL)

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), including Health Science

Teacher Preparation K-12

Veterans

(See below for a description of the types of projects that may be applied for under the SSS Program.)

### SSS Project Types

These project types are provided to inform the needs of eligible applicants serving regular, disabled and “different populations”<sup>7</sup> under a separate and distinct application for specialized services. The types of specialized services may include: (1) English as a Second Language (ESL), (2) Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), including Health Sciences (3) Teacher Preparation K-12, and (4) Veterans. As noted above, you may only check one

---

<sup>7</sup> *Different population* means a group of individuals that an eligible entity desires to serve through an application for a grant under the Student Support Services program and that—

(1) Is separate and distinct from any other population that the entity has applied for a grant to serve; or  
(2) While sharing some of the same needs as another population that the eligible entity has applied for a grant to serve, has distinct needs for specialized services.

line for a single project type to be served for each grant application.

Regular SSS Program: projects provide services to low-income, first-generation and/or disabled students, which may include students from the different populations of students (see footnote <sup>14</sup> below).

Disabled Only SSS Program: projects provide services only to students with disabilities, one third of whom must also be low-income students.

English as a Second Language “ESL” SSS Program: projects provide services only to low-income, first-generation students or individuals with disabilities for whom English is a second language and/or who are of limited English proficiency.

Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and Health Science SSS Program: projects provide services only to low-income, first-generation students or individuals with disabilities pursuing disciplines in the following areas as well as other related fields including: physical sciences, engineering, life sciences, math (e.g., number properties and operations, measurement, geometry, data analysis and probability, and algebra), and technology, including technology literacy, hands on workshops, technological innovations, scientific research, biotechnology, electronics, health sciences, communications and health research.

Teacher Preparation K-12 SSS Program: projects provide services only to low-income, first-generation students or individuals with disabilities pursuing disciplines in the following areas as well as other related fields:

Test preparation to meet the teaching credential for certification and license; internships to learn effective teaching practices; mentoring to experience on-the-job training; technology to enable integration of technology into classroom instruction; diversity training to meet the needs of students (e.g. students who lack proficiency in English and culturally diverse students); methodology to increase the level of implementation of student performance assessment techniques and implementing state and district curriculum and performance standards; and teaching practices to affect special behavior problems.

Veterans Program: projects provide services to low-income, first-generation and disabled veterans/students only.

6. Grant Aid to Students. There is no separate funding for grant aid to students. Providing grant aid to students is not a program requirement for submitting an application under the SSS Program competition. However, successful applicants may use up to 20% of the total budget to cover the cost of grant aid. Applicants that plan to offer grant aid must provide the amount of funds they propose to use for grant aid to students (consistent with the information provided on the proposed grant aid funding and methods for its distribution as discussed in the selection criteria under the Plan of Operation).

Note: Once an applicant has elected to participate in grant aid to students, the Department

will expect continued participation for the duration of the grant award cycle at the rate established at the time of initial funding.

Grant Aid to Students: \$ 0

Institutional Match (33% - if required): \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Not Applicable

If you are not required to match the grant aid to students, please indicate the reason:

Eligible, at the time of the submission date of this application, to receive funds under --

Title III-Part A--Strengthening Institutions Program

Title III-Part B--Strengthening Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Title V—Strengthening Hispanic-serving Institutions

7. All applicants must provide the number of students they

propose to serve each year. Total number of proposed student

participants to be served per year: / 100 /

Breakdown of the number of students to be served in each category out of the proposed total number of participants:

A. \_\_\_ Low-Income and First-Generation

B. \_\_\_ Low-Income

C. \_\_\_ First-Generation

D. 100 Disabled

E. 34 Low-Income and Disabled

(Note: Two-thirds of the participants served in a special focus SSS project must also be low-income, first-generation or disabled students, of whom 1/3 must also be low-income.)

8. Program Objectives:

Please fill in the proposed percent for each objective.

Each applicant must enter targets for each of the standard project objectives listed below based on the institution's sector. Please note that the standard program objectives for the SSS program are different for two-year and four-year institutions. Therefore, please review the guidance below regarding how you should designate the sector of your institution for the SSS grant and then complete the appropriate section.

These same objectives should be referenced in the Part III Project Narrative section of your application and should not be revised in your narrative discussion of the proposed objectives or proposed evaluation. In addition, the Department reserves the right to request modified measurement objectives for those projects that serve “different populations” to measure the progress of the specific subgroup designated in the project application after the grant award.

**Sector of Grantee Institution: (Check applicable option)**

Please note that the applicant’s sector designation for the purposes of completing the SSS Program Profile sheet may differ from the designation contained in the Department’s National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). If you do not know your institution’s designation, please see “**How to determine your institution’s sector**” below.

2-year public  2-year private  4-year public  4-year private

**How to Determine Your Institution’s Sector**

Even though IPEDS may have your institution designated as a 4-year institution, your institution may qualify as a 2- year institution (for the purposes of the SSS Program) if your institution predominantly awards associate’s degrees or certificates. To determine your institution’s sector do the following:

- Click on the link <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>.
- Under “**Name of School**” enter your institution’s name and click on the button “Show Results.”
- On the right hand side, click on your institution’s name.
- If in the **General Information** section under “**Type**” the words “*primarily associate’s*” appear, your institution predominantly awards associate’s degrees or certificates; therefore, your institution primarily enrolls students in 2-year programs or less.
- If you are still not certain how to designate your institution’s sector, follow steps 1, 2, and 3 above.
- Scroll down and select “**Programs/Majors.**”
- If the **Bachelor’s Degree** column (if applicable) represents less than 10 percent of all undergraduate awards including certificates, your institution predominantly awards associate’s degrees or certificates.

Please be advised that your sector designation on this profile sheet will be used to calculate your Prior Experience (PE) points for the persistence and graduation/transfer objectives for the FY 2015 funding cycle; therefore, you need to choose between 2-year and 4-year based upon the types of academic programs (e.g., 2-year versus 4-year) students at your institution are pursuing.

**Project Objectives for applicants designated as 2-year institutions**

A. **Persistence Rate** (2-year institution): **65%** of all participants served<sup>8</sup> in the reporting year by the SSS project will persist from one academic year<sup>9</sup> 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.

B. **Good Academic Standing Rate** (2-year institution): **75%** of all enrolled<sup>10</sup> SSS participants served will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution.

C. **Graduation and Transfer Rates** (2-year institutions only):

1. **25%** of new participants<sup>11</sup> 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.

**Note:** In setting the achievement rates for the graduation and transfer objectives, it is important to understand which SSS participants are counted and the four-year point of measurement. For example, new participants (e.g., those first served by SSS during the 2010-11 academic year) constitute the denominator for the graduation and transfer objectives. The numerator for the graduation only objective (i.e., number "1" above) includes those new participants in 2010-11 that received an associate's degree or certificate from the grantee institutions within four years (by the end of the 2013-14 academic year). The numerator for the graduation and transfer objective (i.e., number "2" above) includes those new participants that received an associate's degree or certificate from the grantee institutions by the end of the 2013-14 academic year and transferred to a four-year institution by the fall term of 2014.

### **Project Objectives for applicants designated as 4-year institutions**

---

<sup>8</sup> For the persistence and good academic standing objectives, the Department defines participants served as those students that received project services during the reporting year.

<sup>9</sup> **Academic year means** the 12-month academic year of the grantee institution; it is not the budget period. For example, the 2015-16 academic year is roughly August/September 2015 through August 2016 while the budget/project year for most SSS grants is September 1, 2015, through August 31, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> **Enrolled** means a student who has met the minimum standards to matriculate at an institution on either a full-time or part-time basis. However, it does not include new summer participants served during the summer preceding the participant's first academic year who did not earn college credits during the period (i.e., summer session) in which they were served.

<sup>11</sup> A **new participant** is an individual who was served by the SSS project for the **first time** in the project year under consideration and who meets the definition of a participant as specified in 34 CFR 646.7(c) of the SSS program regulations.

A. **Persistence Rate** (4-year institution): % of all participants served<sup>12</sup> by the SSS project will persist from one academic year<sup>13</sup> to the beginning of the next academic year or will have earned a bachelor's degree at the grantee institution during the academic year.

B. **Good Academic Standing Rate** (4-year institution): % of all enrolled<sup>14</sup> SSS participants being served will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution.

C. **Graduation Rate** (4-year institutions only):  
\_\_\_ % of new participants<sup>15</sup> served each year will graduate from the grantee institution with a bachelor's degree or equivalent within six (6) years.

**Note: Please indicate if you will address the competitive preference priorities. Be advised, as stated in the Notice, the maximum competitive preference priority points an application can receive under this competition is 6.**

**X** Competitive Preference Priority 1(a): Influencing the Development of Non-Cognitive Factors (up to 1 additional point). The Department is using this competitive preference priority to focus on postsecondary persistence and completion rates among high-need students.

**X** Competitive Preference Priority 1(b): Non-Cognitive Factors Supported by Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness (up to 2 additional points). In recent years, the Department has placed an increasing emphasis on promoting evidence-based practices through our grant competitions. We believe that encouraging applicants to focus on proven strategies can only enhance the quality of our competitions. Accordingly, within the competitive priority for non-cognitive factors (competitive preference priority 1(a)), we give additional competitive preference to applications that submit moderate evidence of effectiveness that supports their proposed strategy for addressing non-

---

<sup>12</sup> For the persistence and good academic standing objectives, the Department defines participants served as those students that received project services during the reporting year.

<sup>13</sup> **Academic year means** the 12-month academic year of the grantee institution; it is not the budget period. For example, the 2015-16 academic year is roughly August/September 2015 through August 2016.

<sup>14</sup> **Enrolled** means a student who has met the minimum standards to matriculate at an institution on either a full-time or part-time basis. However, it does not include new summer participants served during the summer preceding the participant's first academic year who did not earn college credits during the period (i.e., summer session) in which they were served.

<sup>15</sup> A **new participant** is an individual who was served by the SSS project for the **first time** in the project year under consideration and who meets the definition of a participant as specified in 34 CFR 646.7(c) of the SSS program regulations.

cognitive factors. Relevant studies will be reviewed to determine if they meet the What Works Clearinghouse (WWC)<sup>16</sup> Evidence Standards.

Please insert appropriate citation: Stephens, N. M., Hamedani, M. G., & Destin, M. 2014. *Closing the Social Class Achievement Gap: A Difference-Education Intervention Improves First Generation Students' Academic Performance and All Students*. College Transition. Association for Psychological Science; Sage Publishing. <http://psychology.northwestern.edu/documents/destin-achievement.pdf>

X Competitive Preference Priority 2(a): Providing Individualized Counseling for Personal, Career, and Academic Matters (up to 1 additional point). The Department is using this competitive preference priority to focus on improved individualized counseling to students. The Department believes that SSS projects can play a strong role in improving postsecondary outcomes by placing a greater emphasis on strategies that could include proactive coaching or other strategies designed to increase student success.

X Competitive Preference Priority 2(b): Individual Counseling Activities Based on Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness (up to 2 additional points). This competitive preference priority invites applicants to propose ways to improve the effectiveness of counseling using evidence-based practices, which could include coaching or other strategies. Accordingly, within the competitive priority for individualized counseling we give additional competitive preference to applications that submit moderate evidence of effectiveness that supports their proposed strategies for providing individualized counseling.

Please insert appropriate citation: Bettinger, E. P., & Baker, R. (2011). *The effects of student coaching in college: An evaluation of a randomized experiment in student mentoring*. [https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/bettinger\\_baker\\_03\\_0711.pdf](https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/bettinger_baker_03_0711.pdf).

---

<sup>16</sup> The goal of the What Works Clearinghouse is to be a resource for informed education decision making. To reach this goal, the WWC identifies studies that provide credible and reliable evidence of the effectiveness of a given practice, program, or policy (referred to as “interventions”), and disseminates summary information and reports on the WWC website. With over 700 publications available and more than 10,500 reviewed studies in the online searchable database, the WWC aims to inform researchers, educators, and policymakers as they work toward improving education for students.



**Middlesex Community College**  
**Student Support Services – Program for Student Achievement**  
**GEPA Statement**

The Middlesex Community College TRIO Program for Student Achievement (PSA) recruits, selects, and enrolls eligible disabled students without regard to race, gender, color, national origin, or age. To do so, MCC -PSA distributes program information and conducts staff outreach to students through the Disabilities Support Department and other clubs and programs that serve these disabled students. Staff conduct presentations, provide program materials, and meet individually with students to encourage their enrollment. In addition, PSA staff work with faculty and staff from MCC to ensure that the College offers a supportive climate and barrier-free environment.

The program has been very successful in recruiting a diverse population, among the students at MCC with documented disabilities. Currently, the program is 46% female and 54% male. We serve a diverse range of disabilities, including visually and hearing impaired students, students with learning disabilities, students with psychiatric illnesses, students with physical challenges, students diagnosed with Aspergers syndrome, and many with multiple disabilities. We do this by employing staff with experience in supporting students with these disabilities and with the availability of assistive technology for students.

To ensure that we continue to enroll a diverse population, flyers summarizing the benefits of the program and achievements of former students will be available at the Disabilities Support Department and at the MCC Enrollment and Recruitment Office. In addition, we will work with community agencies serving the disabled population to promote the program to those students. We will conduct annual informational meetings with the Directors and staff of a variety of agencies to inform them about the program. These agencies include Massachusetts Rehabilitation

Commission, Massachusetts Department of Mental Health, Northeast Independent Living Program, and the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind.

MCC-PSA also honors fully the College's commitment to pluralism and non-discriminatory practices, as described in the *Middlesex Community College Statement on Diversity and Pluralism*. In the event that service slots become oversubscribed, a waiting list will be established and regularly monitored, with students admitted on a first-come, first-serve basis, within the program's and College's guidelines to ensure non-discriminatory practices.

Equal access and treatment are a major element of all MCC-PSA program activities. To ensure that this message will be clearly communicated, all staff will inform all involved collaborators in the support network that equal access and opportunity to receive services are central features of the program. Clear statements to this effect will be incorporated into all program materials. The Director will take responsibility for monitoring the participant identification and selection process to ensure nondiscriminatory and equal access to all individuals and groups, including traditionally underrepresented groups.

The *Dean of the MCC Lowell Campus* and the *Assistant Dean of Human Resources*, who has responsibility for diversity and equity affairs, review all programs periodically to ensure that these non-discriminatory standards are met, and investigate thoroughly all complaints and other indicators of non-compliance with these standards. If in any instance it is determined that equal access or treatment has been denied to any individual, a recommendation for timely corrective action will be made to the *Dean of Students*.

**CPP, 1a: Influencing the Development of Non-Cognitive Factors**

Middlesex Community College's (MCC) SSS-D program will offer a variety of activities to enable students to develop the non-cognitive skills that are essential to the academic mindset and behaviors required to engage effectively in learning. Non-cognitive skills that support academic achievement may include motivation, effort, self-regulated learning, self-efficacy, academic self-concept, pro-social behavior, coping and resilience<sup>1</sup> or from another perspective, relatively broad non-academic mechanisms that can be thought of as creating social relationships, clarifying aspirations and enhancing commitment, developing college know-how, and making college-life feasible.<sup>2</sup>

Many educators acknowledge the role these factors play in persistence, especially for vulnerable student groups.<sup>3</sup> Using Rosen, et al's framework and the concepts outlined by Karp the SSS-D activities at MCC that will facilitate the building of non-cognitive skills are:

Defined Student Need	Associated Non-cognitive Factor	SSS Strategy and Service
Poorly developed study skills, time management, organization	Effort (extent to which students are active in learning), Self-regulated learning	Case management, Counseling/advising, Skills Workshops,
Lack of experience approaching faculty/staff	Self-efficacy, Academic self-concept	Counseling/advising, Skills Workshops, Leadership development
Lack of role models, mentors and advocates	Motivation (desire to be successful in education), academic self-concept, Coping and resilience	Counseling/advising, Peer Modeling, Skills Workshops, Leadership development

<sup>1</sup> Rosen, J. A., Glennie, E. J., Dalton B. W., Lennon, J. M., and Bozick, R. N. (2010). *Noncognitive Skills in the Classroom: New Perspectives on Educational Research*. RTI Press publication No. BK-0004-1009. Research Triangle Park, NC: RTI International. Retrieved [date] from <http://www.rti.org/rtipress>.

<sup>2</sup> Karp, M. M. (2011) *Toward a New Understanding of Non-Academic Student Support: Four Mechanisms Encouraging Positive Student Outcomes in the Community College*. Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.

<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/new-understanding-non-academic-support.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

Lack of experience related to career, academic, and personal planning	Motivation, Clarifying aspirations	Case management, Counseling/advising, Career planning, Self-Advocacy Coaching
Lack of familiarity with college environment	Academic self-concept, developing college know-how	Case management, Counseling/advising
Lack of engagement in class and college community; Poorly formed identity as a college student	Academic self-concept, Pro-social behavior/creating social relationships, Coping and resilience (responses to challenge)	Case management, Counseling/advising, Skills Workshops, Leadership development, Co-curricular activities, TRIO identity/affiliation

- **Case Management:** Each student will sign a contract that outlines his/her responsibilities as an SSS-D participant. The TRIO Advisor and student will discuss this contract, which sets the foundation for identifying the behaviors that contribute to success as well as helping to develop a strong academic self-concept. This will be followed by intensive case management during the entire time the student is with the program, which will enable SSS-D staff to provide ongoing assistance, support, and encouragement to the student. The contract and case management will help to clarify aspirations and enhance commitment for SSS-D students. Furthermore the contract and ongoing case management help the student to develop self-regulated learning skills such as time management, organization and follow through.
- **Skills Workshops:** Each semester, SSS-D will offer a variety of workshops both in small groups and individually. **Non-cognitive workshops** that will contribute to developing the academic mindsets that contribute to college success include: Transitioning to College, Self-Advocacy, Self-Efficacy, Strategies for Identifying and Achieving Personal Goals, Connecting College Studies to Career Success, Stress Management, Self-Regulating, and Balancing Life, Work, and College Challenges. **Academic and study skills workshops** that also contribute to

the development of non-cognitive skills such as the student's involvement in his/her learning (effort) and self-regulated learning (and the metacognitive skills students with disabilities need) will include: Using Library Services and Online Resources, Study Skills, Organizational Skills, Research Techniques, Note-taking, and Time Management.

- **Student Leadership Development Programs and Student Activities:** National studies have shown that students who are engaged in leadership development and student activities are not only more likely to be retained and graduate, but also demonstrate notable increases in many areas including, but not limited to, a sense of belonging and the creation of social networks, self-confidence, pro-social skills (cooperation and encouragement), and self-efficacy. SSS-D staff will work closely with staff from the MCC Center for Leadership and Engagement to ensure that SSS-D students are connected to all of the opportunities available through the Center. These include year-long leadership development workshops; leadership opportunities, such as serving as an orientation leader, peer tutor, SSS-D peer models; Student Government representative, club leader, or civic engagement project coordinator. In addition, TRIO staff will help students to identify their special interests and connect them to those club or activities that match these interests. SSS-D students will also be assisted in establishing new activities, which will provide them with additional experiences that contribute to developing such pro-social non-cognitive skills as collaboration, advocacy and a sense of self-efficacy.

- **Peer Modeling:** Similar to involvement in the Leadership Development Programs, the positive social relationships and development of a peer network through mentoring can be an important means by which SSS-D participants form a strong academic self-concept and develop college know-how. By learning from peers, SSS-D participants develop pro-social skills and

attitudes as well as learn important strategies for being successful in the college environment and create social relationships.

- **Self-Advocacy Coaching:** SSS-D staff will provide self-advocacy coaching and development which Skinner (2004) identifies as a common theme for successful college students with disabilities. Skinner describes students who have mastered self-advocacy when they, “(a) understand their disability, (b) are aware of their legal rights and (c) can competently and tactfully communicate their rights and needs to those in positions of authority.”<sup>4</sup> Self-Advocacy skills will support SSS-D students in their academic and professional careers and help them to employ long-term strategies to maximize their strengths. In a postsecondary context, these skills will improve student success and increase graduation, transfer and retention rates.

- **Personal Counseling:** SSS-D staff provide personal counseling or, when needed, refers students to therapeutic services outside the college. This resource supports students in understanding their disability, developing motivation (involvement in their learning), college know how, and also help SSS-D students to develop coping mechanisms and resiliency. Often these strategies are linked to other more concrete skills such as financial literacy, and referral to appropriate resources that make college feasible.

- **Field trips, Cultural events and Student Recognition and TRIO affiliation:** SSS-D students may feel or be marginalized and so creating social relationships is a critical component of their transition to college. The experiences and relationships they have through these activities will help them to acquire the social/cultural capital and social networks that are a valuable part of the college experience and are not easily available to first-generation to college, low-income or students with disabilities.

---

<sup>4</sup> Skinner, M. 2004. *College Students with Learning Disabilities Speak Out: What It Takes to Be Successful in Postsecondary Education*. P. 98. Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, Vol. 17 No. 2. [http://ahead.org/publications/jped/vol\\_17/no2tc](http://ahead.org/publications/jped/vol_17/no2tc)

**CPP, 1b: Strategies to Influence the Development of Non-Cognitive Factors Supported by****Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness**

Middlesex Community College's SSS-D strategies for developing the skills to address the non-cognitive factors of motivation, effort, self-regulated learning, self-efficacy, academic self-concept, pro-social behavior, coping and resilience are substantiated by multiple studies at least one of which meets the WWC standard for moderate evidence of effectiveness. Stephens, N. M., Hamedani, M. G., & Destin, M. (2014)<sup>5</sup> is a recognized study that meets this standard through the use of a randomized controlled trial on the effects of a difference-education intervention using a demographically diverse group of incoming college students, including non-traditional first generation to college students. The results of their work are primarily related to the psychosocial aspects of students' transition and adjustment to college. This research is relevant to students with disabilities who may experience barriers and marginalization outside of those experienced by traditional, no-disabled students and therefore need psychological resources at least as much as academic supports and financial aid in order to have a strong college identity, or academic self-concept.

A major focus of this study was the framing of differences between students in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds from a strength-based perspective. The intent was for first generation students who might feel excluded or undeserving to be in college to be able to see the difference in their background as an asset and strength rather than primarily as a barrier to postsecondary education. Because this research is based on difference-education which could be

---

<sup>5</sup> Stephens, N. M., Hamedani, M. G., & Destin, M. 2014. *Closing the Social Class Achievement Gap: A Difference-Education Intervention Improves First Generation Students' Academic Performance and All Students. College Transition*. Association for Psychological Science; Sage Publishing. <http://psychology.northwestern.edu/documents/destin-achievement.pdf>

applied to the experience of people with disabilities, MCC would like to propose its applicability to the SSS – D program. The researchers pose their intervention as a contrast to conventional program models for first generations students that offer academic and study supports but don't acknowledge the nature of the difference between their backgrounds and those of "continuing generation" college students. In fact, Skinner (2004) discusses the characteristics of "successful" people with learning disabilities as those who "were able to reconceptualize their learning problems into something positive and functional."<sup>6</sup>

Stephens, et al further make the point that in addition to establishing a sense of belonging (strong college identity) first generation students - or students with disabilities - need to understand "the rules of the game" or develop what Karp (2011)<sup>7</sup> describes as "college know-how", that is, what resources are available and how to access them. Learning about resources such as tutoring, skill workshops, course selection and scheduling, and counseling/advising as well as more program specific ones such as internship opportunities and how to comfortably take advantage of them can be a major difference in academic performance and success. For students with disabilities this includes a knowledge of their rights and available accommodations.

Also by using an intergroup dialogue as the strategy for the intervention, Stephens et al created a situation that helped to build engagement among the students as well as the pro-social skills of intergroup collaboration and empathy that in turn encouraged the creation of social networks. MCC's SSS –D program will use similar approaches to strength the sense of belonging, college-going identities and academic self-concept of its participants.

Stephens, et al point out that indeed students' first generation status does matter – and in a good way. Furthermore these researchers point out that first generation students must use

---

<sup>6</sup> Skinner, 2004. P. 92.

<sup>7</sup> Karp, M. M. 2011.



strategies that take the differences in their background into account while also being mindful of the obstacles that can be created by their backgrounds, just Skinner notes about students with learning disabilities. It is the linking of students' backgrounds to the nature of the college experiences they have that can help first generation students gain a fuller understanding of how to draw on the strengths as well as prepare for the obstacles of being first generation to college students. This again is contrasted to many conventional programs for non-traditional students that provide many resources but never frame access to these resources in a helpful context that could help non-traditional students be more aware of their innate strengths or feel more fully included in the college environment.

What is important to note is that the fostering of these non-cognitive attributes - self-efficacy, academic self-concept, pro-social behavior, coping and resilience – by a strengths based focus has noticeable effect on academic performance although not directly providing any academic supports. The effect that is connected to eliminating the achievement gap is the improved or greater use of resources to improve academic performance. For students with disabilities this is further connected to increasing self-advocacy and a greater understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.

Although Middlesex's SSS-D program does not explicitly use difference education as Stephen's did in the cited intervention there are many similarities in terms of the approaches to students' self-concept and the development of non-cognitive skills. Case management and ongoing advising in MCC's program support acknowledgement of the student's life circumstances (including first generation status) in conjunction with the development of coping strategies and building resiliency.

Somewhat less powerful evidence that supports Stephens' findings is Rendon (1994)<sup>8</sup> who worked with a non-randomized study of 132 first year students. Her study focuses on students who are non-traditional although more through the lens of minority status rather than primarily first generation to college identification. Her findings reinforces that involvement in college may not be easy for non-traditional students and these students were more likely to express doubts about their ability to succeed in college, many may need active interventions from trusted agents and for those students who need these interventions, interpersonal validation was an important aspect of the support. The non-traditional students in her study describe their lack of preparedness and expectation of failing which they felt we reinforced by the conventions of the academic culture that invalidated them by, in some cases, a downright indifference to them by faculty and staff. Although Rendon's work discusses the importance of the feelings of belonging from non-traditional students, both in-class and out-of-class, she further explores the possible role that other, supportive agents, can play in helping these students to feel validated in the college environment. This validation resulted in the necessary non-cognitive skills – especially a strong academic self-concept and effort (or involvement in their learning) – that students need to be academically successful.

Overall the important non-cognitive attitudes and behaviors TRIO eligible students need to be successful in college are thoughtfully integrated into the model proposed by MCC. These include the development of a strong self-concept related to college studies, an understanding of and access to important resources, and the validating nature of social relationships and the ability to create a positive, social network.

---

<sup>8</sup> Rendon, L. 1994. *Validating Culturally Diverse Students: Toward a new Model of Learning and Student Development*. Innovative Higher Education, Vol. 19, No. 1, Fall 1994.  
[http://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/Rendon-\(1994\)-Validating-Culturally-Diverse-Students-Toward-a-New-Model-of-Learning-and-Student-Development](http://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/Rendon-(1994)-Validating-Culturally-Diverse-Students-Toward-a-New-Model-of-Learning-and-Student-Development)

**CPP, 2a: Providing Individualized Counseling for Personal, Career, Academic Matters**

Middlesex Community College's (MCC) SSS-D program will provide counseling as an essential part of its SSS services. Counseling in various forms, sometimes discussed as advising or coaching, can address different dimensions of the college experience for TRIO SSS students. Bettinger & Baker (2011) point out the benefits of counseling generally in helping students who may lack key information or fail to act on the information they have related to college, especially non-traditional students, and its positive results in terms of retention and graduation.<sup>1</sup>

Bettinger (2011) notes that counseling may come in different forms and that each form suggests a different emphasis. Mentoring more often focuses on information gathering and social integration and/or relationships while counseling and advising may be connected to academic, study or social needs.<sup>2</sup> These different aspects are critical for students with disabilities and are addressed in the variety of services MCC's program offers.

- **Case management/advising:** Case management hinges on goal-setting that is clearly defined in the creation of a contract and the development of a Customized Service Plan (CSP) that students and advisors formulate together. The CSP clarifies goals, barriers and resources for the student. Together the advisor and student monitor progress on an ongoing basis through case management and advising based on the CSP with the contract clarifying the student's commitment. An important element of this approach is that it is relatively intensive and ongoing, compared to the type of counseling and advising normally provided to community

---

<sup>1</sup> Bettinger, E. P., & Baker, R. (2011). *The effects of student coaching in college: An evaluation of a randomized experiment in student mentoring*.

[https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/bettinger\\_baker\\_03\\_0711.pdf](https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/bettinger_baker_03_0711.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Pp. 4, 6.

college students that is frequently fragmented and inconsistent.<sup>3</sup> Case management, and especially sustained interactions through advising, have been shown to have great benefit to high risk and non-traditional students and are another means by which SSS-D students can form an important relationship while cultivating critical skills for decision-making, follow-through, and coping. An important element of the case management advising will be the contact, support and assistance in addressing factors related to the Early Awareness Intervention Reports (EAIR) for those students at risk of academic failure and enable SSS-D staff to proactively work with students when they need it most.

- **Self-Advocacy Coaching:** An important element of MCC's SSS-D program is the emphasis on trained staff who can support SSS-D participants in developing self-advocacy skills. The partnership between coach and student are designed to set and clarify the student's personal, academic and professional goals; remove barriers; and develop action plans with built-in accountability. Skinner (2004)<sup>4</sup> identifies the skills of self-advocacy and goal-setting as those non-cognitive factors that are critical to helping people with learning disabilities succeed. This approach and the aspects that are addressed are consistent with Bettinger's (2011) model. The coaching (InsideTrack) Bettinger discusses focuses largely on life outside of school and the link that these factors have on persistence and completion. Students with disabilities who develop the skills to self-advocate, become better, more competent students and this allows them to balance

---

<sup>3</sup> Karp, M.M., and Stacey, G.W. (2013) *Designing a System for Strategic Advising*. Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.

<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/designing-a-system-for-strategic-advising.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Skinner, M. 2004. *College Students with Learning Disabilities Speak Out: What It Takes to Be Successful in Postsecondary Education*. Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, Vol. 17 No. 2. Association on Higher Education and Disability: Huntersville, NC .

[http://ahead.org/publications/jped/vol\\_17/no2tc](http://ahead.org/publications/jped/vol_17/no2tc)

the barriers their disabilities may present with their academic and school demands. This increases SSS-D participants' ability to balance these life issues with the setting and meeting of personal goals is an important means to increase college persistence and completion.

- **Peer Modeling:** Incoming SSS-D students spend time with returning students who have learned to navigate the college system, especially through appropriate use of accommodations and tips for self-advocacy. The new students and peer models participate jointly in activities facilitated by SSS-D staff members. The connection with peers, their knowledge of the college environment, their ability to manage their disability in a college setting, and their ability to convey valuable information will provide SSS-D students with both important information as well as help them to build a social network. Personal connection can be especially important for disabled students, who may not feel validated in a postsecondary setting<sup>5</sup> and also helps those students with disabilities gain college “know-how” from a trusted source.

- **Intensive Advising and Assistance in Postsecondary Course Selection:** As part of case management responsibilities, SSS-D staff serve as the student's official academic advisor and work closely with staff from Admissions, the Registrar's Office, Disabilities Support Services, and the Advising Center to assist SSS-D students in following and completing an academic program. As an SSS-D student's official advisor, the SSS-D staff is acknowledged institutionally as the primary person working with the SSS-D student and thereby can be an effective advocate for these students. Faculty serve as advisors for students who matriculate into certain career programs and in these instances the SSS-D staff work in unison to the faculty. As Scrivener & Weiss (2009) point out, student outcomes improve over a period of time when

---

<sup>5</sup> Rendon, L. I. (1994) *Validating Culturally Diverse Students: Towards a New Model of Learning and Student Development*. Innovative Higher Education, Vol. 19, No. 1, Fall 1994. Human Sciences Press, Inc. [http://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/Rendon-\(1994\)-Validating-Culturally-Diverse-Students-Toward-a-New-Model-of-Learning-and-Student-Development](http://www.csun.edu/sites/default/files/Rendon-(1994)-Validating-Culturally-Diverse-Students-Toward-a-New-Model-of-Learning-and-Student-Development)

students receive regular counseling support, such as discussing progress and resolving issues affecting outcomes.<sup>6</sup> Similarly SSS-D staff take a very proactive role in facilitating transfer options and begin discussing the transfer process from the point that students enter the program.

- **Personal Counseling/Advising:** SSS staff are accessible to provide participants personal support on life issues that may be impeding their academic goals. This is done within the context of SSS-D programming and objectives. Students with other needs are referred to therapeutic or other resources outside of the college. These may include medical or community-based services.
- **Career Development:** SSS-D staff provide career counseling individually and through the use of software and other materials. SSS-D staff work closely with students in researching careers, taking career inventories and making decisions about how career choices align with academic program choices in order to identify career goals and develop a plan for achieving these. Linking academic program choices to career decision-making is a more holistic approach that helps students see the larger impact and benefit of persevering in college.
- **Financial Aid Counseling in the context of economic literacy:** SSS-D staff offer financial aid advising to ensure that each student secures the maximum amount of federal and state financial aid for which the student is eligible, and thereby minimizes dependence on loans. Financial Aid workshops are held and assistance is given in completing financial aid forms, as well as developing an organization system so that the student does not lose papers, forms and correspondence. This Financial Aid counseling and support in completing the process is also framed as a fundamental part of students' economic literacy training.

---

<sup>6</sup> Scrivener, S. and Weiss, M. (2009) *More Guidance, Better Results?* MDRC (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation). New York, NY and Oakland CA.  
[http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full\\_450.pdf](http://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/full_450.pdf)

▪ **CPP, 2b: Individual Counseling Activities Based on Moderate Evidence of Effectiveness**

Middlesex Community College's SSS strategies for individualized counseling – in the forms of counseling, advising, and mentoring – are substantiated by multiple studies at least one of which meets the WWC standard for moderate evidence of effectiveness. Bettinger & Baker (2011)<sup>7</sup> is a USDE recognized study that meets this standard through the use of a randomized experiment on individualized student coaching. Their findings discuss how students who lack basic information for college and academic success or have information but fail to act on it, can be supported through counseling intervention, in this case coaching, to improve persistence and completion. Importantly, most of the students in their experiment were non-traditional students.

Bettinger's study explored coaching as a regular and ongoing intervention to assist students in identifying and clarifying long-term goals, putting those goals of the context of their daily activities, and then in building skills that could help them realize these long-term aspirations. The skill building included time management, self-advocacy and study habits – these are essentially non-cognitive attributes that contribute to student success which are provided and reinforced by different elements of MCC's SSS-D program. This study found that retention and completion rates were greater for students receiving the intervention for than those who did not over every length of time following enrollment that was measured. These results were 5.3 percentage points higher for coached students after 12 months, 4.3 percentage points higher after 18 months and 3.4 percentage points higher after 24 months.<sup>8</sup> Another study by Scrinever and Weiss (2009) found that that the benefit to student persistence falls off once the

---

<sup>7</sup> Bettinger, E. P., & Baker, R. (2011). *The effects of student coaching in college: An evaluation of a randomized experiment in student mentoring*.  
[https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/bettinger\\_baker\\_03\\_0711.pdf](https://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/bettinger_baker_03_0711.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 3.

interventions stops although the outcomes of students who received coaching consistently exceeded those of the students who did not receive coaching, an important consideration given that MCC's SSS-D program seeks to maintain a strong relationship with participants through their studies at the college.

In Bettinger's discussion on coaching there are three main approaches or parts – helping students prioritize academics, planning for how to be successful, and identifying and addressing barriers to success.<sup>9</sup> Relevant to this study is the observation is that college success is dependent on being able to handle the complex tasks that are part of college and academic success. For those who do not have personal role models or knowledge of the environment i.e. disabled students, this poses a daunting challenge. In the Bettinger model coaching helps students dissect the complexity of college tasks and provide the tools and motivation to do so. Another important element to coaching, and in fact different types of counseling and advising, is the social support these services provide to students who may not feel integrated into the college environment. Counseling, advising and mentoring are ways to outreach students who may feel marginalized or uncertain in the college environment.

These different aspects are critical for the disabled students SSS-D serves and are addressed in the variety of counseling/advising and modeling services that MCC's SSS-D program offers. Case management, and the advising that accompanies at MCC, helps students with prioritizing their academic lives and building organizational skills. Case management and advising by SSS staff is a rich and ongoing experience that provides diverse tools and also helps the students develop a sense of self-efficacy and proficiency, that is “of being up to the

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p. 2.



challenge” of college success. For student with disabilities the non-cognitive attributes of self-regulated learning and self-advocacy are critical in navigating needed accommodations.

Another element at MCC, self-advocacy coaching, is directly relevant to planning how to be successful and complements case management by putting academic success into the context of larger life goals. Career counseling also helps students make the connection between their academic choices and long-term goals and aspirations. As mentioned in CPP, 2a peer mentoring provides students with both social connection as well as critical information about college and what is expected.

As part of a compilation of research on non-academic supports Karp’s work<sup>10</sup> with the Community College Research Center (CCRC) provides a useful analysis of many of the same approaches as Bettinger’s research including enhanced advising. Enhanced advising is a concept that has emerged as a means to meet the needs of higher risk students. It may mean intrusive (or proactive) advising that uses required meetings as well as counseling or advising sessions that are more frequent or of greater duration. Enhanced advising responds to the fragmented and inconsistent nature of much of the counseling/advising that community college students generally receive.<sup>11</sup> This can be seen in the disparate offices that these services reside in at many, if not most, community colleges and the sporadic contacts students are likely to have with these offices. In Bettinger’s research enhanced advising is the coaching provided by Inside Track. This is also embodied in the nature of the SSS-D counseling services used at MCC – from case management to self-advocacy coaching and career counseling – that present a unified set of services that engage the SSS participants on different fronts all available and actively provided through one office. In this way students are clarifying their academic goals in light of

---

<sup>10</sup> Karp, M.M., and Stacey, G.W. 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p. 2.

life issues, planning an academic program that reflects these goals and also receiving support for course registration and scheduling, all with an eye as to how to finance their education and address issues in order to persevere and complete.

Karp (2012)<sup>12</sup> expands on enhanced advising as a part of a re-envisioning of student success supports that go beyond traditional habits of institutionally focused systems and misunderstandings of student need. Rather than fragmented services offered by separate parts of an institution Karp identifies the qualities of sustained, intrusive, integrated, and personalized as those that reflect the best evidence and outcomes.<sup>13</sup> Additionally these services must be delivered by relationships that are meaningful and provided by people who are trusted by the student whether they be peers, faculty or staff.<sup>14</sup> These qualities are truly embodied in the services and structure of MCC's SSS-D program.

One additional concept delineated by Karp as useful to viewing this service structure is that of cultural capital. This is the accumulation of types of knowledge that are valued and social assets that promote social success i.e. social mobility. In a postsecondary setting this involves the knowledge of the institution, its resources and its people as well as the establishment of social networks for support. The student with disabilities is clearly at a disadvantage in terms of cultural capital when they enter postsecondary education by themselves, unaided by peers or other resources. The array of SSS-D resources provide these students with the knowledge, skills and a sense of connection that together can enable the participants to be successful in college.

---

<sup>12</sup> Karp, M. M. (2012). "Supporting student success: A vision for evidence-based reform." Presentation to the California Chief Student Services Officers Association, Spring Institute.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Karp, M. M. (2011). *Toward a New Understanding of Non-Academic Student Support: Four Mechanisms Encouraging Positive Student Outcomes in the Community College*. Community College Research Center, Teachers College, Columbia University.  
<http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/media/k2/attachments/new-understanding-non-academic-support.pdf>