**Executive Summary and Action Plan**
Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) Self-Assessment
TRIO Student Support Services at Community College of Denver
April to June 2015


The Self-Assessment Process

The TRIO Student Support Services program at Community College of Denver (CCD) completed a self-assessment that utilized the guide for TRIO and Other Educational Opportunity Programs created by the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education.

The CAS Self-Assessment Committee for TRIO Student Support Services included a Facilitator and a four-member Review Team.

The Director of TRIO Student Support Services, **Troy Abfalter**, served as Facilitator. The Facilitator established and prepared the self-assessment Review Team (April 16 to May 6); explained CAS standards and guidelines (May 12); compiled documentary evidence (May 29 to June 15); recorded judgments at committee meetings (June 5, 11, 18); and completed the assessment process by creating a final report and action plan (June 26).

The Review Team included representation from all three organizational divisions of CCD and included the following individuals: **Angela Rodriguez**, Student Success Specialist, TRIO Student Support Services; **Carol Hester**, Assistant Director, Academic Support Center; **Kristine Frey**, Staff Accountant, Fiscal Services; and **David Williams**, Recruiter, Recruitment and Student Outreach. The Review Team reviewed documentary evidence and judged performance (June 1 to June 15); reported judgments at committee meetings (June 5, 11, 18); and completed the assessment process by creating a final report and action plan (June 26).


Component Areas Overview

Part 1: Mission

The mission of the program reads: "TRIO Student Support Services empowers students to graduate from Community College of Denver and transfer to a four-year college or university of choice. The program works specifically with students overcoming obstacles to education, including limited income, first generation to college, and need for accessibility services." One

strength of the program is that its mission aligns with the mission of the institution and the mission of the grantee agency, especially in the areas of diversity and student success. Also, the program sufficiently reviews and implements its mission as part of its strategic planning process. One opportunity for growth is to further disseminate the mission of the program to the Academic Affairs and Administrative Services Divisions of the institution. A second opportunity for growth is to disseminate the program's strategic plan alongside the program's mission in order to provide greater depth of information.

Part 2: Program

The primary elements of the program are defined by SSS program regulations (34 CFR 646): academic tutoring, academic advising, financial aid application assistance, financial literacy, transfer assistance, personal coaching, career development, academic and cultural enrichment, and peer and faculty mentoring. As a strength, the program structures its services based upon evidence-based practice. Also, the program excels in providing communication and instruction through a diversity of mediums and formats. The program is also strong in implementing services in accordance with all relevant regulations. One growth opportunity is to establish additional collaborations with Academic Affairs and Administrative Services Divisions. A second growth opportunity is to evaluate the most appropriate scope and most meaningful practice for assessing student learning outcomes.

Part 3: Organization and Leadership

Program leaders advance SSS through an institutional culture of support, frequent reporting of outcomes, alignment of program goals with institutional goals, and involvement on institutional initiatives. The leadership practices of program leaders are structured, inclusive and ethical. As a strength, the program excels in developing and retaining effective and respected professional and student staff members. In addition, the program develops and implements robust procedures for administration, internal controls, and reporting. An opportunity for growth is to further advance the organization through increased partnerships with the Academic Affairs and Administrative Services Division. A second opportunity for growth is to develop a procedure that clarifies who is included in making what decisions and when.

Part 4: Human Resources

The program maintains sufficient authority, autonomy and procedures to ensure that staff qualifications meet high standards. The performance of staff members is evaluated through a performance management process that includes goal setting, monthly reporting, monthly one-

on-one meetings, a mid-year review, and a final self-evaluation and review. One strength of the program is the significant amount of professional development provided to staff members. Also, the program excels in employing professional and student staff members that represent and relate to the SSS student population. A third strength is the healthy office culture and work-life balance that the program maintains. One opportunity for growth is additional training for student staff members on policies related to institutional and program procedures. Another opportunity for growth is to acquire institutional funding to add professional staff members and increase the number of students served.

Part 5: Ethics

Ethical principles set by Federal legislation and regulations, the Colorado Community College System, the institution, and relevant higher education organizations guide the ethical standards of the program. The program provides its staff members appropriate training on these ethical standards. The program maintains procedures for monitoring and enforcing its ethical standards as part of the performance management process. The program excels in the thoroughness of its ethical standards and is exemplary among its institutional peers in this regard. The program also excels in ensuring data confidentiality through its ethical standards, training and facilities. One growth opportunity is to determine a strategy for implementing the program's procedure for monitoring and enforcing ethical standards. A second growth opportunity is to ensure that adequate protections are in place for peer reporting of ethical violations ("whistleblower" protections).  A third growth opportunity is to enhance trainings on ethical standards to reinforce learning, especially in relation to online trainings provided by the institution.

Part 6: Law, Policy and Governance

The program remains in compliance with laws, regulations and policies by implementing a procedures manual, an internal system of controls and various quality assurance measures. The program utilizes resources provided by the institution and the system to assist its staff members with legal, policy and governance concerns. The program excels in limiting its exposure to liability through its robust ethical standards. Also, the program excels in the transparency of its data, recordkeeping and reporting. One growth opportunity is to determine a procedure to ensure that the appropriate level of authority guides the decision-making and approval process.

Part 7: Diversity, Equity and Access

The program ensures diversity, equity and access through outreach to students per project assurances, adherence to ethical standards that prohibit discrimination, the creation of an inclusive culture for both students and staff, and the maintenance of inclusive technology and facilities. The program implements a plan to employ personnel that have overcome disadvantaged backgrounds. The program excels in providing its staff members cross-training with diversity programs from across campus. The program also excels in ensuring equal access to services regardless of age, personal circumstance, ability, ethnicity, et cetera. One growth opportunity is to share best practices and knowledge related to diversity with the Academic Affairs and Administrative Services Divisions. Another growth opportunity is to explore ways to provide distance tutoring in collaboration with institutional partners.

Part 8: Institutional and External Relations

The program maintains effective relations with a wide-range of institutional and external partners, including executive administrators, faculty members, staff members within the Enrollment Administration and Student Success Division, four-year institutions, and community-based organizations. These institutional and external relations provide the program a number of benefits, including outreach to prospective participants, enhanced service provision for current participants, and the support of allies and advocates within the institution and beyond. The program excels in developing partnerships with four-year institutions to provide seamless transfer support and scholarship opportunities for its participants. The program is also strong in building connections with many community-based organizations in order to provide resources and experiential opportunities to its participants. One growth opportunity is to pursue additional partnership opportunities with the CCD Foundation in order to increase external funding. A second growth opportunity is to develop additional partnerships with the College Opportunity and Student Outreach Department in order to make connections with high school students and their families while remaining compliance with program regulations that prohibit recruitment.

Part 9: Financial Resources

The program maintains sufficient resources through its grant and institutional funds, though additional resources would enhance academic tutoring and expand access to academic enrichment activities such as international service-learning. Though grant funds remain flat, the program secured a 40% increase in institutional funds through the 2015-2020 SSS Grant Proposal. A growth opportunity is to partner with the CCD Foundation to increase external funding opportunities. The program excels in fiscal responsibility as a result of its robust procedures and internal controls related thereto, as evinced by a 2015 Colorado Community College System audit. The program utilizes an annual budgetary analysis followed by a monthly review of allocations to maintain responsible stewardship. The program achieves

cost-effectiveness by leveraging institutional commitments, such as a 90/10 split of grant and institutional funding for staff salaries and fringe.

Part 10: Technology

The program provides sufficient technology resources for its staff members, including updated workstations, iPads, iPhones and other tools. The program also provides a computer lab for its participants. To provide accessibility and adaptive technology, the program partners with CCD's Accessibility Center to make referrals. The program excels in its use of technology to deploy multimedia learning tools and provide access for student support at distance. A growth opportunity is to ensure that the institution refreshes the student computer lab according to its standard schedule and provides a printing option linked to student accounts. A second growth opportunity is to bolster the program's social media strategy by expanding implementation and incorporating participant feedback to identify emerging platforms. A third growth opportunity is to partner with CCD's Information Technology Department to ensure data security as the program moves to implement the new electronic recordkeeping standard identifying in Federal Uniform Grant Guidance.

Part 11: Facilities and Equipment

The program collaborates with CCD's Facilities Department to inventory, maintain and secure its facilities. A 2013 renovation of program facilities ensures that health, safety and access standards are met. The size, location, visibility and inviting ambience are strengths of the program's facilities.  Also, the program's offices are contiguous with other student development and retention programs in order to ensure coordination.  The program excels in providing each professional staff member a private office and one flex-office for when student employees require a confidential space. An opportunity for growth is to utilize artistic and cultural decor to further enhance the climate of the facility.  A second opportunity for growth is to secure the program's data and recordkeeping storage room with FOB access.

Part 12: Assessment and Evaluation

The program assesses student learning outcomes and evaluates program performance using a variety of data sources, including program applications, surveys, institutional records, student essays, student presentations, post-tests, and national clearinghouse data. The program sets goals, student learning outcomes and measureable benchmarks as part of the annual strategic planning process. The program has a clearly articulated plan to complete formative and summative program evaluation to demonstrate accountability and improve the program. One growth opportunity, however, is to secure the support of the Institutional Research Department to complete the sophisticated statistical regressions included in the evaluation plan. SSS also assesses student learning, but in a piecemeal fashion. A growth opportunity is to develop a plan to assess student learning outcomes in a systematic fashion.  A final growth opportunity is to share the results of assessment and evaluation at points of convergence with institutional partners.

Judgment of Performance

The Review Team identified five component areas of strength. These include Human Resources; Diversity, Equity and Access; Institutional and External Relations; Financial Resources; and Facilities and Equipment. The program's most significant strengths include:

- expansive, functional and welcoming facilities;
- staff training and expertise working with diverse student populations;
- partnerships with the Enrollment Administration and Student Success Division, faculty members, four-year institutions, and community-based organizations;
- hiring, developing and retaining high-quality staff members; and
- securing and managing fiscal resources.

The Review Team identified seven component areas that sufficiently meet standards. These include: Mission; Program; Organization and Leadership; Ethics; Law, Policy and Governance; Technology; and Assessment and Evaluation.

The Review Team identified zero component areas of deficiency or weakness.

| CAS Component Area | Judgment | Rating |
|---|---|---|
| Part 1: Mission | 3.3 | Meets standard |
| Part 2: Program | 3.6 | Meets standard |
| Part 3: Organization and Leadership | 3.8 | Meets standard |
| Part 4: Human Resources | 4.0 | Strength |
| Part 5: Ethics | 3.9 | Meets standard |
| Part 6: Law, Policy and Governance | 3.3 | Meet standard |
| Part 7: Diversity, Equity and Access | 4.3 | Strength |
| Part 8: Institutional and External Relations | 4.1 | Strength |
| Part 9: Financial Resources | 4.0 | Strength |
| Part 10: Technology | 3.9 | Meets standard |
| Part 11: Facilities and Equipment | 4.7 | Strength |
| Part 12: Assessment and Evaluation | 3.8 | Meets standard |

Prioritized Action Plan

1. Develop and implement a systematic assessment strategy for student learning outcomes.

- Review best practices in the assessment of student learning outcomes in student affairs, SSS Director, June 2015.
- Develop student learning outcomes and assessment methods, SSS Team, June 2015.
- Create a schedule of formative and summative assessment, SSS Director, July 2015.
- Complete formative and summative assessment, SSS Director, according to schedule.

2. Develop and implement procedures to clarify levels of authority required for specific decision-making activities.

   - Review best practices in a decision-making rubric with the Dean of Student Development and the Fiscal Services Department, Director, September 2015.
   - Create and add new procedures to the SSS Procedures Manual, SSS Director, September 2015.
   - Provide training to SSS Team on new procedures, SSS Director, September 2015.

3. Review, integrate and distribute the program's mission statement.

   - Review and refine the program's mission statement, SSS Team, June 2015.
   - Align program goals with the program's mission statement and the institution's strategic plan, SSS Team, June 2015.
   - Update the program's mission statement on the website, SSS Director, July 2015.
   - Publish a poster with the program's mission statement and goals, SSS Director, July 2015.

4. Increase collaboration with mid-level staff members in the Academic Affairs Division and Administrative Services Division.

   - Cross-train with Enrollment Services during Peak Registration, SSS Staff, August 2015.
   - Set up cross-training opportunities with specific departments, SSS Director, November 2015.
   - Targeted outreach to specific staff members for the TRIO Open House, SSS Team, February 2016

5. Implement and monitor the program's ethical standards.

   - Provide training to the SSS Team on the program's ethical standards, SSS Director, December 2015.
   - Identify strategies for monitoring the program's ethical standards, SSS Team, December 2015.
   - Include discussion of ethical standards in performance evaluations if applicable, SSS Director, April 2016.

6. Partner with CCD's Information Technology Department to ensure data security as the program moves to implement the new electronic recordkeeping standard identifying in Federal Uniform Grant Guidance.

   - Partner with IT to assess the security of the Blumen database, SSS Director, October 2015.
   - Partner with IT to review secure options for scanning and store electronic records, SSS Director, November 2015.
   - Partner with IT to analyze financial resources required to secure electronic records, SSS Director, November 2015.
   - Partner with IT to obtain technology required for security if feasible, SSS Director, January 2016.

- Develop a procedure and a schedule for implementing electronic recordkeeping, SSS Director, March 2016.

7. Secure the support of the Institutional Research Department to complete the sophisticated statistical regressions included in the evaluation plan.

   - Review resources and options with the Director of Institutional Research, SSS Director, February 2016.
   - Partner with IR to develop statistical tools to measure the effectiveness of an intervention while controlling for other variables, SSS Director, June 2016.
   - Implement the statistical tools as part of summative evaluation of the 2015-2016 academic year, SSS Director, June 2016.