

# Comprehensive Program Review Report



## Program Review - Admissions & Records

### Program Summary

#### 2021-2022

**Prepared by:** Michele L. Brock, Dean of Student Services

**What are the strengths of your area?:** Program Review for the period of July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021

In the area of Admissions and Records, the Unit works within this mission statement: Admissions and Records is to serve as a continuous resource for students throughout their academic experience. We strive to provide outstanding service to students in the areas of admission, registration, graduation, transcripts, degree audit and record maintenance by creating a positive environment that values diversity, multiculturalism, and mutual respect. The Admissions and Records Unit is committed to maintaining high academic standards, promoting student success, and creating opportunities for life-long learning. We strive to provide accurate, responsive, and respectful services to the students, faculty, staff, and administration, while upholding and maintaining the policies and procedures of the district.

In the academic year of 2020-2021, Admissions and Records proudly served over 16,452 students from the start to the finish of their journey here at the College of the Sequoias. Additionally, this dynamic staff worked hard to serve over 497 full and part-time faculty members in our collective efforts to facilitate student success. Annual district-wide enrollment has increased 6% since 2015-2016 with FTES totaling of 9,571 with students carrying 13,115 units just in Fall of 2020 alone.

It is deep inside the processes of these statistics where many of the A & R processes directly support staff and students. To give perspective to the daily and cyclical work of A & R, the following statistics (for a few of the major duties for the 2020-21 academic year) are offered; The team awarded 3023 degrees and 1423 certificates; 68,917 grades were processed, 509 grade changes, 2396 CW/EW drops, 4212 applications processed, 15,316 transcripts processed (almost 76% electronically), 842 external transcripts evaluated, 7428 certifications reviewed (golden four), 1439 microfilm transcripts processed to PDF and 522 to BDMS, 7 catalogs added for course-to course matrix for degree audit, 7428 GE Certifications reviewed, 543 enrollment verifications, 345 AB 540 cases, 436 Residency, DACA/Misc. 224 and 555 demographic changes were completed.

All of this great work was during the pandemic, when almost all staff worked from home over the academic year. With a satisfactory rate from the most recent Mother Lode Survey of students during this time was 96%. Such clearly illustrates the dedication that this amazing group of individuals who came together under significant change and challenge to be sure our students were served and served well. Although there were many hardships to overcome, Team A & R did an outstanding job in supporting students in this less-than-ideal circumstance.

We learned how to use and become proficient with tools to serve students in an online only setting moving from an antiquated system that circled around meeting a student face-to-face and with hardcopy paperwork. We worked quickly with Tech Services to develop a secure paperless/digital drop box that took the enormous number of forms and placed them on our webpage. Once the forms were completed, they could be uploaded into the secure SharePoint drop box. This was a vital service as no student was allowed on campus during this time and limited staff were available to manage incoming mail. A & R became available outside of standard methods of interaction in the use of zoom, google voice mail and our SharePoint Drop box. It is this type of example that demonstrates the many small and large ways this team had to adapt and find creative solutions to ensure the internal mechanism of A & R continued to function or the District would come to a screeching halt.

Across the District we have several highly specialized positions within A & R with pivotal duties that interact at every major junction of a student's journey with us. This unit and it's integral duties, similar to Financial Aid, cannot be afforded a hiatus as

was found true for many other units that had a significant decrease in work load/demand during the pandemic. The stress and strain of working, living and supporting family all in the same space was difficult for all but despite this team held it together. Should anyone person become unavailable several others stepped in to carry the load. This is where the A & R team showed their truest colors. At the end of the day it was all for the good of the student.

**What improvements are needed?:**

With a 96% approval rate and with such stats as listed above, what improvement may be needed you may ask? There is always room for improvement when it comes to serving our students, faculty, staff, district, and community at large.

The overarching challenge for the A & R unit is to move from a highly specialized and centralized division to a system that is decentralized to meet the growing needs beyond the Visalia Campus. As we face continued growth in our Hanford and Tulare centers, CTE, dual and concurrent enrollments and distance education the current structure makes these areas co-dependent on the Visalia Campus to support each unique need.

As it is so often quoted, “there are no bad teams just bad leaders”, I cannot look at improvement of a program or team or individual I oversee, without continually evaluating my efficacy as a servant leader and change agent. It is my deepest belief that any leader should have an ongoing process to seek and receive feedback, as well as data point to reflect continuous growth and efficiency to review and revise actions and thought processes at the very least. My effort in this is reflected by my focus within my Performance Goals. For myself and those I have to good fortune to lead, we will engage in weekly and monthly professional development opportunities to ensure revision of area policies and procedures that ensure equity of access and services for all.

More directly related to my A & R team, through designated project days through out the academic year, we will work collaboratively to develop and implement processes that create meaningful touch points for student enrolling at COS. This work will be shared with the other units within Student Services such as the Welcome Center and Student Success staff; to ensure a well-rounded approach to reach the unique and diverse needs of the communities we serve.

Additionally, in the work of Admission and Records we will be focusing on evaluating identifying and revising admissions processes that create a barrier to students using only online/digital platforms.

More broadly, in my work as the chair of the Behavior Intervention Team, it is my goal to infuse the lens of social justice in the work we do with in the walls of Student Services and the student code of conduct.

Overall, our work will include reflection on our processes within A & R. Looking directly at how every student from a face-to-face platform to completely online, find access and success within COS. We must also identify and work to support the innate struggles and strengths of the student we serve within our District.

Our current areas of improvement more specifically are nestled at the heart of the many State initiatives that point our students towards access to equitable services that close the achievement gap while accelerating their persistence and completion rates. In order to support these high stakes and help move the needle, our Unit must be able to have the staff ratio and tools to support such significant growth and timelines. The largest area of deficit is managing the increase of demand highlighted in the following areas most specifically:

\* Continue to be a accessible and equitable access point to all students that are served here at the College. Providing competent, non-bias support to all students at all times is a continued area of growth the team engages in.

\* Increase management and staffing to directly support all students (including evening/online), support students' records maintenance/compliance, along with expansion of outreach impact such as the Dual Enrollment High School students, College Promise, AB 705, the funding formula, and the tremendous impact moving all student and services remotely causing potential for gaps in service.

\* Create positions to meet the growing needs of case management within A &R, such as: A & R Generalist/Coord for high touch enrollments and completions (i.e., dual/concurrent enrollment, applications to enrollments and completion awarding) from application management to degree awarding.

\* Additionally, to meet these increasing demands this Unit must be continually trained and cross trained to ensure equitable services in all setting at all locations for all students.

\*Continued efforts to ensure compliance with records keeping including Microfilm and its conversation into our SIS/BDMS to

maintain records accordingly.

\* Degree Works has become part of the student and counselors standard set of tools within COS. This system will require continual maintenance and upkeep from the scribing to the building of catalogs and course to course equivalence. With more course-to-course input and upkeep students with external transcripts will have a more accurate view of their true progress and what if scenarios.

**Describe any external opportunities or challenges.:** Describe any external opportunities?

Looking through the lens of digital access and equity for all, the pandemic has taken us full throttle into online learning. Such an event allowed our unit to quickly see that paper based, face-to-face engagement could not and more importantly should not be our only if not primary way of serving our student. From how we reset passwords, to sending and receiving transcripts; received rosters and grades; posted degree and handled pass-alongs and degree/cert applications (just to name a few areas) all had to be retooled immediately. We could no longer shy away from the sometimes referred to "Fifth Campus" (Visalia, Hanford, Tulare, Dual/Con High School and Distance Ed.) and must now in almost one week move all processes to support online/remote only. What a challenge which has resulted in one of the greatest shifts in mindsets for the institution which moves as quickly as most bureaucratic institution mired in red tape. We had no choice but to adapt and adapt we sure did. I am most proud of the collaborative heavy lifting that went on in this space. Continually we ran into processes that could not support the remote student. From access to technology and Wi-Fi to developing and online form repository were not easy; with all the players at home managing, home, life, and work all at once in one of the most precarious time in recent global history. As health and lives slipped beyond our personal control, trying to serve students, staff, and the community as we always had, found moments of brilliance within the collective. We, by necessity, could not manage alone and by sheer preservation we became acutely aware of the need of "team" despite the prescribed isolation. With our internal and external assets/resources stretched to reach these unique needs, the creative brainstorm session that took place were often so very fruitful. Although such can lend a spotlight to those sitting idle and non-responsive, for those who chose to run the marathon- they got on and did not stop. For this I honor most. Not for all that didn't go as we thought, but for all the times, we were able to meet the need of that student or that staff member in a completely different way. It is in these moments, that allow us now to revisit the "hows" and "whys" of processes and policy that must be retooled to meet the current and new normal of tomorrow.

Future casting based on the implementation of the Banner 9 Self-Serve, this will be a tangible software solution that will bring the student and faculty experience to the next digital level. As we test this major upgrade, this will require several significant shifts in policies and procedures to level up to this new normal. A few of the many benefits will be found for the instructors by creating a new roster/grading interface which has the capacity to be completely independent online, while meeting all the Title 5 and other regulatory compliance needs. The Banner Web Portal for students will also receive a fundamental upgrade. Students will have access to real time data such as personalization, grades, transcripts, and planning tools. It will also be ready for actions such as real time registration and advising tools. This resource will truly complement the ongoing work to continue to embrace the online learning platform as a comprehensive Universal Design and not another small piece of classroom offerings.

Additionally, the onboarding of the Student Services Manager (Neal Powell) offers tremendous opportunity to continue to revisit and revise what should be adjusted in our new normal. The scope of work for this position focuses on projects and direct coaching support to staff. This work encompasses many projects. Recent work circles around the implementation of NextGen a digital documentation solution in partnership with Financial Aid, to working directly with staff to develop/update manuals for each area including workflow, demand calendars and SOPs. This allows the Director of FA and Dean over A & R, to ensure quality and completion to several areas of need that was needed but not possible in the past. A large support of this role also is in the collaboration with the High School Dual/Concurrent Director (Brandan Hildreth). Work around Dual/Concurrent has been increasing to such a degree that there have been consistent errors in students completing the appropriate application correctly, gaining permission to take courses (HS permission form) and be cleared to register (opportunity for priority registration). The collective work in this area is to codify exemplary practices that have centralized processes that provide accurate feedback to all parties to ensure forms and actions are completed as required in a timely manner so all HS Dual/Con students can register on the registration date in an appropriate class for their pathway.

Describe any external challenges?

I can't imagine anyone not being impacted by external challenges in terms of the pandemic. It turned how we did business up to that point upside down and inside out. The strain on a staff already stretched thin with the increase in growth, was evident in morale and engagement at the very least. Soon compassion fatigue was a real thing and life as we knew it was a memory. There is truly no other challenge that impacted our unit than the pandemic and the resulting remote status for students and none or inconsistent staff support in the office due to safety protocols.

**Overall SAO Achievement:** Much of the lack of progress is SAO achievement comes mostly from the lack of students and faculty

on campus. Anything that was nonessential came to a screeching halt (often more to the task not being conducive to work at home /needing special equipment etc.); such as the cumbersome work of moving records from microfiche into BDMS.

**Changes Based on SAO Achievement:** Based on reflection from last year and projecting with at least 50% of student remaining 100% online, our goals will shift with this new normal. From the lessons we have learned thus far, we must embrace and make space for the fully online student and faculty presence within our district. All while not decreasing are ability to serve students and staff when on site. As we continuedly review systems and policies to ensure equity for all students, we must address the access point of online learning at a far grater rate and a sustainable realty for the future.

**Outcome cycle evaluation:** Overall, I am truly proud of the great work this team has accomplished. This time has been extremely challenging to ensure none of the vital processes and systems that make student enrollment, engagement and goal attainment a reality-- fail. In this I can say we have been very successful within the work of Admissions and records. We are also more the wise for this journey. We have been stretched and churned to realize that the lens of equity is much more larger that perhaps many look through before. We have learned the power and limitation of online learning and serving remotely. We know that there is not just one answer nor just one right way. We know we can never go backward and today we must thrust forward if for nothing else and for perhaps the most important piece of our life's work, for the students.

## Action: Cross Train A & R staff

Scheduling structure and time to allow for training opportunities for job shadowing and training will ensure during absences or cyclic demands the lack of a single staff member with the area of expertise will not impede timely/efficiency, accurate, student/staff centered service within that area.

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**Implementation Timeline:** 2020 - 2021, 2021 - 2022

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**Identify related course/program outcomes:**

**Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position):** Michele Brock, Dean of Student Services, and Neal Powell, Student Services Manager

**Rationale (With supporting data):** When staff is unavailable student/staff & faculty needs are not able to be addressed as no other person in the team is able to support the process. Student/staff needs are put on hold until the team member with the specialize knowledge returns. This can greatly impact customer service, student success, and overall compliance. Based on several incidence of lack of specialized staff availability (absence, workload demand etc.) actions such as cross training will continue to be taken during the 2021-2022 academic school year to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and accuracy to ensure compliance for timelines and regulations to be carried out by all A & R staff while ensuring expedient student/staff service is available at all times. A & R staff will have designated time each month to work on this project in small groups and individually. Cross training opportunities are open to all staff members.

Each A & R staff member will have created a manual, flowchart and handbook to support efficiency in their workflow and allow other staff to be cross trained to add additional support to the A & R team during an absence or high demand period.

**Priority:** Medium

**Safety Issue:** No

**External Mandate:** No

**Safety/Mandate Explanation:**

### Update on Action

#### Updates

**Update Year:** 2021-2022

06/30/2021

**Status:** Continue Action Next Year

Due to the specialized nature of the workloads in the A & R office, services and processes can be negatively impacted when only one staff member is able to address certain areas. This interferes with student satisfaction, compliance related deadlines and the efficiency of interdependent cycles of the office and the District at large.

Time is set aside every month for all A & R staff to cross-train. In addition A & R staff are working to complete workflow charts and handbooks for each area to ensure designated staff can also interface with the processes ensuring timely completion.

**Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):**

# Program Review - Admissions & Records

## Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2015-2018

**District Objectives** - 3.2 - Increase training for academic and student services staff and faculty to respond to the unique needs of our student population.

**District Objectives** - 4.1 - Improve operational systems based upon data driven decision-making as described in the COS 2.0 manuals.

**District Objectives** - 4.2 - Improve the efficiency, effectiveness and communication of human, physical, technological, and financial resources to advance the District Mission.

District Objectives: 2021-2025

**District Objective 4.3** - Improve professional development practices District-wide for all District employees to support equity and operational effectiveness from 2021-2025.

## Action: Increase student access to A & R processes via a digital platform to better accommodate students and faculty that are interfacing fully online.

Train staff and students on the use of Banner 9 self service features. This will allow students real time data (received transcripts, AP scores, degree applications/awarding) to better facilitate time lines and access. Also this upgrade will support submission of rosters/grades etc. from the faculty to eliminate the need for paper and wet signature process. Several processes due to this upgrade will allow fully digital options of students and staff.

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**Implementation Timeline:** 2021 - 2022

**Leave Blank:**

**Leave Blank:**

**Identify related course/program outcomes:**

**Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position):** A & R Staff, Dean of Student Services, Marketing

**Rationale (With supporting data):**

**Priority:** Medium

**Safety Issue:** No

**External Mandate:** No

**Safety/Mandate Explanation:**

## Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

**District Objective 1.1** - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 2025.

## Action: Increase equitable student access, persistence and completion within A & R processes (Application, registration, awarding)

Increase all student access, persistence and completion as it relates to A & R processes in access, application completion/enrollment, course completion/evaluation, persistence and awarding of degrees and certificate by creating a position to support student needs within these areas. This position would interface between all areas of A & R to facilitate removal of barriers and increase the pathway from application to completion. This position could directly support CTE and Dual/Concurrent processes to maximize

**Leave Blank:**

**Implementation Timeline:** 2020 - 2021, 2021 - 2022

**Leave Blank:**

# Program Review - Admissions & Records

Leave Blank:

Identify related course/program outcomes:

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Michele Brock, Dean of Student Services and Neal Powell, Student Services Manager

Rationale (With supporting data): With the example of over 10,000+ CCCApply applications processed during this academic year, many of these students never enroll in COS. Additionally, the increase in fraudulent applications is significant causing strict filters that also require a manual process to release the students' legitimate applications. This position would designate duties to case manager and create baseline data to build on. This would impact enrollment and would also potentially impact how we process workshops at our high school outreach events. This position would also work with the evaluations unit to ensure student are contacted (via Degree Works data) who are close or at completion for awarding. Overall this position will ensure data collection and student contact in crucial touch points that are currently not addressed in any capacity.

Priority: High

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

## Update on Action

### Updates

Update Year: 2021-2022

06/30/2021

Status: Continue Action Next Year

No action has been taken on this request.

Impact on District Objectives/Unit Outcomes (Not Required):

## Resources Description

**Personnel - Classified/Confidential** - Hire a Student Services Success Coordinator to support informational campaigns (high school, four-year institutions and other community pathways) intrusive targeted case management of high touch populations (CTE, Dual/Concurrent, DE, Centers) in the continuum of application to completion within the scope of A & R. (Active)

**Why is this resource required for this action?:** With the increase of our inherently disadvantaged student population, increases in CTE and dual/concurrent programs as well as the funding formal with an emphasis in completion of degrees and certificates, more direct student case management would directly benefit student access, persistence and completion.

**Notes (optional):**

**Cost of Request (Nothing will be funded over the amount listed.):** 80000

## Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

**District Objective 1.1** - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 2025.

**District Objective 2.4** - Increase the percentage of CTE students who achieve their employment objectives by five percentage points (job closely related to field of study and attainment of a livable wage) and the number of CTE students who successfully complete 9+ CTE units in a single year by 10% from 2021-2025.