

Comprehensive Program Review Report



Program Review - Access and Ability Center

Program Summary

2023-2024

Prepared by: Lyndsi Litten, AAC Director

What are the strengths of your area?: The Access and Ability Center (AAC) advocates for equal access to opportunities for student success. We envision a college experience that is supportive, engaging, and barrier free. College of the Sequoias (COS)'s Access and Ability Center's commitment and dedication to students with physical, communication, psychological, and learning disabilities is evidenced by its growth since its inception in 1975.

We facilitate innovative systems and service provision to ensure students have an accessible experience in their pursuit of excellence here at the College of the Sequoias. We assist eligible students in making smooth transitions into our institution, as well as from our college to universities or work settings. Additionally, we continually strive to address existing barriers encountered both within our institution and in the community at large.

The strengths of our department include:

- highly trained, qualified and committed professionals, with extensive experience in the disability field;
- a wide range of available services that address the needs of our students;
- flexibility in meeting the shifting landscape of postsecondary disability service provision, including changes to the Title 5 regulations;
- a shared desire to provide ongoing sensitivity training to our campus community, and
- a commitment to working as a team to address students' needs.
- providing services in a more integrated setting since our recent relocation to the back of the library.

The Success Dashboard in Tableau Public (data extracted 7.23.2023) revealed the following data regarding success rates (including EWs) of all COS courses across all departments across the past 5 academic years (FA18-SP23):

Student Group	Success Rates of Students Receiving AAC Services	Success Rates of Students NOT Receiving AAC Services
Veteran Students	79.5%	77.7%
Puente Students	76.4%	67.2%

Clearly, our veteran and Puente students have greater success when connected with the Access and Ability Center.

Furthermore, when comparing those who received AAC services with those who did not across race/ethnicity and gender, students who were either African-American or Filipino females, Native American males, or Asian (females and/or males) experienced higher success rates when connected with AAC. These results could indicate that students of these race/ethnicities are more willing to seek assistance and connect with AAC or perhaps they are more active in utilizing our services offered. Additionally, data revealed that non-binary Foster Youths who received AAC services had success rates more than twice as high than those who did not use services (81.8% and 39.0%, respectively) and success rates were also higher for those of unknown gender. Lastly, there were higher success rates of those who used AAC services than those who did not for first-time transfer students who were either female and/or of unknown gender, first-time students who were non-binary, and returning students who were non-binary across the last 5 years. These results may be indicative of these students' willingness to seek and use services within these subgroups.

What improvements are needed?: 1. The first challenge we are facing right now is not having faculty at full capacity since our

Learning Specialist has transitioned to 3 days per week during her final year before retirement. We need to hire a faculty soon to backfill her. Over the past year, we have experienced an increase of 40.8% Intakes and with our rate of opening around 100 files per month, we will be limiting availability for counseling appointments if we don't add another faculty member. We have legal regulations that require us to respond to requests for accommodations within a timely manner, so we cannot delay initial Intake appointments. So far during our first month of this FA23 semester, we have completed 89 Intakes, 1 learning assessment, and began assessing another 14 students. This is a record high! We anticipate contacts will continue to increase as a result of our recent relocation. Upon our full-time Learning Specialist's retirement at the end of this academic year, we need to replace this position to meet our student demand by hiring another Learning Specialist AAC Counselor. After May 2024, our remaining faculty will consist of 1.5 Counselors, 0.5 Learning Specialist, and an Adjunct Counselor; this will fall short of student demand. The new hire would help facilitate student success by providing specialized services, high quality counseling, and advocacy necessary for equal access to higher education. The dual expertise (split position) of this faculty member is needed to be able to cover learning disability assessments and study skills instruction as well as perform counseling duties.

2. We continue to struggle to successfully transitioning to a new data management system, AIM (Accessible Information Management), which will improve and streamline our data collection and reporting. IT approved the purchase of this system and agreed to support it. As of the last two program reviews, AAC staff was in the infancy stage of implementation. Unfortunately, due in part to our move to online services during the last couple of years followed by our physical move on campus last summer, we continue to be at about the same stage of development. Because it will take some time to implement, we continue to be challenged with the amount of documentation required to ensure that students' contacts, appointments, and utilized services are being documented correctly for reporting purposes. If we cannot achieve migration over by Dec 2023 with AIM's assistance, it is clear that COS or outside IT support (either AIM staff or hiring a temporary information technology staff) will be necessary to ensure the applications and everything within the system are in place, connected, and working properly. Regardless, it has been challenging to identify a slower period (or month of the year) to make the leap since demand is remaining consistent, and has increased 13.9% from AY22 to AY23. Until AIM is fully implemented and operational, AAC staff will continue to utilize systems currently in place.

3. The only downside to our relocation in Lodgpole is that there are not 3 distinct private testing rooms as we previously had in North Sequoia. I am hopeful that facilities can build an interior wall in a room/office that has two doors. The current spaces being used as private testing rooms will not be ideal in the long-run. We will continue to evaluate what is needed to meet our needs. Our Testing Center experienced an increase of 48.0% from AY22 (1901 exams proctored) to AY23 (2814 exams proctored). Specifically, our Visalia Testing Center has proctored 120 exams during the first month of Fall 2023 in our new larger location in the back of the library, which is an increase of 84.6% from the 65 exams proctored in the first month of Fall 2022.

Describe any external opportunities or challenges.: The most exciting opportunity that we see is that we feel confident that we can successfully bring back LS 308 (Instructional Support) class due to our recent relocation. We can offer these specialized services in the Educational Support Services building until Student Services creates a One Stop in Summer 2024 on the first floor of the library. At that time, it is ideal that we offer that course for independent workers back in the library. This is where the course was offered in years prior before it was moved into a less integrated setting where the enrollment plummeted. We have many students who have requested it since it was cancelled in Fall 2020 and we are well aware of the need since COS responded to AB 705 with the removal of remedial courses. The accompanied support courses are not enough with students who are far below college-ready English and math. In addition, many students benefitted from Instructional Support for their major and other general education courses.

The other opportunity that poses as a challenge is that our department is currently divided on the Visalia campus across two buildings. It's a valuable opportunity to have space within the Educational Support Services building along with Tutorial, Math Lab, Writing Center, and ESL. Our Accessibility Center (lab), Interpreting Services and Data Specialist along with student workers are available there to students. The rest of AAC and our Testing Center are in the library. We will evaluate the effectiveness of students being able to access us in two spaces on the Visalia campus as well as the effectiveness of staff being able to offer collaborative services this academic year.

Overall SAO Achievement: The Access and Ability Center's SAOs are to: (1) strive to ensure that each student's college experience is supportive, engaging, and barrier-free, and (2) advocate for equal access to opportunities for student success. In the academic year of 2022-23, AAC provided services to 1,855 students, which is an increase of 13.9% or more 226 students from the previous academic year. Last year, 380 AAC students obtained their Associate degree(s) and/or Certificate(s). This is an increase of 60.3% from the previous AY22 of 237 graduates. AAC utilizes strategic marketing campus-wide to ensure all students are aware of our program, which we refer to as outreach. Such outreach practices each semester include: (1) in-class presentations, (2) presenting (or tabling a booth) at various events for students, (3) familiarizing faculty about referrals and providing sample syllabi statements, (4) collaborating with general counselors and Mental Health about the soft hand-off, (5) collaborating with special programs, such as Veterans, Foster youth, EOPS, Student Success, and probation students, and (6) reaching out to former AAC students who are currently enrolled.

	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
# Active AAC Students	1879	1927	2342
Growth by Academic Year		Increase of 48 Students (+ 2.6%)	Increase of 415 Students (+ 21.5%)
# Intakes Completed	377	568	800
Growth by Academic Year		199 More Intakes (+ 50.7%)	232 More Intakes (+ 40.8%)
# AAC Service Contacts	1422	1629	1855
Growth by Academic Year		207 More Contacts (+ 14.6%)	226 More Contacts (+ 13.9%)

As shown in the table above, our outreach efforts have been successful resulting in an increase of 21.5% (or 415) more Active students from AY22 to AY23. Furthermore, during AY23, we completed 800 Intakes resulting in an increase of 40.8% (compared to 568 Intakes completed during AY22). Of these, 166 Intakes were due to 2022-23 high school outreach who are now first-year students or dual-enrolled students. Out of these, 146 (or 88%) enrolled this FA23 semester. Since we began encouraging high school partners to have their students open their files with us independently (last year only 4 HS brought groups to campus during school hours), we see that the students who did open an AAC file were invested in their future plans and did follow through on their intentions to enroll at COS. Regarding alternate media, there has been an increase of 94.9% (or 129 more students) from AY22 to AY23, which has led in an increase of 28.4% requests fulfilled. Our Testing Center experienced an increase of 48.0% from AY22 (1901 exams proctored) to AY23 (2814 exams proctored). Specifically, our Visalia Testing Center has proctored 120 exams during the first month of Fall 2023 in our new larger location in the back of the library, which is an increase of 84.6% from the 65 exams proctored in the first month of Fall 2022.

Changes Based on SAO Achievement: We plan to continue current in-reach practices to ensure all students know about and feel supported in using alternate media and assistive technology tools as well as to improve our persistence rates especially among first-year students using AAC services.

Outcome cycle evaluation: The AAC staff has analyzed each area’s SAOs and has made changes based on the data and outcomes. This Unit will continue to review data in relation to SAOs during monthly team meetings, area meetings and staff folder meetings including within individual evaluations. We will continue to gather and reflect upon data, correlations, and outcomes to determine if adjustments are needed.

Action: 2022-2023 Full-Time Test Proctor

Classified full-time, 12-mo Test Proctor (additional position) for Access and Ability Center, paid thru General Fund. The work hours will be from 10am to 7pm.

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Implementation Timeline: 2019 - 2020, 2022 - 2023

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Identify related course/program outcomes: To effectively run the Testing Center, an additional hire of a 12-mo full-time Testing Proctor is required to meet the growing demand of testing accommodations, provide staffing for extended business hours, and maintain testing integrity. This allows for students to have access to this accommodation/service at the time that is needed. This Test Proctor is needed to cover breaks/lunches for current Test Proctor since testing cannot be stopped mid-way, and this would enable the testing center to be open later (with a 10am-7pm shift) to serve students who attend later college classes and/or work full-time. Furthermore, we have concluded that in order to best serve students, the Testing Center should be in a more generalized setting, especially since it also provides testing services to general students who need to take make-up exams, etc. We propose moving to the Library (Lodgepole building) or the new Educational Support building.

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Lyndsi Litten, AAC Director

Rationale (With supporting data): Besides the fact that more help has proven to be needed to meet demands, our current Test Proctor is only a 10-month employee and this new position would enable us to cover the summer months without the extra cost on the AAC program. In the past, we used student workers to extend working hours, and although student workers have been vital in helping perform the duties of the testing center, there were concerns from Faculty that the testing integrity may be impacted. So this past year, we hired a Seasonal position which has been challenging with the work limitations with the nature of this position with work-time limits annually as well as the reliability due to short-term positions not staying filled. Overall, the two Test Proctors would be ideal, and it would be more equitable to be able to offer extended hours.

Program Review - Access and Ability Center

Priority: High

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Update on Action

Updates

Update Year: 2023 - 2024

09/01/2023

Status: Action Completed

Full time Test Proctor was hired August 2023

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

Update Year: 2022 - 2023

09/30/2022

Status: Continue Action Next Year

After in-depth analysis, it has been determined that the steady use of the Testing Center cannot be fulfilled by one staff member alone. A part-time staff will be needed to assist at least 4 hours per day (and more hours may be required on some days). Last year, 49% and 61% of students utilizing Testing Center were general (nonAAC) students in FA21 and SP22, respectively; therefore, it seems appropriate to rely on College Effort (college's general fund revenues allocated to serve students with disabilities) in order to maintain the prompt, high level, and variable demands of service delivery to all students including those with disabilities, as well as complying with Title 5 regulations. Lastly, we have concluded that in order to best serve students, the Testing Center should be in a more generalized setting, especially since it also provides testing services to general students who need to take make-up exams, etc. We propose moving to the Library (Lodgepole building) or the new Educational Support building.

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

Resources Description

Personnel - Classified/Confidential - Another Full-time Test Proctor, paid by General Fund is needed to cover current Test Proctor's breaks/lunches since we can't stop students in the middle of their tests, to help since most days are steadily busy (and two eyes are not enough even with cameras), and to be able to offer extended testing hours. In the event that someone is out, we need another trained staff present (i.e., familiar with assistive technology). (Active)

Why is this resource required for this action?: Given that nearly half (and even more than half of students last semester) who use consistently use AAC Testing Services are general (non-AAC) students who are doing make-up exams, it would be appropriate for this additional staff be paid using College Effort. Data from Spring 2022 semester revealed that 247 (61%) students who used our Testing Center were not AAC students (out of 927 tests proctored). Furthermore, throughout the Fall 2021 semester, there were 137 (49%) students who utilized our Testing Center were not AAC students (out of 973 tests proctored). Moreover, due to the nature of the environment, we cannot stop proctoring exams while students are in the middle of testing; therefore, we need another Test Proctor to cover when our current Test Proctor must take daily breaks/lunch. We tried having other AAC staff cover while staggering lunches, but then we ran into coverage problems in our main office and lab. Then staff were forced to take lunch at an unreasonable hour, etc. Overall, this constant movement within the department caused too much stress. This Fall 2022 semester we have experienced such an increase in usage that one person cannot effectively complete duties alone. Currently, there is a Seasonal helping right now 6 hrs per day which has proven that two staff are needed to meet the demand. They are extremely busy! As it is crucial that our students be assisted by those familiar with their unique challenges, including such staff and student workers who have received necessary training provided by our certificated faculty.

Notes (optional): Salary Range is 28 step 2 (\$50,440); Benefits are (\$17,971.52 plus health cost \$19,138.20)

We also recommend that we explore moving the Testing Center in order to provide this service in the more integrated Library/Lodgepole (or Educational Support building) setting that has more equitable extended hours to serve the working student and those enrolled in evening classes while be near other COS staff with same hours. Offering testing in a setting with more staff and extended business hours would assure fiscal responsibility as well as greater accessibility in operating hours.

Cost of Request (Nothing will be funded over the amount listed.): 87549.72

Program Review - Access and Ability Center

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2018-2021
District Objective 2.1 - Increase the percentage of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and Non-CTE) by 5 percentage points over three years
District Objective 2.4 - By 2021, Increase the percentage of CTE students who achieve their employment objectives by 5 percentage points
District Objective 3.2 - By 2021, increase the percentage of students in targeted groups who complete transfer-level English (by 10 percentage points) and transfer-level math (by 5 percentage points) within their first year
District Objective 4.2 - Improve organizational effectiveness by strengthening operations of and communication between District departments, divisions, and constituents
District Objectives: 2021-2025
District Objective 1.1 - The District will increase FTES 2% from 2021 to 2025.
District Objective 2.1 - Increase the number of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and non-CTE) by 5% from 2021-2025.
District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who are transfer-ready by 15% and students who transfer to four-year institutions by 10% from 2021-2025.
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.
District Objective 3.1 - Reduce equity gaps in course success rates across all departments by 40% from 2021-2025.

Action: 2023-2024 Complete Implementation of AIM, AAC Data Management System (with the initialization and support of IT)

AAC purchased AIM, a Data Management system, to record students enrolled, services, booking testing appointments, equipment checkout, appointment management. This will centralize and keep information in one location to ensure accurate and up to date on student and misc information. The implementation process has been very challenging and has taken 3 years already.

Leave Blank: Essential for Operation

Implementation Timeline: 2019 - 2020, 2020 - 2021, 2021 - 2022, 2022 - 2023, 2023 - 2024

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Identify related course/program outcomes: Having a data management system will allow AAC staff to maintain up to date information on student services and progress. This type of system will allow services to be managed by students, be managed online and to replace paper, keep registered students informed. Also this system will be 508-compliant and fully accessible by all students, faculty and staff. AAC is dedicated to maintaining and continually enhancing the overall accessibility of the system for all users.

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Lyndsi Litten, AAC Director

Rationale (With supporting data): Now that AIM is set up for single-sign-on, the mapping of our student records database to AIM is needed to be completed, as well as verification that it's connected fully to Banner. Since AAC doesn't have an IT specialist, we need COS IT to assist with this process. If they cannot make time for this, hiring an IT applications specialist will be necessary.

Priority: High

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Update on Action

Program Review - Access and Ability Center

Updates

Update Year: 2023 - 2024

09/22/2023

Status: Continue Action Next Year

We are within our current contract with AIM (our data management system) and we still trying to transition to it and get it ready for implementation; therefore, if IT personnel cannot dedicate time to finish this project for us, we will need to hire a short-term contracted person to assist.

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

Resources Description

Adjustment to Base Budget - Assistance to purchase a data management system specifically designed with the unique services and documentation required for Disabled student services Departments. (Active)

Why is this resource required for this action?: AAC is currently serving 1600 students and AIM (Accessible Information Management) was purchased June 2019, a data management system that will document, store, and process the variety of services offered to students. This system will help with minimizing the man hours currently needed to complete the majority of these tasks and it links to the several IT systems in operation in COS . It will also greatly assist in obtaining up to the minute information needed for reports and research. AAC requires assistance with partial payment of system. The amount needed is \$16,000.

Notes (optional): This system has already been purchased, but we are still waiting for IT to prioritize finishing up the initialization and communication with Banner 9.

Cost of Request (Nothing will be funded over the amount listed.): 16000

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2018-2021

District Objective 2.1 - Increase the percentage of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and Non-CTE) by 5 percentage points over three years

District Objective 2.4 - By 2021, Increase the percentage of CTE students who achieve their employment objectives by 5 percentage points

District Objective 3.2 - By 2021, increase the percentage of students in targeted groups who complete transfer-level English (by 10 percentage points) and transfer-level math (by 5 percentage points) within their first year

District Objective 4.1 - Increase the use of data for decision-making at the District and department/unit level

District Objective 4.2 - Improve organizational effectiveness by strengthening operations of and communication between District departments, divisions, and constituents

District Objective 4.3 - College of the Sequoias Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff will engage in best practices and staff development to sustain effective operational systems for institutional assessment and continuous improvement.

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 3.1 - Reduce equity gaps in course success rates across all departments by 40% from 2021-2025.

District Objective 4.2 - Improve communication practices needed to support organizational effectiveness and continuous improvement across all District units and constituents from 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: 2023-2024 Hire a full-time AAC Counselor/Learning Specialist

By June 30, 2024, hire a full-time Learning Specialist/AAC Counselor to provide a myriad of services such as electronic Student Educational Plans, course selection/registration, Academic Accommodations Plan (AAP), open new files for students, review medical verification and code students to the program, advocacy and disability accommodations. In addition, complete learning assessments and provide study skill-building.

Program Review - Access and Ability Center

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Implementation Timeline: 2023 - 2024

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Identify related course/program outcomes: Improve customer service and equitable resources for students.

Person(s) Responsible (Name and Position): Lyndsi Litten, AAC Director

Rationale (With supporting data): To replace the position going vacant in May 2024, rather than hiring a full-time Learning Specialist, we want to replace it with another Learning Specialist AAC Counselor who has split duties who will be able to perform the duties of a Learning Specialist to complete learning assessments as well as Counseling duties. AAC won't be able to meet the student demands with only 1.5 full-time counselors, 1 part-time counselor, and 0.5 Learning Specialist. Last year, there were 755 assessment appointments that enabled 60 students to complete learning assessments qualifying them as either having a learning or intellectual disability, and another 75 students who were assisted to identify alternate verification in lieu of assessment to open their files so they could obtain services. Therefore, 5.8% (135) of our 2342 active AAC students in AY23 were served because of a Learning Specialist, which cannot be accomplished with only our remaining 0.5 Learning Specialist after the other's retirement. Furthermore, there were 800 Intakes completed by faculty in AY23, which was an increase of 40.9% from the previous academic year. In the first month of Fall 2023, we have completed 89 Intakes, completed 1 learning assessment and have 14 more currently in progress. This is a huge influx of new students probably due to our recent relocation into a more integrated setting in the library, which demand will need to be met. When a Learning Specialist is also a Counselor, s/he can meet students' requests for counseling appointments (for example, AAC conducted 2620 counseling appointments last year).

Priority: High

Safety Issue: No

External Mandate: No

Safety/Mandate Explanation:

Resources Description

Personnel - Faculty - This is a replacement position becoming vacant in May 2024. A Learning Specialist/AAC Counselor is needed to meet our student need. (Active)

Why is this resource required for this action?: The goal of the AAC office is to facilitate student success in education by providing specialized services, high quality of counseling, and advocacy necessary for equal access to higher education. Also, many students will need to undergo a learning assessment to be eligible for AAC services, which only can be administered by a Learning Specialist certified to completed the LDESM process as determined by the CCCCO.

Notes (optional): It will be more beneficial to replace the full-time Learning Specialist with a full-time AAC Counselor/Learning Specialist. Current faculty rate is as follows:

Salary (Step 1, Column 1 to Step 5, Column 5)	\$73,758.04-\$107,531.59
STRS (22.6708%)	\$16721.54-\$24378.27
Benefits	\$19,739.40
Total Cost	\$110218.99-\$151649.26

Cost of Request (Nothing will be funded over the amount listed.): 151650

Link Actions to District Objectives

District Objectives: 2021-2025

District Objective 2.1 - Increase the number of students who earn an associate degree or certificate (CTE and non-CTE) by 5% from 2021-2025.

District Objective 2.2 - Increase the number of students who are transfer-ready by 15% and students who transfer to four-year institutions by 10% from 2021-2025.

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.

District Objective 3.1 - Reduce equity gaps in course success rates across all departments by 40% from 2021-2025.

