



OAKLAND COMMUNITY COLLEGE®

Student Services

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Prepared by:



College Brain Trust

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Drs. Eleanor Brown, Bob Jensen, Diane Troyer and Jan Lyddon reviewed Student Affairs/Services and assessed the quality and consistency of student services within each campus and across all five campuses. The team reviewed extensive material and documents, developed a survey that was distributed to all Student Services faculty and staff, interviewed 65 faculty, staff and students and visited each campus.

The CBT Student Affairs/Services Team (CBT Team) consultants found the oversight and management of student service programs at OCC are provided by faculty and staff who are professional and passionate about their role in working directly with students in support of student success. Analysis of the survey results and interviews and meetings with program directors, managers and coordinators revealed all were student-centered and desirous of providing high levels of service to students.

The Student Affairs/Services assessment led to a series of recommendations for improvements in institutional operations, communication, collaboration and cooperation. We believe the recommendations contained in this report will assist Student Affairs/Services in developing a culture of student success supported by both Academic and Student Affairs and will enhance initiatives the College has adopted and is considering. The entire staff is to be commended for having a high level of commitment to students.

TASK OVERVIEW

The CBT task in Student Services was to evaluate the College's student services including recruitment, admissions, registration, financial aid and counseling for the purpose of recommending strategies to improve and support student success. Specifically, the CBT was charged to "review Student Services policies and procedures and both communication and

collaboration practices with the intent of clarifying campus roles regarding student support systems and provide recommendations of best practices to benefit students.”

FINDINGS/OBSERVATIONS

The results of the CBT review include findings and observation from interviews with District administrators, campus managers and staff providing student services and programs, students, and from a review of documents including plans, policies, procedures, student data, campus visits and the over-arching themes from the Student Services Survey (Appendix A). These findings are:

1. Absence of a vision for student success.
2. Confusion in the organizational structure and insufficient staffing.
3. Inadequate vertical communications.
4. Ineffective and inconsistent processes and standards.
5. Lack of automation and technology support.

Absence of a Vision for Student Success

CBT found that Student Affairs does not have a coherent vision for student success. This has resulted in a lack of clarity of how its functions should be aligned and coordinated college-wide to support and enhance student success. Further, a culture of evidence and data concerning student matriculation, retention and student outcomes that would support a vision for student success has not been established.

- A vision for student success was not articulated by OCC leadership. The alignment of student services at the campus level in support of a well-coordinated delivery system for student success was not evident. The absence of a clear vision for student success was expressed by some groups as a lack of understanding within Student Services about their role in supporting students. Counselors reported the new OCC mission is “all about community” but lacks a focus on students and student success. Other groups, including Student Life Coordinators and Admissions Recruiters, expressed confusion regarding alignment of their role and area priorities in support of student success.
- A matriculation process has not been instituted. There is no consistent, comprehensive, new student orientation, academic advising/educational planning, course placement based on academic skills or an academic early alert system. While some evidence-based student enrollment initiatives arose from the Achieving the Dream (ATD) planning, such as basic skills assessment preparation and a comprehensive new student orientation,

they have yet to be integrated into a college-wide vision to fully integrate these practices. Hard evidence exists that more intentional requirements are necessary to influence and support new student success. Because the College has not established clear roles and goals in the improvement of student success, a plan to systemically integrate best practices across the College has not been developed.

- While the Recruiters work collaboratively among themselves, there is inconsistent support for them, leading to lack of comprehensive pre-enrollment efforts.
- Academic planning has not been effectively aligned with college goals for improvement of student outcomes as demonstrated by the OCC Counseling Video and the lack of a high priority within the counseling role to assure strong academic advising and educational planning.
- Counselors reported greater numbers of underprepared students enrolling at OCC without enough developmental education classes available. Without pre-requisites developed or enforced for general education classes, these underprepared students often end up in college level courses. The Counselors also reported no feedback regarding the academic skill level of new students and no OCC policy for developing educational plans for students other than for Veterans Affairs (VA) students and for financial aid students placed on academic probation due to federal regulations guiding satisfactory academic progress.
- The College has not articulated a comprehensive vision for student success that includes tutoring to assure students reach their educational goals. The College does not appear to have specific goals for the improvement of student outcomes or specific goals to be met in tutoring. Coupled with this lack of vision and the across-the-board reductions in funding for student tutoring services in Accessibility Compliance Center & Educational Support Services (ACCESS) and Academic Support Center (ASC), it likely results in fewer students served and a reduction in other services provided by ACCESS and ASC. The lack of support for tutoring services reinforces the need for a College vision for student success that integrates student support, including tutoring, into a holistic student success plan.
- The Registrar reported that statistical data regarding students was regularly distributed and used for year-to-year large-scale planning. However, he stated that information within OCC regarding graduation rates and other student data was not generally known. An example of this is the lack of retention data on students—within semesters, from

semester to semester, from year to year and to degree completion—regularly being applied to planning and to the modification of services within Student Services.

- The College Readiness Report (March 2012) provided statistics regarding the number of new students assessing at the developmental education level and tracked the small number of those who actually attempted and completed a developmental education course, but it did not provide any tracking or outcomes for the majority of developmental education level students who did not enroll in a developmental education course. The Developmental Education Plan of 2007 reported 40-60% of all new OCC students need skill development for college-level courses; however, the number of developmental education courses scheduled has not increased to meet this need. This gap between need and scheduling reflects the need for both clear vision and planning to improve student outcomes and the lack of integration of student services into overall academic decision-making.

Confusion Regarding the Organizational Structure and Insufficient Staffing

CBT found inconsistency in the organizational structure and confusion at the campus level in some Student Services departments regarding their line of reporting and identification of a direct supervisor.

- Student Services is led by the Executive Director for Enrollment Management who reports directly to the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs. The title of the Executive Director and placement of this position on the organizational chart is misleading. Although this position is responsible and accountable to provide college-wide leadership and management for all Student Services, this position is at a lower level on the organizational chart than the Associate Vice Chancellor (AVC) for Academic and Student Affairs. Additionally, CBT learned from the AVC for Academic and Student Affairs that she actually has no functional relationship or responsibility for Student Affairs/Services.
- The College Registrar, while responsible for college-wide admissions, registration, and student records, does not supervise campus personnel. Enrollment Services staff report to the campus Directors of Student Services who coordinate campus operations. While the Registrar and the Directors meet regularly with the Executive Director, there are reported gaps in information and procedure updates reaching all campus personnel, especially part-time admissions and counseling staff. Additionally, the process of when and how students submit an application for graduation is not consistent or under his control. This process is handled at the campus level and begins in the Counseling Center

rather than the District Registrar's office or at the campus Enrollment Services office, and then only after being initiated by the student. The graduation application is the only time a degree plan is developed for students. By virtue of the graduation application process occurring through individual Counselors, it is inconsistent from campus to campus and perhaps from counselor to counselor.

- Counselors are an integral part of student enrollment activities, support and success, and yet, they report to Academic Affairs without a communication or coordination link to Student Services. Counselors reported that “a huge disconnect exists between Student Services and Counseling.” The new organizational structure (effective January 2013) places Counselors into the new academic division of College Readiness and reinforces the likelihood that the existing disconnect will become even greater. The role of Counselors is also in question regarding student advising, since the College does not have separate academic advisors at the staff level within student services.
- The clerical staff for Counselors reports to Student Services, while the Counselors report to Academic Affairs. This inconsistency in the reporting structure within Counseling Centers not only contributes to confusion regarding clerical day-to-day priorities and supervision, but also to area accountability.
- The functions of the Admissions Recruiters (three Recruiters representing five campuses) are unclear. The Admissions Recruiters state their first priority is to work with feeder high schools within Oakland County; their second priority is to connect with high schools outside the county; and their third priority is to represent the College at state college recruitment events and local community events. They have been re-assigned from Marketing to the Directors of Student Services. It appears the Directors of Student Services are moving to change the role and priorities of these positions without clear communications to the Recruiters; consequently conflicts over their duties have occurred. Examples are the change in the content of the OCC View Book and the change in oversight from the Recruiters to the Directors along with the expectation that the Recruiters prioritize new student orientation over high school visitations. Reportedly, neither of these changes was discussed or clearly communicated with the Recruiters. The Recruiters may have become marginalized and are not functioning as an integral part of the Student Services team. With clarification in the priorities within Student Services, their duties could be directed toward the highest priority needs in support of student success, including serving as a communications link between area high schools and the College regarding college expectations and readiness.

- Student Life Coordinators did not appear on the new OCC organizational chart and, reportedly, lack an understanding of to whom they report and how their budget is developed. Several Student Life Coordinators have also recently been assigned the responsibility of coordinating some Achieving the Dream (ATD) activities, such as new student orientation. The College should articulate a clear vision of how Student Life contributes to student engagement and retention.
- Student Life is also a “one person show” without any permanent clerical staff and is dependent on temporary student workers to keep offices open and provide support for campus student life activities. The intermittent nature of student workers’ schedules and the demand for Student Life Coordinators to facilitate activities and events means the Student Life office is often closed, which reflects poorly on an office whose function is to support student engagement activities on campus.
- Financial Aid at the District and campus is significantly understaffed. According to a staffing model developed by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, colleges with the annual enrollment and financial aid awards of the size of OCC need a staff of thirty-three (33). OCC Financial Aid has a total District and campus staff of nineteen (19). Closing the office one day a week during the summer has been the only way the campus Financial Aid Offices have been able to manage the volume of financial aid applications. The Director of Financial Aid reported campus staff members do not participate in visits to area high schools, conduct financial aid workshops or provide student loan counseling due to staffing and workload issues.
- Campus Financial Aid Managers expressed concerns regarding the lack of full-time staff to process student veterans’ (VA) benefits. One part-time staff member is currently servicing approximately 450 VA students. The office has two part-time staff approved; however, only one position is filled. This causes delays in students’ receiving VA benefits.
- The Registrar’s office only has two transcript evaluators to handle all in-state and out-of-state requests for transcript evaluations. Due to the lack of staff, transcript evaluations for in-state students currently take two to six weeks to complete; evaluations for out-of-state transcripts are not completed until requested by the student. The lack of staff and delays for transcript evaluation impact timely completion of financial aid applications for out-of-state students (as required by federal guidelines to verify credits completed at previous colleges) and progress toward degree completion for all students.

Inadequate Vertical Communications

CBT found a number of communications challenges. Most of these are due to the absence of systems and feedback mechanisms to ensure that information flows vertically throughout the College and to lack of stakeholder engagement in decisions impacting their roles and areas. Part-time Counselors and Student Services staff appear to be especially vulnerable to information gaps.

- Campus Student Services departments work independently, and while they reported they communicate and coordinate regularly with colleagues on other campuses, campus meetings inclusive of all Student Service Managers and Coordinators are not regularly scheduled.
- The recently implemented changes in campus supervision have created inconsistencies in roles and responsibilities across campuses. For example, at some campuses, Student Life Coordinators have been assigned some coordination responsibilities for ATD interventions, while others have not. Many staff members report that decisions regarding changing staff roles, priorities and reporting lines are not consistently communicated to the staff impacted by those decisions.
- Counselors reported, as a group, frustration about the lack of feedback on previous recommendations on the counseling role and on the planning process, including the ReDesign Student Services Committee Report and the CAMP. Input into the College decision-making processes is seen as a void because they do not feel they have a voice at the Cabinet level. Attempts to communicate directly with the Executive Director of Enrollment Management regarding mutual student issues such as enrollment and registration have not been successful.
- Information regarding the volume of financial aid applications, annual awards and dollars disbursed is not regularly distributed to the OCC Executive Team or Board. It appears that OCC leadership either has not been informed of or perhaps has not attended to input regarding the extreme stress Financial Aid Managers and staff experience due to understaffing of the Financial Aid Offices and the pressure to process financial aid awards as timely and accurately as possible. There has not been a

comprehensive review of the operation of Financial Aid to determine possible efficiencies through technology or process simplification.

- Multiple departments within Student Services report a lack of feedback from their supervisors on recommendations and issues forwarded to them for action. A formal process to assure staff is informed about actions taken as a result of staff meetings and planning does not exist.
- Student Services reported confusion and frustration regarding area budgets. They have not been informed as to the reason area budgets have decreased, what the budget process is, or who makes budget decisions. There appears to be, from staff perspective, inequity in the allocation of resources.
- Students expressed concern regarding the lack of input into administrative decisions impacting them. As a voting member of the Campus Academic Senate, students have a venue to address issues related to academics and curriculum. However, they do not have a place to address student concerns that are administrative in nature. Additionally, Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) International Honor Society is the only student voice allowed to address the OCC Board of Trustees; Student Government officers do not feel PTK represents the voice of the greater OCC student body.

Ineffective and Inconsistent Processes and Standards

CBT reviewed processes and effectiveness in several areas within Student Services and found student outcomes are negatively impacted due to lack of developing and monitoring systems and practices.

- The delay in transcript evaluations has implications for transfer students applying for financial aid as well as for those completing degree or certificate programs. Due to these delays, it was reported that inconsistent processes have been developed across campuses as Counselors attempt to accommodate student needs. Counselors often count other college courses as equivalent to OCC courses without appropriate documentation. A clear process for assuring transcript evaluation in a timely manner and assuring consistent evaluation standards across the College has not been developed.

- The College does not have a process to ensure the development of academic plans by enrolling students that serves to track their progress and trigger either the need for student intervention or an update in courses needed for goal completion. An academic plan is required once a student applies for graduation, but the process and responsibility for the development of the plan is not clear. Graduation applications, which must be initiated by students, are submitted to campus Counselors who review the students' transcripts and determine whether degree requirements have been met. This delay in a review of student transcripts and the home-grown degree audit program, which is not totally accurate, is ineffective and does not support student success.
- The College has not developed a standard to determine who qualifies for tutorial services provided by ACCESS, ASC and Project BOLD. Although the function of ACCESS is to provide academic accommodations and tutorial services for students with documented disabilities, some faculty at some campuses refer students on academic probation to ACCESS for tutorial services rather than to ASC. This has caused a duplication in tutorial efforts as well as a lack of consistency in the tutoring model. Additional duplication exists between ACCESS and the Counseling Centers regarding support for students with learning disabilities. Project BOLD, a program providing tutorial services for a limited number of high functioning students with learning disabilities, is a service offered by the Counseling Centers. The broader population of students with learning disabilities receives services through ACCESS.

The function of ASC is to provide tutorial, student success courses and workshops and supplemental instruction for the general student population. Students on academic probation are referred to both ASC and ACCESS for tutorial services. The lack of clarity regarding populations served by ASC, ACCESS and the Counseling Center creates inconsistency in processes, procedures and confusion for students. The goal of tutoring services has not been established by the College and is unclear from area-to-area and campus-to-campus.

- The College has delayed the expansion of the OCC Electronic Call Center (ECC). Plans have been in process since July 2011 to install additional computers, phones, and part-time workers at each campus to more effectively handle the volume of financial aid calls. Currently, student workers answer campus phones. The volume of incoming calls to the Financial Aid Offices, the constant turn-over and inability to sufficiently train student workers to answer complicated financial aid questions creates an ineffective system.

- Both the Director and Managers of Financial Aid reported they are unable to process financial aid applications in a timely manner and are dramatically behind in student loan processing due to staffing issues. Staff believe the lack of timely processing of student financial aid applications has had a negative impact on enrollment.
- Some current policies are either inconsistent or have negative consequences for students. For example, the use of the “N” grade and the lack of a policy to assure documentation of student attendance have a negative impact on Financial Aid and College liability. Faculty had been using the “N” grade if the student never attended class; however, Financial Aid did not receive notification of those who never attended until the end of the term. Consequently, financial aid was disbursed to students ineligible by federal regulations to receive aid. This practice has resulted in a huge financial liability for OCC. According to Financial Aid staff, return of Title IV money has grown from approximately \$100,000 a year to closer to \$1,000,000 a year. Additionally, the College is required to attempt to collect a pro-rated amount of the disbursement of loan monies from students. To begin to address this issue, the OCC financial aid attendance policy now requires students attend at least once during the first three weeks of the semester to be considered eligible for aid disbursement. According to the Director, it is a challenge to receive attendance documentation consistently from both full-time and adjunct faculty by the end of the first three weeks of the semester.
- Both the Director and Managers of Financial Aid expressed concern that some students are engaged in deliberate financial aid fraud by enrolling, attending class once and ceasing to attend without officially withdrawing. Counselors also reported some students had openly admitted this was their plan. There is not currently a plan of action to ensure this issue is taken seriously and corrected. Further, the lack of communication and coordination between Student Services and Counselors presents a barrier for problem solving around issues such as this.
- The financial aid policy for awarding student loans is impacting the OCC student loan default rate. OCC student loan defaults have significantly increased over the last three years. The College moved from an 8.9% default rate in 2008 to a 16.8% rate for the three years ending with 2010. When college default rates rise above 15%, federal regulations require the college to delay loan disbursements for new borrowers for thirty days after the beginning of the semester. Although staff knows the potential for financial aid fraud, OCC Financial Aid is automatically including student loans as part of the student award, if financial aid eligibility allows, to avoid the time required to revise

financial aid awards if a student loan is not part of the original package and such revision is requested by the student.

- Four Student Life Coordinators serve the five campuses, with Southfield and Royal Oak sharing one Student Life Coordinator. This has created an inequity in the availability of student life events and activities for Southfield and Royal Oak campuses. Additionally, while all Student Life Coordinators are advisors for Phi Theta Kappa, they have not implemented common opportunities across the College for student involvement in Student Government. Student Government is organized and active at only one campus: Auburn Hills.

Lack of Automation and Technology Support

A number of areas within Student Services reported the need for greater automation and technology support, not only to improve processes for a more effective delivery of services for students but also to use limited staff effectively.

- The Registrar stated that the scope of his job has changed and now requires both increased technology and accurate and timely reporting. The College is considering a technology upgrade with Ellucian, which could provide the opportunity to revise and streamline business processes, strengthen the College's ability to get data to end users in a timely manner, and improve service to students.
- The College lacks a dedicated Student Portal. Such a Portal would provide more effective support for on-line student services and could reduce the need for manual functions for basic student transactions.
- OCC has recently installed a document-imaging program and is in the process of completing the training of all Financial Aid full-time and part-time staff. Although document imaging has allowed Financial Aid staff to scan student paperwork, to centralize processing and to become more consistent in the way student financial aid applications are processed, the Director expressed the need for more training and hardware support as part of the implementation. Additional computer monitors and on-going training is needed for the staff to become proficient in the use of the document-imaging program.

- Financial Aid staffing levels have delayed the development of a financial aid application tracking system. This system would allow students to track, on-line, their financial aid documents from initial submission to the award and reduce the volume of student phone calls to check on the status of their financial awards.
- The College has a home-grown degree audit program that is not totally accurate. Plans to implement an automated degree audit program have not been developed.

OTHER FINDINGS/OBSERVATIONS

Admissions/Registration/Student Records

- Project WIN-WIN, scheduled for full implementation in August 2013, will develop more interaction with students to provide continuous information to them as they progress through degree requirements and will allow students to track how close they are to degree completion. For example, students who change majors may not be aware how close they are to completing a degree in two areas. WIN-WIN will alert students to courses needed to complete both degrees.
- The Registrar saw himself as having an active role in the Chancellor's new initiatives for the College Academic Master Plan, which is intended to develop a focus on community and the student. By working closely with Institutional Research (IR), he will gather retention data on students within semesters, from semester to semester, from year to year and to degree completion. It is not clear if distribution of retention and student outcomes will become part of a College-wide comprehensive Student Success Plan.

Admissions Recruiters

- A morale issue has developed with the changing reporting lines and lack of role clarity within the new organizational structure. According to the Admissions Recruiters, the Directors of Student Services told them they needed to be "reeled in, that what they have been doing is seen as a waste of time, and that they are not needed." The

Admissions Recruiters feel the new supervision is disrespectful and authoritative, that they are being micro-managed and receive inconsistent direction regarding role and use of time. They provide reports of their activities to the Directors but do not know what happens to the reports due to lack of feedback.

Campus Facilities

- CBT found the campus facilities and grounds well maintained and attractive. However, facilities housing Student Services contained very few areas for students to sit or wait. Hallways leading to Student Services at some of the campuses were narrow, and offices had no reception areas, forcing students to line up in hallways. At one campus, signage led students into the reception area for counseling; signage at this campus was confusing and did not clearly indicate that Enrollment Services and Financial Aid offices were up one flight. At two other campuses, the Financial Aid office was the first office seen as one entered the building, perhaps misleading students to start at Financial Aid rather than at Enrollment Services.
- Student Life banners and materials were present at each campus, but the offices were in tucked-away corners or even in a little used building and not easy to find.
- Directional signage was inconsistent from campus to campus. At three, the Financial Aid office was named Student Financial Resources and Scholarships while at the others it was titled Financial Aid. Likewise, Admissions/Registration was used at one campus while Enrollment Services is used at the others. The poster, "Steps to College Success," was only seen at one campus; no other helpful directional signs for new students indicating "start here or welcome" were posted at any of the campuses.
- The Student Center building at Highland Lakes appeared to be nearly totally unused except by campus security and, in an office at the bottom of a stairway, Student Life. This building contained a large open space, once occupied by a cafeteria, which might be available for use by Registration and Financial Aid to process large volumes of students during peak times.

Counseling Services

- Although representatives from Student Government and the Counselors support a mandatory, comprehensive new-student orientation and emphasized new students need the structure a mandatory orientation could provide, the Counselors suggested it may not be realistic to attempt to provide orientation for all new students. The seven-thousand-plus new students each year present a volume issue, not only in numbers but in access to space and personnel. There has been no consideration or discussion of different modalities for delivering new-student orientation, such as utilizing amphitheater-size rooms for large group presentations; using all Student Service managers and coordinators to create small groups for more individualized Q & A sessions following a large group presentation; or developing a mandatory new-student orientation into a comprehensive one- or two-credit course.

Financial Aid

- The Director of Financial Aid reported campus staff do not participate in visits to area high schools, conduct financial aid workshops or provide student loan counseling due to staffing and workload issues. The inability to provide crucial information to students about the financial aid process, regulations regarding continued eligibility and loan counseling impacts student retention and the College default rate.
- The Financial Aid Managers also expressed concerns that placement of the Financial Aid clerical staff low on the OCC salary scale has a negative impact on the stability of financial aid offices. Financial Aid clerical staff persons are classified at the lowest level (1) but are required to know financial aid regulations and provide accurate information to students. The clerical staff members were told by Human Resources that requests for re-evaluation of job responsibilities and a potential upgrade had to be processed through their union (which, they say, was accomplished). The requested upgrade for these positions was denied by Human Resources. This may be an issue to resolve through the union. The result, however, is constant turnover and retraining of clerical staff.
- The campus Financial Aid offices were not designed to provide service to students or accommodate student traffic. Financial Aid offices have walk-up counters, similar to what one sees in banks, for quick in-take processing rather than taking into consideration the complicated financial aid application process, which often requires

extended time with students. Three campus Financial Aid offices have very small reception areas/counters that might accommodate two to three students; none is designed to accommodate the number of students seeking financial aid information or help in completing applications and resolving financial aid related problems. Student confidentiality issues must often be dealt with in public. At two of the campuses, glass barriers separate students from financial aid staff, creating a visually impersonal connection to OCC. Consequently, at all campuses, students are forced to line up and congregate in hallways, exacerbating complaints of student congestion and long lines.

Student Government

- Four Student Government officers from Auburn Hills met with the CBT Team. The students prepared well for the meeting by sending out a Student Concern Survey to all Auburn Hills students; 108 responses were received. While these students were very satisfied with their interactions with OCC faculty and staff, feedback from the student survey indicated the greater OCC student body has a variety of issues and concerns to communicate to the administration without a venue to accommodate this need (Appendix B).
- Funding for Student Government comes from the Student Life budget. Reduction in funding for Student Life has impacted funding for student clubs and activities. Student Government prefers a dedicated budget for Student Government at each campus, supported by a student fee, to allow it to support student clubs, groups, and activities and projects that enhance student engagement at OCC, as well as educational and academic experiences. If Student Life is a part of the OCC mission, the issue of funding to provide a stable budget for Student Government needs to be resolved.

Feedback from the Student Concern Survey

108 responses from Auburn Hills students reflect issues and concerns from one campus. However, CBT assumed the issues and concerns of Auburn Hills students were such that they can be generalized to reflect the issues and concerns of students at the other four campuses.

- The Bookstore hours do not meet the needs of students, and the price of books is too high.

- The OCC web site is confusing, has limited information, is not easy to navigate, and terminates on-line services at 11:45 p.m.; students want 24/7 on-line services.
- Obtaining office phone numbers is difficult.
- New Student Orientation for all new students is not available. Information regarding enrollment and OCC policies and procedures that impact students is not distributed to students and is desperately needed.
- Student handbook needs to be distributed and/or easy to obtain.
- Financial Aid Office is never available; financial aid staff should have name tags.
- Cafeteria prices are too expensive, and healthier food choices are wanted.
- Designated smoking areas need to be established away from buildings.
- Some faculty members require students to download and print required handbooks and the course syllabus.
- Student events such as cultural films and political game shows need to be scheduled more than once a day; too many are scheduled only around the lunch hour.

ANALYSIS

Student Affairs/Services has become disenfranchised and isolated from Academic Affairs. No communication channels exist between Academic Affairs and Student Affairs/Services, and the administrative committee structure does not include representation from Student Affairs/Services. Student Affairs/Services has not been involved in policy decisions impacting students, curriculum, and requirements for degree/certificate completion and has become subordinate to Academic Affairs.

The Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, the Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs and the Executive Director for Enrollment Management hold equal positions and levels of responsibility, but this is not reflected in their job titles. If, in fact, Student Affairs is a part of OCC mission, the administrators reporting directly to the Vice Chancellor who are responsible for Academic Affairs and for Student Affairs should have equal titles. Additionally, according to the most recent College organization chart, campus managers report to campus deans. And while there are managers of student services at all campuses, there are no student service dean positions at the campuses. This inequity creates a void in the communication and collaboration between campus academic deans and those responsible for student services at the campus level. Campus Student Service Managers and staff perceive a significant lack of connection to the academic side of the College and feel they have no one at the campus level to express and champion a vision for student success.

A College vision for Student Success does not exist. Neither the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs nor the Executive Director for Enrollment Management were able to articulate and communicate a vision for student success or for student services. Without a clear vision for student success, initiatives such as new-student orientation, an enrollment management plan and retention activities are likely to remain disconnected events incapable of producing the student success outcomes associated with an integrated, comprehensive plan.

Campus employee groups within Student Services meet, communicate, coordinate and collaborate horizontally across campuses. However, communication and coordination is not flowing vertically down from the District or down through the Directors to employee groups. Moreover, it appears upward communication meets a dead end. Employee groups are silos working independently. Reporting lines/relationships are confusing and, within some employee groups, actually unknown. Clarification of roles and responsibilities for some employee groups has not occurred or been communicated.

Counseling and Student Services do not have a vehicle or a venue by which to communicate. During the time Counselors have reported to campus Academic Affairs, they have been virtually self-directed and focused on providing services to students consistent with their image as counseling faculty rather than as academic advisors/educational planners. As part of OCC's mission and focus to provide support for underprepared students, OCC leadership should determine the extent to which Counselors can afford to devote time to personal counseling as opposed to student advising. A recent report released by the National School Boards Association provided documentation for the increased persistence to degree completion of students who talked to an academic adviser "often" versus "never." However, Counselors do not see themselves as academic advisers. A clear dedication to academic advising, including development of degree plans early in students' enrollment, and support for early academic alert and related problems is vitally important.

Based on the large number of underprepared students enrolling at OCC, counseling support for a structured matriculation process that includes mandatory assessment, orientation and course placement is needed. The College has not made a systemic effort to apply national best practice in the entering student experience. Different modalities for delivering the support services that are part of a matriculation process such as breaking large group orientation into small groups for academic advising and using other members of Student Services to facilitate small groups should be considered. A re-definition of Counselors' roles and redirection of focus is needed to better support student success.

Financial Aid is critically understaffed. It is important for OCC leadership to understand that financial aid is very complex and requires technical skills to interpret and correctly apply the ever-changing federal regulations. The plan to reassign existing student service positions into

Financial Aid without taking into consideration the specialization of skills required and training time needed to become proficient in financial aid is unlikely to produce the outcomes desired. Additionally, the constant turnover in student workers and clerical support does not provide the level of training or knowledge needed to answer area phones.

The increase in the College's student loan default rate is a very serious concern; the practice of automatically packaging student loans into financial aid awards needs to be reconsidered. The College liability for the return of Title IV funds is increasing. The increasing and large amount of suspected student fraud in applying for financial aid requires modifying current attendance and aid disbursement practices. Recognition that increasing Financial Aid staffing levels and training new financial aid specialists will require time, contracting with an outside firm such as American Student Assistance (schools.saltmoney.org) to manage the College student loan default would help address the growing student default rate, begin to decrease the liability for the return of Title IV funds and provide financial literacy programming to all students.

At Southfield, staff financial aid computer stations were positioned with staff backs facing the reception window and computer screens facing the public. The inevitable display and exposure of student social security numbers violates the Social Security Administration mandate to develop stringent safeguards for social security numbers. Staff work stations need to be repositioned to avoid displaying student social security numbers and other personal information.

The lack of active Student Government groups at four OCC campuses eliminates the ability of students at all campuses to engage in and participate in student leadership activities and limits the voice of OCC students to be heard by the administration. Active Student Government groups establish avenues for students to gain experience in leadership and participate in college governance.

The College has not kept pace with on-line services to support students and eliminate many manual processes in Student Affairs/Services. These include on-line student tracking of financial aid applications, an academic early alert system, an updated automated degree audit program and a student portal for more effective management of information for students. The Registrar reported the need for more technological support to improve data integrity and reporting capabilities; the website needs to be updated and redesigned to be more user/student friendly. Students voiced frustration with the limited hours of OCC on-line services; they expect 24/7 access to on-line services.

Support for students needing academic skill development to prepare for college-level work is extremely weak. New-student orientation is not mandatory, prerequisites for college level courses are not enforced and 52% of degree-seeking students leave after one year. According

to a March 2012 report to the OCC Board of Trustees (OCC College Readiness), of the 7,033 new students enrolled, 2,504 students placed at the developmental English level, and 2,787 students placed at the developmental math level. However, of these numbers, only 334 students attempted ENL 1055, and only 173 students attempted ENL 1060; only 48 attempted Math 1040, and only 19 attempted Math 1050. The OCC College Readiness report did not provide any information regarding the outcome of the remaining 1,997 who placed into developmental English but did not enroll in it or the 2,720 developmental math students who did not enroll in Math 1040 or Math 1050. The ATD initiative has resulted in the implementation of several direct interventions targeted at students at the lowest level of developmental English and math. However, the CBT Team was informed the College does not plan to continue its involvement in ATD beyond 2013.

Based on conversations and analysis, student success indicator data are not widely known or understood. OCC's graduation rate, while higher than five years ago, is still lower than the comparison colleges that the College has selected as its peers through the IPEDS peer analysis system for the annual College Feedback Reports (13% versus a median of 14%). The Michigan colleges OCC chose as benchmark colleges also had higher graduation rates than OCC; Pima Community College in Arizona was the same as OCC; the two Texas colleges were lower than OCC. The one-year retention rate for full-time and part-time students has dropped and is below the College's established critical score. The focus of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is on retention, success in developmental education coursework and student usage of student services. While these are typical measures and worth watching, there is nothing indicating the end result, i.e., graduation rates. Graduation rates are becoming increasingly urgent in public policy work, and federal guidelines for financial aid have instituted limits on the number of semesters students can receive Pell Grants. These measures should frame the overall picture of student success, with other indicators such as retention and course success serving as earlier indicators of progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. With leadership from the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs and the Executive Director for Enrollment Management, in coordination with the Cabinet and Deans, should develop and communicate a college-wide, comprehensive

OCC vision for Student Success. This vision should establish the foundation for a College culture of administratively integrated and coordinated Academic Affairs and Student Affairs in support of student success (Appendix C). The vision should be folded into the College Academic Master Plan (CAMP) with clear measures or indicators of the outcomes and supported with aligned forms of data and actionable metrics at the campus (or other unit) level.

(CAMP Strategic Outcome #1, Objective 6; draft June 6, 2012)

2. Provide the Executive Director of Enrollment Management with the support of a mentor from outside the College who can help her develop a comprehensive Student Success and Enrollment Plan; help her establish and maintain communication and feedback systems throughout Student Services; and help her develop and support a culture within Student Services focused on student success.
3. Change the title of the Executive Director of Enrollment Management to reflect the leadership and responsibility for Student Affairs College-wide, such as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs. Eliminate “Student” from the title of the Associate Vice Chancellor.
(CAMP Strategic Outcome #2, Objective 15; Outcome #5, Objective 27; draft June 6, 2012)
4. Redesign the College administrative committee structure to ensure stronger integration, communication and coordination with Student Services. Student Services representatives need to be present in every committee, such as the Deans Council, that makes recommendations that impact students. (CAMP Strategic Outcome #1, Objective 6; draft June 6, 2012)
5. As part of the OCC mission, define a role for a Student Affairs Dean for each campus to provide day-to-day supervision for all Student Services managers and staff. Repurpose/revise the job description of the newly created Campus Affairs Dean to include Student Services; expand the job title from Campus Affairs Dean to *Student and Campus Affairs Dean*.

This position would:

- Report day-to-day to the campus president and functionally to the OCC executive level administrator responsible for providing leadership for Student Affairs College-wide (currently the Executive Director),
- Supervise student service managers and staff day-to-day,

- Provide direction for Counselors,
 - Ensure coordination and communication with other campuses and within campus student services, and
 - Ensure consistent application of college-wide standards and coordination.
6. Reassign Counselors to Student Services and redefine their roles to include academic advising/educational planning, in line with efforts to ensure new students develop career pathways and experience a first semester and first-year experience with success. Establish priorities for counselor time during peak times of registration based on data and institutional strategy to determine which students are most likely to need and benefit from guidance. Counselor roles and other aspects of their work in student success should be an integrated part of a comprehensive Student Success and Enrollment Plan.
7. Develop a comprehensive Student Success and Enrollment Plan which includes the full range of components such as (Appendix D):
- A structured matriculation process beginning with mandatory academic skill assessment,
 - A mandatory new-student orientation for all students enrolled for six credits or more,
 - A course placement procedure based on basic academic skill assessment,
 - A retention plan with adequate sections of developmental classes to accommodate student needs,
 - An academic early alert program with standard dates for faculty feedback to students,
 - A first-year experience based on the work of John Gardner and redefined roles for Counselors as noted above, and
 - A clear statement of outcomes accompanied by standards for measuring effectiveness broken out by campus and unit.
8. Design an integrated tutoring system that eliminates the duplication of tutoring services, clarifies tutoring goals and assures equity in services regardless of the location of tutoring services. Develop a clear evaluation plan to determine the impact of tutoring on student success and apply that learning to improve and enhance services. Based on the streamlined plan for an integrated tutoring model, allocate funds adequate to meet student demand and support for academic student success.

9. Implement the centralization of financial aid processing and reporting per the Executive Director for Enrollment Management's plan to include:
 - Re-allocation of staff depending on individual qualifications and employment of an additional fourteen (14) qualified staff to bring staffing levels in line with the NASFAA staffing guidelines,
 - Elimination of the practice of automatically packaging student loans into financial aid awards,
 - Connection with an outside organization such as SALT American Student Assistance to manage, track and follow-up with student loan recipients,
 - Continuation of plans to address alleged student financial aid fraud more aggressively by instituting multiple aid disbursement within the semester with documentation of attendance required,
 - Relocation of staff computer stations at the Southfield campus to eliminate the risk of accidental display and exposure of student social security numbers,
 - Re-visitation of the issue of the classification level of financial aid clerical staff to develop staff stability within campus financial aid offices,
 - Relocation of the Attendance Cost Assistance Program from ACCESS to campus Financial Aid Offices when the centralization of processes has been achieved and staffing levels have reached the optimal level, and
 - Implementation of a tuition payment plan to relieve the pressure for the majority of completed awards by the tuition payment deadline.

10. Establish consistent campus signage for Financial Aid and Admissions; place "Steps to College Success" posters on all campuses in high student traffic and Student Service areas (only Auburn Hills displayed this poster). Revise the external and internal way-finding signage at Orchard Ridge to provide clear direction to second-floor admissions and financial aid (the Orchard Ridge Counseling reception desk, due to confusing signage, is considered the campus Welcome Desk). Orchard Ridge second-floor layout of Student Services is not intuitive, appears accidental and is confusing. Consider moving Financial Aid and other student enrollment functions temporarily to the under-used Student Center at Highland Lakes during peak registration times.

11. Clarify reporting lines and roles of the Admissions Recruiters. Maintaining a consistent College presence in high schools and in the community is important for public relations and College visibility, and the roles and responsibilities of these positions should be a topic of discussion within the Executive Team. If the Admissions Recruiters will no longer perform these duties, the College needs to decide how a presence in high schools and community activities and events will be managed.

12. Establish a formal communication linkage between administration and Student Government to provide a venue for students to express administrative-related issues and concerns, such as quarterly meetings with Student Government Officers with the Executive Director of Enrollment Management.