

MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Program Review For TRIO – Student Success Program

SECTION I: PROGRAM PURPOSE, POPULATION, AND CURRICULUM

A. Program Purpose

1. State the mission of the program.

The MCC Student Success Program (SSP) offers a comprehensive array of individualized and group services that increases the retention, transfer, and graduation rates of eligible low-income, first generation and disabled college students.

Through advocacy efforts and by educating the college community through a variety of educational and social programs, the SSP also has in its mission the goal of improving the institutional climate for low-income and first generation college students. Oftentimes, this group is underrepresented in college settings and we strive to ensure that students, faculty, and staff have an understanding of the unique needs and concerns this population presents inside and outside of the classroom.

2. What is the relationship of the program's mission to the College's mission?

Part of Middlesex Community College's mission is to provide educational programs and services that support personal growth and economic opportunity for the community it serves and its diverse student population. As the college is dedicated to personal attention and teaching, the Student Success Program offers a personalized plan for each of its participants. Each member of the Student Success Program has the advantage of personal tutoring and counseling, and extensive academic monitoring and advising. The College strives to ensure that its programs transfer well and that the students who leave MCC are equipped to compete academically at other colleges and universities. The Student Success Program works one-on-one with each of its participants to improve academic performance, to help formulate long term career and transfer plans, and to provide opportunities for cultural enrichment.

3. How does the program fulfill a need within the community?

Since the opening of the Lowell campus in 1987, the College has enrolled an increasing large number of low-income, first generation students who demonstrate need for academic support. Seventy-two percent of the entering class of fall 2003 was eligible for Student Support Services. Lowell is a working-class city with a diverse population. Thirty-six percent of the MCC population comes from racial and ethnic minority groups and 28% are from linguistic minority backgrounds. It is also estimated that low-income

residents account for 17.3% of the city's population, while 86% of the residents have not graduated from college. By targeting this sector of the population and providing services such as academic support and advising, career and transfer counseling, and specialized tutoring, the Student Success Program helps the College retain and graduate this high-risk group

4. Please describe any similar programs in the general geographic area. Please compare the programs and comment on the similarities and differences in our program.

As mandated by the Department of Education, all programs funded under the federal TRIO Student Support Services grants offer academic support to low-income, first generation, and disabled college students, although individual programs may determine the types of services offered as allowed by the grant regulations. Differences between these programs are slight but include:

- Number of students served
- Delivery of instructional assistance
- Assistive technology/technology
- Inclusion of learning communities with credit and/or non-credit courses

Middlesex Community College's Program for Student Achievement (PSA) is similar in design to the Student Success Program at MCC, but the population differs from traditional TRIO programs in that all 100 students in PSA have a documented disability. All students need not meet income requirements and all students need not be first generation (only 1/3 are required to be low income). PSA provides academic tutoring in writing and math, but also provides their students with assistive technology designed to accommodate their needs.

Northern Essex Community College's Pathways to Academic and Career Excellence (PACE) program works with 250 students. Similar to the Student Success Program, students are first generation, low-income, and have placed into a developmental course. Tutors are available in math, reading, and writing. PACE does not provide supplemental instruction or have learning communities, but does provide current participants a chance to pair up with an alumnus of the college and the PACE program. This mentor program allows students to gain a better understanding of the transfer process, networking, career information, etc. Currently the Student Success Program is not offering a mentoring program.

North Shore Community College differs from both Middlesex collegiate TRIO programs in that it provides its participants an opportunity to participate in a learning community. Through linked courses, students are placed in cohorts and work with faculty from two disciplines and are able to weave concepts and curricula together to enhance the classroom experience. TRIO students are together and can also forge relationships with each other early on. Additionally, TRIO staff monitors the academic progress of these

cohorts to ensure students are meeting academic goals and are on track. Examples of the linked courses are 1) College Reading, College Writing, and College Success Seminar, 2) Composition I & Speech, 3) Composition II & Introduction to Psychology.

Massasoit's PLAN program closely resembles the Student Success Program. However, like Middlesex's Program for Student Achievement, the PLAN program has additional resources designed to assist students with disabilities. PLAN has a Learning Disabilities specialist on staff as well as assistive technology available to students.

B. Target Population

5. Describe the population served. In what way is this population unique?

The Student Success Program serves student who are first-generation, low-income college students and students with disabilities who have specific academic need. While the students are not unique in that 72% of MCC students are eligible to participate in the program, the 200 students that are served annually are provided additional support services not readily available to the general student population. Student Success Program members participate in extensive academic monitoring. Faculty provides academic progress reports to the staff each semester and SSP staff maintains open communication with students and faculty throughout the semester.

6. Describe mechanisms used to monitor the program's currency and fit with the needs of the community.

The Student Success Program follows strict federal guidelines and maintains compliance with all TRIO legislation and regulations. Our office adjusts our policies and procedures in accordance with any changes made by the federal TRIO office. As allowed by the US Department of Education, the following services are offered to students:

- Tutoring
- Advising
- Assistance with Financial Aid
- Assistance with the college transfer process
- Participation in cultural events

To ensure that our program fits the needs of our program population, we receive feedback from our students regarding program services. Feedback has been provided through informal conversation, the distribution of surveys, and focus groups. Student participation in regards to feedback has been less than what we hope, but our office will strive to improve our assessment measures for the upcoming project year. Outside of feedback from students, our program's currency is also monitored by program staff and each of the following service components are evaluated on a regular basis as explained below.

Tutoring:

- Survey of students who have participated in SSP tutoring
- All tutoring contacts are recorded in the program database and compiled for federal and internal reports

Advising

- Survey program participants on the quality of advising
- Roundtable discussion on the quality of advising at SSP
- All Advising contacts are recorded in the program database and compiled for federal and internal reports

Assistance with Financial Aid

- Review of the number of students meeting with staff regarding Financial aid
- Tally of number of students who complete FAFSA by priority deadline

Assistance with the college transfer process

- Review number of students meeting for transfer counseling and compare to how many students transfer in that year
- Review number of participants attending transfer workshops
- Review number of students participating in college campus visitations

Participation in cultural events

- Review of evaluation forms completed after cultural events
- Surveys to students each semester to determine the type of events students would like to participate in

7. Describe attempts to review outreach approaches and/or enlarge the program.

Due to the fact that our program was designed and structured to serve 200 students, we have no current plan to enlarge the program because we serve the maximum amount allowed. However, in January 2006 we began expanding our services to SSP eligible students on the Bedford campus. Recent Pell grant data suggests that there are a significant number of students attending the Bedford campus that satisfy the income eligibility requirements. Accomplishments to date include:

- Secured space for an SSP office on Bedford campus (Building 9, Room 218)
- Created and distributed publication materials announcing our move
- Obtained financial information regarding Bedford attendees-contacting those that are Pell-eligible
- Offered services on the Bedford Campus beginning in January 2006
- Attended and currently (Summer 2006) making classroom presentations

8. Describe recruiting efforts. Can you suggest any additional recruiting efforts that have not been attempted?

Each year, there is an expectation that we will be fully enrolled (200 participants) by November 15. For the past few years, we have not achieved this goal by the outlined deadline. In addressing the challenge of student recruitment and outreach, the Student Success Program has reexamined the current recruitment methods and has since developed additional methods and strategies to increase the amount of SSP applications and intaked students. Prior to 2004, student recruitment has consisted of:

- Attendance at yearly Club and Resource fair
- SSP staff presentations in developmental courses such as Basic Writing
- Calls and letters to Pell grant eligible students

New strategies have included:

- SSP Student Ambassador program: current SSP students actively promote and recruit their peers, they also staff recruitment tables and attend classroom presentations
- Attendance/Presenting at Getting Started presentations designed to assist new students with registration
- Assistance with Advance-to-Go sessions
- Student orientation workshop at Opening Day
- Group Intake Sessions
- Open House
- Recruiting small sub-section of academic review population
- International Club meeting attendance

Recruitment strategies to be implemented in 2006-07:

- SSP staff attendance at departmental meetings to encourage faculty and staff to send students
- Attendance at SUGA and other club meetings
- More flyers and promotional materials
- Targeted mailings to students enrolled in specific courses (courses that we are capable of tutoring and providing supplemental instruction)

9. Describe the curriculum or outcomes of the program. What are the service goals and objectives of the program? What are the expected student outcomes? (see below)

Curriculum

The Student Success Program curriculum offers a support system for our student population that is all encompassing. Our program's curriculum is aimed and directed at providing student support through educational, social, and at times, through experiential means. The SSP offers workshops, field trips, college visits, academic, transfer, personal, and financial aid advising to our students in order to achieve our stated goals

and objectives. Each year, the SSP strives to successfully achieve these goals and objectives within the outlined timeframe. Our outcomes are simple yet complex, but obtainable. Our primary goal is to support the success of our students: students who complete their associate degree program from our institution, students who successfully transfer to baccalaureate institutions, and/or students who successfully complete their degree from Middlesex and go on to further their education in schools that grant baccalaureate or graduate degrees.

We achieve these outcomes through major program goals and objectives. Below our objectives and goals are outlined.

TRIO SSP PROGRAM GOALS & OBJECTIVES

<p>The TRIO Student Success Program will employ multiple methods of intrusive outreach to actively maintain a cohort persistence rate of 70% retained from the first cohort year to the next.</p>
<p>The SSP program will offer a comprehensive array of individualized and group services that will increase the retention, transfer, and graduation rates of eligible students and foster an institutional climate supportive of the success of low-income, first generation students and individuals with disabilities</p>
<p>By November 15 of each year, identify, screen, and select eligible low-income, first generation and disabled students with academic need to be new project participants so that the project has a total enrollment of 200 students annually.</p>
<p>SSP students will experience activities that impact their values and attitudes regarding diversity, as well as cultural and educational issues.</p>
<p>A minimum of 70% percent of the SSP program population will be considered in “good academic standing” as defined by the institution as earning a gpa of 2.0 or higher.</p>
<p>A total of 40% of each entering cohort will graduate and/or transfer to a four-year institution within three years of enrolling in SSP.</p>
<p>The SSP program will develop and maintain relationships with other Middlesex Community College departments and division and will receive institutional and programmatic support.</p>

Promote an institutional climate that supports the goals of academic achievement, graduation, and transfer to four-year institutions for low-income first generation students, and students with disabilities.
SSP program will utilize a customized service plan developed to monitor student progress and address ongoing needs for services.
SSP program will utilize an academic intervention program that monitors each student's success or difficulties in order to provide staff with information needed to assist students in meeting academic requirements.
SSP offers a minimum of eight workshops a semester.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

For the purpose of this program review and with keeping in accordance to the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) standards outlined for TRIO and other educational opportunity programs, the student learning outcomes listed below will encompass CAS student learning outcomes in addition to student learning outcomes that fall within the broad categories established by NASPA professionals which encompass: complex cognitive skills, knowledge acquisition, intrapersonal development, interpersonal development, practical competence, civic responsibility, academic achievement, and persistence.

Listed below is the desired student learning outcomes for our population. Student learning outcomes taken directly from the CAS standards for TRIO program are noted by the (CAS) notation after the outcome.

Cognitive Skills-“reflective thought, critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and intellectual flexibility”

SSP students will be able to:

- Produce personal and educational goal statements (CAS)
- Use complex information from a variety of sources including personal experience and observation to form a decision or opinion (CAS)
- Obtain a degree (CAS)
- Apply previously understood information and concepts to a new situation or setting (CAS)

Knowledge Acquisition-“subject matter mastery and knowledge application”

SSP students will be able to:

- Attend workshops introducing practical, educational, and/or cultural information and will be able to demonstrate mastery or a deep understanding of the material
- Utilize tutoring services (math and writing) and will apply skills and knowledge learned in the classroom and in tutoring sessions to the assigned topic
- Learn about the general college transfer process and will understand what role they need to play—what steps need to be taken--in order to successfully transfer to a baccalaureate program

Intrapersonal Development-“autonomy, values, identity, aesthetics, self-esteem, and maturity”

SSP students will be able to:

- Manage time effectively (CAS)
- Set, articulate, and pursue individual goals (CAS)
- Articulate educational goals and objectives (CAS)
- Use personal and educational goals to guide decisions (CAS)
- Understand the effect of one’s personal and educational goals on others (CAS)
- Develops and articulates personal belief system (CAS)
- Make decisions that reflect identified personal, work, and lifestyle values (CAS)
- Initiate actions toward achievement of goals (CAS)
- Function without constant reassurance from others (CAS)

Interpersonal Development-“understanding and appreciating human differences, ability to relate to others, and establishing intimate relationships”

SSP students will be able to:

- Work cooperatively with others (CAS)
- Seek feedback from others (CAS)
- Listen to and consider others’ points of view (CAS)
- Establish relationships with peers, faculty, and staff (CAS)
- Students will develop an appreciation of diversity
- Seek involvement with people different from oneself (CAS)

Practical competence-“career preparation, managing one’s personal affairs, and economic self-sufficiency”

SSP students will be able to:

- Articulate career choices based on assessment of interests, values, skills, and abilities (CAS)

- Document knowledge, skills, and accomplishments resulting from formal education, work experience, community service and volunteer experiences(CAS)
- Construct a resume with clear job objectives and evidence of related knowledge, skills, and accomplishments (CAS)
- Articulate the characteristics of a preferred work environment (CAS)
- Take steps to initiate a job search (CAS)
- Learn how to create and work within a specified budget
- Learn about the financial aid application process
- Apply for financial aid before posted deadlines
- Complete the FAFSA application
- Learn how to better manage their time
- Overcome obstacles that hamper goal achievement
- Achieve balance between education, work, and leisure

Civic responsibility-“responsibilities as a citizen in a democratic society and commitment to democratic ideals”

SSP students will be able to:

- Participate in service/volunteer activities (CAS)
- Appropriately challenge the unfair, unjust, or uncivil behavior(s) of other individuals or groups (CAS)
- Participate in “Civility Days” activities at the college

Academic achievement-“the ability to earn satisfactory grades in courses”

SSP students will be able to:

- Be in good academic standing (2.0 or better) –75% of program population will achieve (SSP grant objective)
- Work with academic specialists and counselors to receive additional support in areas identified as weaknesses (SSP student contract objective)
- Articulate academic concerns or a need for help when need be
- Successfully utilize our tutoring services on a weekly or daily basis
- Earn satisfactory grades in their courses

Persistence-“the ability to pursue a degree to graduation or achieve personal educational objectives”

SSP students will be able to:

- Persist between academic years → 70% of program cohort will persist from 1st year to second year at MCC, 60% from second cohort year will persist to a 3rd year (SSP grant objective)
- Transfer to complete bachelors degree
- Continue education in specialized programs (nursing, dental hygiene, biotech, etc.)

10. Describe the strategies, activities, and/or assignments that will enable the students to achieve these goals, objectives, and outcomes?

(See below)

11. Describe how these goals, objectives, and outcomes will be assessed.

For the purpose of this program review we have outlined several desired student learning outcomes. In accordance with the college's assessment initiative, our office will focus in the upcoming year (2006-07) on two student learning outcomes and will design thorough means of assessing the degree to which TRIO SSP students achieve these selected outcomes.

Student Outcomes/Competencies	Strategies for Attainment	Assessment Criteria and Methods
COGNITIVE SKILLS—SSP Students will be able to...		
Produce personal and educational statement	Customized service plans Educational plan workshops	Review documented statements
Apply previously understood information and concepts to a new situation or setting	Workshops	Pretests/posttest Qualitative: interviews
KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION—SSP Students will be able to...		
Utilize tutoring services and will subsequently apply knowledge to assigned topic	Tutoring sessions with academic specialist, math tutor	Tutoring self-assessment surveys, compare scores of work before tutoring took place to after
Summarize, describe and apply knowledge pertaining to the general college transfer process and will integrate information into their personal transfer plans	Workshops, academic advising, transfer counseling, college visits, personal counseling	Goal setting charts, created timelines, pre-test, post-test, qualitative interview(s), documented list of steps needed to transfer
INTRAPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT—SSP Students will be able to...		
Apply effective strategies of time management into their lives	Time management workshops, personal	Develop rubric to determine levels of

Student Outcomes/Competencies	Strategies for Attainment	Assessment Criteria and Methods
	and academic counseling, 7 Habits training	“effective” document number of students using planning system, qualitative analysis—interviews, self-assessment surveys, workshop evaluations, personal counseling reports
Make decisions that reflect identified personal, work, and lifestyle values	Personal, career, transfer, academic advising, participation in customized service plan worksheet	Self-assessment reports that follow up on the goals outlined in customized service plan; interviews, counseling reports, essays
Initiate actions toward achievement of goals	Engage in counseling sessions; workshops,	Charting educational roadmap, self-reports, surveys, eyewitness accounts, follow up with customized service plan

PRACTICAL COMPETENCE—SSP Students will be able to...

Articulate career choices based on assessment of interests, values, skills, and abilities	Career counseling, personal counseling, goal setting workshops, resume writing workshops	Customized service plan, essays, career inventories, questionnaires
Document knowledge, skills, and accomplishment resulting from formal education, work exp., community service	Resume workshops, career workshops, writing tutoring,	Resume development, essays and personal statements, Lists of experience
Construct a resume with clear job objectives	Career counseling, resume workshops, writing tutoring	Compare first and second drafts of resume

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT—SSP Students will be able to..

Achieve the outlined goals of their educational plan	Early awareness program, tutoring, personal and academic counseling, workshop attendance, periodic	Look up grade point averages, need surveys, early awareness feedback, deficiency lists, SSP annual performance
--	--	--

Student Outcomes/Competencies	Strategies for Attainment	Assessment Criteria and Methods
	review of academic progress	report, questionnaire, self-report; review of academic progress, document number of adjustments to educational plan—compare to see if student still on track
PERSISTENCE—SSP Students will be able to..		
Persist between academic years	Tutoring, SSP services-counseling, workshops, program involvement	Annual performance report data, drop out surveys, course registration data,

SECTION II: DATA

12. Provide enrollment and retention data for the last 3-5 years, if possible. Please comment on trends, patterns, and issues that emerge from the data below.

Student Success Program Project Performance Outcomes 2002-2005 As required and reported to the US Department of Education Federal TRIO Programs

CHART 12-1

Criteria	Project Objective (as approved by the US Department of Education)	Year 2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
Persistence	70% of eligible participants will persist toward completion of the academic programs in which they were enrolled.	79%	85%	87%
Good Academic Standing	75% of eligible participants met academic performance levels required to stay in good academic standing at the institution.	92%	86%	93%
Graduation	7% of eligible students will graduate each academic year (based on program total)	12%	19%	9%

Criteria	Project Objective (as approved by the US Department of Education)	Year 2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005
	enrollment regardless of grade level)			
Graduation /Transfer	40% of continuing students will graduate or transfer within six semesters (based on entering Fall cohort only)	46%	50%	39%
Transfer	7% of eligible participants will transfer each academic year (based on program total enrollment regardless of grade level)	14%	15%	10%

Student Success Program Project Performance Outcomes 2005-2009

As required to be reported to the US Department of Education Federal TRIO Programs

(For the 2005-2009 grant cycle, the US Department of Education required that the program objectives be written using the following format:

CHART 12-2

Criteria	Project Objective (as approved by the US Department of Education)	Year 2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008- 2009
Persistence	Of students accepted as participants in the SSP project, each cohort will persist (or graduate or transfer) according to the following percentages: 70% from first cohort year to second year, 60% from second cohort year to third (Cohort is defined as all students entering the program in a given program year)				
Good Academic Standing	A minimum of 75% of all SSP participants will be in good academic standing as defined by the institution as earning a GPA of 2.0 or higher				
Graduation/ Transfer	A total of 40% of each entering cohort will graduate and/or transfer to a four year institution within three years of enrollment in SSP.				

Demographic Profile of Program Participants

Each year the Student Success Program is required to serve 200 participants. The following table provides a breakdown by program year of the number of students who have been served by the program. It also shows the number of students who are persisting in the program (and at the College) and taking much longer than the standard three years to complete their program of study. The number of first time participants in each Program Year shows the number of available spots that must be filled each year based on the number of students in the previous year who have graduated and or transferred or dropped out of college.

Participants Served During each Reporting Period

CHART 12-3

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
Number of First Time participants	67	74	86	57
Number of participants served for two years	65	56	64	79
Number of participants served for three years	36	40	26	39
Number of participants served for four years	18	16	13	15
Number of participants served for five years	10	7	9	7
Number of participants served for six years	3	4	3	2
Number of participants served for more than 6 serves	4	3	1	2
Total number of students served	203	200	202	201

The following table provides a breakdown by Eligibility category for the past four program years. The US Department of Education Federal TRIO Programs required that a minimum 2/3rds of all participants be both low income and first generation. The remaining 1/3rd may be either low income or first generation. Additionally, of all the disabled students in the program, a minimum of 1/3rd must also be low-income. Please note that the number of disabled students served has decreased since the college was awarded a second Student Support Services Grant. The Program for Student Achievement serves only students with disabilities. Every applicant is given a choice of programs that he may apply for. He/She may only participate in one program. Typically, the Program for Student Achievement is a better match for students with disabilities as they offer specify services and technologies to assist students

Participant Distribution by Eligibility

CHART 12-4

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
Low income and first generation	171	169	162	171
Low income only	6	15	19	15
First-generation only	13	6	15	13
Disabled only	3	2	1	1
Disabled and Low-income	10	8	5	1

The following table provides a breakdown of participant distribution by ethnic group. The ethnic groups listed are the only ones accepted by the US Department of Education Federal TRIO Programs.

Participant Distribution by Ethnic Group

CHART 12-5

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	<i>2005-2006 Categories changed in 2005-2006 to the following:</i>	2005-2006
Native American or Alaskan Native	1	1	1	Native American/Alaskan Native	1
Asian	68	65	55	Asian/Pacific Islander	49

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	<i>2005-2006 Categories changed in 2005- 2006 to the following:</i>	2005-2006
Black or African-American	17	17	24	Black (non-Hispanic)	24
Hispanic	65	67	63	Hispanic	65
White	44	44	57	White (non-Hispanic)	51
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0	2	Other	8
More than one race reported	8	0	0	More than one race reported	3

Participant Distribution by Gender

CHART 12-6

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
Male	59	46	51	58
Female	144	154	151	143

Participant Distribution by Grade Level (end of project year)

As required by the US Department of Education Federal TRIO Programs, students must be identified as freshmen or sophomores. For the purpose of identifying the grade level for the TRIO grant, the college has determined that students with fewer than 30 college credits are considered freshmen, and students with 30 credits or more are considered sophomores.

CHART 12-7

	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006
Freshmen (less than 30 college credits)	74	129	111	Not available until individual transcripts are analyzed
Sophomore (30 or more college credits)	129	71	91	Not available until individual transcripts are analyzed

Based on the data provided several trends are worthy of note.

- *The African American/Black population has increased by approximately 6% from cohort year 2003-2004 to 2004-2005. The 2004-2005 academic year marked the arrival of an African-American TRIO counselor.*
- *Women participants have accounted for approximately 70 percent of the TRIO SSP population*
- *The number of students remaining in our program for more than 6 semesters is decreasing.*
- *Data from the OIR indicates that from the 2002-2005 academic years, the white student population at Middlesex Community College accounts for approximately 70% of the overall student body. Contrastingly, the TRIO SSP has a student participant population that includes 70% ethnic minority students.*
- *Although not present in the data, our office has seen an increase in the number of TRIO legacy students (students who have/had a sibling or other family member enrolled in the SSP program).*

13. Provide outcome assessment and/or follow up data. Please comment on significant information that emerges from the data.

Outcome assessment in the past has been conducted by the distribution of surveys, workshop evaluations, the use of our customized service plan, and through informal conversation. *(Examples of student feedback have been provided in the appendices.)*

At present, the best measure we have in current use is our customized service plan. The customized service plan is designed by the student with guidance from a TRIO staff member and outlines the participant's personal goals and objectives. The student lists his/her academic goals for the academic year and lists strategies and resources needed to accomplish these goals. Throughout the semester, the student and TRIO staff will readdress the goals listed and will measure (through conversation) how well the student is working towards the goal. Goals are/have been adjusted when/if dictated by the student.

Another method currently in use is the exit survey. When students leave our program whether for transfer, graduation, drop-out, or move, a survey is distributed to prior participants. Questions regarding the students' academic plan, what services they found helpful, reasons why they are not returning, etc., help us determine areas in which improvement may be necessary. However, more intentional measures will need to be implemented for measuring the new student learning outcomes included in this review.

Of significance that we've found through completing this program review is that the data we collect is sparse and rarely thoroughly analyzed beyond collection. One explanation for this problem is that student participation for workshops and cultural events is fairly low when taking into account a 200 student population. For example, during the 2005-06 year, 18 workshops were offered and attendance reports indicate a number of 32 attendees for all workshop. Many of the 32 workshop participants attended several of the

workshops offered in the year —meaning that in actuality, an average of 2-7 students attended each workshop offered.

SECTION III: SUMMARY

14. Describe the strengths of the program.

Strengths of the TRIO program are numerous. Based on exit survey and workshop and trip evaluations, students are pleased with the service they receive.

- “I’m very thankful...the program has helped me in 100 ways (emotional, economical,...I met great people...)”
- “The program and its services...are great.”
- “[The program] really helped me with the academic advising and transfer counseling.”
- “[The program]” helped me decide which classes to take.”
- “It has helped open my mind and explore different areas in the program.”
- “It really helped boost my grades.”
- “The field trips to New York and Philadelphia were unbelievable.”

EXPOSURE

With focus on the last student comment, we believe a significant strength is our emphasis on providing cultural enrichment activities to students who might not otherwise have access to these opportunities. The trip to Philadelphia for example, included tours of Independence Hall, the Liberty Bell, Amish Country, the U.S. Mint, and participation in a debate which later was broadcast on NPR (one of our students can be heard on the broadcast!). Additionally, the students toured Philadelphia University to gain perspective of what it’s like to attend a private urban university.

Exposing our students to a variety of public and private institutions (college tours, meetings with admissions officers, etc) and continually offering support and encouragement as our students navigate the transfer process is another program feature that we’re especially proud of. Oftentimes, we find ourselves assuming the role of additional parent for our first generation college students whose families may not know how to go about approaching such tasks as filling out the FAFSA for financial aid, helping with college applications, etc. Thus we step in when needed.

Additionally, our staff exposes SSP participants to opportunities available at the college

including involvement in clubs, activities, scholarships, and other academic opportunities. We have assisted our students with the application processes for MCC Foundation Scholarships, the Ireland International Fellowship, student award recognition, etc. Our students' persistence in these areas and our assistance has resulted in some of the following accomplishments.

Fall 2004-present

- 5 SSP participants chosen for the Ireland fellowship
- 8 SSP participants awarded MCC Foundation Scholarships
- 1 SSP participant selected as MCC graduation speaker
- 1 SSP participant selected as the James E. Houlihan, Jr. Student of the Year Award

STAFF

Our staff's willingness to assist and their dedication to our students is one of our program's greatest strengths. The SSP staff consists of six individuals or 4 FTEs (full-time equivalent) serving 200 students. The staff to student ratio is 1:50 resulting in personalized service that includes extended time for academic advising, tutoring, one-on-one interventions, and academic support.

Five out of 6 SSP Staff members were first-generation college students and thus have a deep understanding of the needs and concerns our first generation college students have regarding college.

Two out of 6 SSP staff members are members of ethnic minority groups resulting not only in an increase in the recruitment of SSP participants from diverse populations, but our staff more accurately representing the student demographic at MCC.

EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY

Consistent with our mission, numerous SSP resources have been utilized to educate the college community about low-income and first generation students. We have been able to integrate information pertaining to our population through several creative and innovative formats including:

- Viewings of "Monkey Dance" a documentary film that follows 3 Cambodian-American youth living in Lowell (shown at Professional Day, Cambodian Heritage Celebration, Searching for Heroes classes, upcoming viewing for MILES group) that includes a former MCC Student Success Program participant filmed while attending MCC.
- Seven Habits of Highly Effective People trainings for college faculty, staff, students, and Lowell Career Pathways for Youth participants
- Assistance with Getting Started Presentations
- "Tolerance, is it Enough?" presentation for MCC Student Leadership Series

Other Strengths:

Student Success staff and students willingness to assist other departments, the college, and the community:

- Several SSP students serve as graduation marshals each year
- SSP staff assist with Opening Day activities including offering workshops to students
- SSP students offering workshops to peers about the transition to college, getting involved on campus, etc.
- SSP students serve as Orientation Leaders for Opening Day activities
- SSP staff actively recruits students to serve on SUGA each year. This year, two of the 15 members are SSP participants
- SSP staff serving on a variety of college committees
- SSP staff assisting the MILES program by presenting two workshops in 2006-2007 to the senior guests on campus
- SSP Students and staff willingness to serve on focus groups as requested by the Office of Institutional Research
- SSP staff and students sponsoring the Salvation Army Back to School backpack project providing backpacks filled with school supplies for area disadvantaged youth
- SSP students and staff volunteering for the Walk for Hunger
- SSP staff and students sponsoring “Let’s Talk Turkey” to collect funds to provide over 15 complete Thanksgiving dinners for MCC students and their families
- SSP staff presenting multiple workshops for the “Advance to Go” Program and volunteering to serve as mentors to assigned students

15. Describe program weaknesses or needs for improvement.

Based on some of the data gathered several areas have been identified as those where improvement is needed.

- 1) One major area in which we can improvement is in the area of recruitment. As mentioned in an earlier section, our program has a target deadline of November 15 to be fully enrolled. We struggle with this deadline. Data indicates that applications are at their strongest numbers in September, but waiver around mid-October. Many of the September applications are a result of our presence at the Resource Fair, but they dwindle once classes are in full swing. Another point to note is that we have a disproportionate female to male participant rate. Chart 12-6 provided points to the fact that women in the SSP program have made up a little more than 70% of the SSP population. Although overall college figures show that women make up over 60% of the MCC student population, we feel that the lack of more men in our program is a weakness.
- 2) According to figures from our student record database, participation in all levels of our program (advising, workshops, tutoring, and counseling) are lower than what we

would like. Each student should have a minimum of 3 contacts each semester, one of which should be a workshop/trip/cultural event.

- 3) Limited publicity in regards to faculty/staff referring students to our program. Faculty/staff have different ideas of what student the SSP student should look like, program's goals, our services, etc.
- 4) One weakness is that we have received level funding for three years which results in fewer activities, reduced tutoring, and few college visits for students and reduced work hours for part-time staff as we have had to budget for additional equipment, staff raises, increased fringe benefit costs, etc. As we operate on grant funds separate from the college, the SSP may not always be included in both the division and the institution's master plans regarding the distribution of financial and other supports (example: distribution of computers, furniture, etc.) However, co-sponsorship from other academic and student affairs could allow us to better serve our population as well as increase the program's outreach, education, and advocacy for low-income and first generation populations at the institutional level.
- 5) As we collected data for the purpose of this review, we realize that our data has not been carefully analyzed. We periodically collect information through surveys and evaluation feedback forms, but we lack the expertise to sufficiently analyze our data and/or are unsure of the types of questions we should be asking. Are our instruments appropriate for gathering data on our student learning outcomes?

16. What suggestions do you have to correct the identified weaknesses and improve the program? Suggest timelines wherever applicable.

To address the aforementioned weaknesses, the following list suggest strategies for improvement, outlines what our office needs (additional information, support, etc.) to achieve improvement and success, and a timeline for when tasks should be completed.

- 1) Recruitment—through analysis of trends in the Student Success Program's enrollment by ethnicity and gender, our program will actively recruit students that are representative of the overall student population in terms of gender and ethnicity while also taking into account the percentage of these students who also meet low-income status.

Strategies for Improvement	What SSP needs	Timeline
Identify reasons that males are not applying to SSP	Work with Assessment Coordinator, OIR to develop and implement instruments to obtain this information	March 2007

Strategies for Improvement	What SSP needs	Timeline
Develop recruitment goals for Fall 2007 enrollment based on numbers of low income students—specify ethnicity and gender	*Identify the percentage of low income students by ethnicity through data provided by OIR *Increased engagement by administration in spreading the mission of our program to students	December 2006—obtain data from OIR April 2007—develop new recruitment goals based on demographic data April 2007-ongoing—recruit accordingly

2) Increased SSP student participation in program sponsored activities

Strategies for Improvement	What SSP needs	Timeline
Identify reasons that some SSP participants don't utilize tutoring, workshop, academic support	Work with Assessment Coordinator, OIR to develop and implement instruments to obtain this information	
Survey students regarding what they would like to see; have students serve on event planning committee	Assistance with survey development, focus group facilitation by non SSP college staff	
Development of a dedicated SSP course (may be similar to First Year Seminar)—required of all new SSP students	Need assistance in the development of curricula Support from the administration on adding a TRIO specific course and how to staff the course (MCC faculty or TRIO staff person) Assistance from appropriate academic deans, registrar, enrollment center, etc.	

3 & 4) Limited publicity and Limited Resources

Strategies for Improvement	What SSP needs	Timeline
Working alongside college	Source of	Ongoing

Strategies for Improvement	What SSP needs	Timeline
administration in developing ways to secure additional support	supplemental/college funding –inclusion in MCC’s master plan for distribution of resources (computers, furniture, brochures, etc.)	
	Work with MCC Office of Resource Development (if necessary) to apply for state/local/federal aid to supplement budget	
	Work with the Office of Financial Aid to determine if work-study students may be used as peer tutors to increase the number of tutoring hours available to students and assign work-study students to SSP	Annually September and December
Working with Publications Department to highlight the work and accomplishments of SSP Program and students	Assistance in providing ongoing public relations materials to be distributed on campus and in the community to highlight the strengths of the program Assistance with the development of outreach materials: posters, fliers, etc. to increase visibility on campus	Ongoing

5) Development of assessment tools, collection and analysis of data

Strategies for Improvement	What SSP needs	Timeline
Meeting with Assessment Coordinator, OIR to determine what SLOs will be assessed and what tools will work best	Support and consultation from the OIR and Assistant Dean of Assessment	
Continual professional development for all SSP in	An examination by OIR and Assistant Dean of	Ongoing

Strategies for Improvement	What SSP needs	Timeline
the areas of assessment	Assessment of current assessment tools and assistance in developing new tools	
Meeting with Assessment Office to more closely align our federally required evaluation plan with the assessment process being utilized by MCC	Support and consultation with review of the SSP evaluation plan as submitted to the US Department of Education and assistance to integrate both systems	
Develop strategies to increase the response rate for surveys, evaluations, and focus groups	Technical support from MCC experts	

Additional Recommendations include:

- The development of a MCC Foundation or college scholarship designed specifically for a low-income student to participate in the International Fellowship Program.
- To have advocates for low-income and first generation college students serving on key selection committees for student opportunities such as the International Fellowship, Foundation Scholarships, Honors program, and selective academic programs.
- Increased collaboration from other student support departments: i.e. funding from Student Government for SSP sponsored events- dinners to honor students similar to International Student Dinner, support for the establishment of an SSP club or organization, support for overnight field trips to expose low-income first generation students to cultural activities and colleges not readily available to this population; funding from the College for various expenditures, such as purchasing of equipment (inclusion in the college's master distribution plan), sponsoring events to honor outstanding student and staff accomplishments such as annual college sponsored luncheon that the grant funds can not support.