

Stark State College
Student Support Services Assessment Biennial Report

Program/Department Name: Student Support Services
Individual Completing Report: Ben Tobias
Date: 4/24/14

Program/ Departmental Self-Assessment Procedure and Action Plan

Purpose:

To self-identify the status of Program/Department in the outcomes assessment process as well as the action-steps and timetable for the development of assessment processes.

Procedure:

All programs and departments must complete the self-assessment process. Programs which do not demonstrate how the program/department meets each of the self-assessment criteria must submit an assessment plan documenting the proposed action steps and timelines along with the self-assessment form. A follow-up self-assessment report on the implementation of the assessment plan will be due the following academic year. Programs meeting effective assessment standards will be required to submit an assessment report on a biennial basis.

Directions:

Mark the appropriate response to the Yes/No items with an X. Provide a brief summary of action steps to meet the Criteria (for example, the department will meet twice a month over the next term to develop goals). Please note that it is critical that due diligence is given to the development of goals and associated outcome measures. Do not attempt to create goals, identify measures, and implement the assessment plan in the same term!

Assessment Criteria

1. Goals

Does the Department have specific student learning or academic/ student service goals which reflect the discipline or service area professional standards?

Yes X No

2. Outcome Measures

Are direct and indirect outcome measures identified for each goal?

Yes X No

3. Research

Is research systematically conducted to evaluate success or failure in achieving outcomes?

Yes X No

4. Findings

Are research results analyzed and interpreted and findings determined?

Yes No

5. Review Process

Are findings are discussed and reviewed by appropriate groups and individuals and recommendations made for action?

Yes No

6. Proposed Actions

Are recommendations acted upon?

Yes No

7. Improvements

Have actions result in documented improvements in student learning or academic/ student services?

Yes No

Assessment Measures Inventory

Purpose:

To identify benchmarked outcome measures and the benchmarking level (internal, state, national, etc.).

Instructions:

Enter the appropriate response for each question. Place an X in the box that corresponds to the level/type of benchmarking data that is available for each measure. The table can be appended as needed by adding or deleting rows.

**Type of performance benchmark
(check all that apply)**

Assessment Measures for Goals (Outcome measures from assessment report)	Is trend data available for the measure? (Yes, No, NA)	Has a performance benchmark(s) been identified for the measure? (Yes, No, NA)	SSC (Internal)	State-level (OACC, OBR, etc)	National (Professional Org., accrediting group, etc.)
Goal 1, Persistence Rate	Yes	Yes	X	NA	X
Goal 2a, Graduation Rate	Yes	Yes	X	NA	X
Goal 2b, Transfer Rate	Yes	Yes	X	NA	X
Goal 3, Good Academic Standing	Yes	Yes	X	NA	X
Goal 4, Advisor Evaluations	Yes	No	X	NA	NA
Goal 4, Case Studies	No	NA	X	NA	NA
Goal 4, Focus Group	No	NA	X	NA	NA

Student Service Goals/Objectives

Objective 1: **Persistence Rate:** 60% of all participants served by the SSS program will persist from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or graduate and/or transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year institution during the academic year.

Objective 2: **Good Academic Standing:** 70% of all enrolled participants served by the SSS program will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution.

Objective 3: **Graduation and Transfer Rates:**

- (1) 40% of new participants served each year will graduate with an associate's degree or certificate within four (4) years.
- (2) 20% of new participants served each year will transfer with an associate's degree or certificate within four (4) years

Goal 4: **To provide high quality learning support services to students.**

Summary Narrative

Stark State College's TRiO Student Support Services Program is a U.S. Department of Education funded program designed to assist low-income, first-generation students graduate from college. Targeted services are utilized, including: academic, transfer, and career advising; financial literacy education; study skills and learning assessments; and one-on-one assistance in all the aspects of navigating college life. The program is funded on a 5-year cycle and serves 160 low-income, first-generation students, 2/3 of which must be both low-income and first-generation.

Oftentimes, students come to college with little to no knowledge of how to navigate the unique culture. This is particularly true for low-income/first-generation students. The TRiO SSS program provides both a pathway of supportive access to the college, as well as help and guidance towards graduation. TRiO offers a "one-stop" method of student advising: registering, scheduling, and financial aid can be done in the office, along with a myriad of necessary needs for successful college completion.

Advising services are designed to help students formulate strategies for each semester through strategic scheduling, college level, skill-based personality assessments, advocating to specific academic entities, and limited one-on-one academic assistance. Due to the high number of tutoring and lab availability, the TRiO SSS program limits its tutoring to a small scale. In direct terms, if a student says "can you help me with this one problem?" they're helped. If it's a major tutoring session, they're directed to the correct resource.

The LASSI (Learning Assessment and Study Skills Inventory) is conducted so that students can understand their strengths and weakness on college level skills, including:

- Anxiety
- Motivation
- Concentration
- Selecting the main idea

- Self-testing
- Time Management
- Test Taking
- Attitude
- Input Processing
- Study Aids

Students also take the VARK (Visual, Aural, Reading, Kinesthetic), a learning style inventory, as well as the Myers-Briggs Personality Assessment. In addition, when applying for the program, students do a self-assessment on a wide-range of topics, along with specific questions about their abilities in math, reading, and writing.

Transfer advising includes identifying 4-year colleges the student is considering attending; a “transfer plan” is then developed. The TRiO SSS program maintains an intimate relationship with local colleges and universities, who often sponsor transfer and advising session specifically for TRiO students. These visits allow transfer students to pre-register for their specific transfer institution, as well as meet with academic advisors, the financial aid office, and the student services office.

Students take Financial Literacy 101, an on-line, interactive multi-media module that covers key financial topics for transitioning to college, including understanding financial health, budgeting, credit card management, and banking. The course provides surveys, specific exercises, assessment and program personalization. A certificate is printed at the completion of the course.

Finally, the Stark State TRiO SSS program offers individualized counseling on an as-needed basis using class schedules, self-survey inventories, interviews, formal and informal meetings, academic success history, and any other individual needs that should be addressed, either personally or through referral.

The required objectives from the U.S. Department of Education makes quantitative evaluation of the TRiO SSS Program well-defined. Qualitative data has proven to be more difficult to gather for several reasons, not least of which is the hectic lives that Stark State TRiO Student Support Services students lead. The quantitative data shows that the TRiO SSS Program is highly successful at meeting its federally defined objectives.

Advisor evaluations, case studies, and SWOT interviews were conducted to determine qualitative data. While case studies and the SWOT interviews proved constructive, only three Advisor evaluations were returned. Digital and hard copies were distributed to all 160 program participants, along with directly handing students copies as they came into TRiO. Still, the response was small. While frustrating, it’s consistent with the population of the TRiO SSS program, since the students also fail to apply for scholarship funds allocated to the program. The staff will continue to find ways to convince students to fill out Advisor evaluations.

A new grant 5-year cycle will commence starting academic year 2015-2016, and all data point to the TRiO SSS program being successfully refunded.

Assessment Results Report

Purpose:

The report is a summary compilation of key assessment methods, findings, review processes, actions, and improvements related to the academic/ student service or learning goals of the department/ unit on an annual basis. As a historical record of assessment activities, the report provides for and supports the systematic assessment of academic support outcomes.

Instructions:

Enter the outcome measure in the space provided. Please note that for each goal it is expected that a mix of quantitative and qualitative as well as direct and indirect measures are employed. Mark the term of assessment with an X (for example, if a survey is conducted in the fall term, mark fall for that measure). Provide a brief summary of key findings, either as bulleted points or in short paragraph form. Provide a brief summary on the review committee/ process (for example, Findings are reviewed by the Director and staff on a per term basis and recommendations are forward to the VP for further review). Provide a brief summary of any proposed actions for the next term/ academic year. Please note that not all findings result in actions. Provide a brief summary of any improvements from the previous year (this does not apply to new measures the first year). Finally, Goals and/ or Outcome Measures can be added (or deleted) as needed by copying and pasting.

Goal/Objective 1. Persistence Rate

Outcome Measure: 60% of all participants served by the SSS program will persist from one academic year to the beginning of the next academic year or graduate and/or transfer from a 2-year to a 4-year institution during the academic year.

Persistence			
Reporting Year	Objective	Performance	Objective Met
2011-2012	60%	82%	Yes
2012-2013	60%	70%	Yes

Terms of Assessment: Summer _____ Fall _____ Spring _____ Annual x

Findings: In the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 academic years, an average of 76% of TRiO students persisted. The high persistence rate demonstrates that the services provided to the TRiO students are effective.

Review Committee/ Process: Data was reviewed by the United State Department of Education through the Annual Performance Report (APR), as well as the TRiO staff at the beginning of each semester. Data to the Department of Education is 100% quantitative. It was determined that since the stated outcome measure was exceeded, no change in the process was necessary.

Proposed actions for next term/academic year: Continued operations as defined in the grant, including academic, transfer, and financial aid advising; education in financial literacy; and individualized education plans.

Improvements: Since services to students are specifically defined by the TRiO grants, the stated services will be continued in the 2013-2014 academic year.

Goal/Objective 2. Good Academic Standing

Outcome Measure: 70% of all enrolled participants served by the SSS program will meet the performance level required to stay in good academic standing at the grantee institution. In academic year 2011-2012, 82% of TRiO students were in good standing, while in academic year 2012-2013, 88% achieved good standing

Good Academic Standing			
Reporting Year	Objective	Performance	Objective Met
2011-2012	70%	82%	Yes
2012-2013	70%	88%	Yes

Terms of Assessment: Summer _____ Fall _____ Spring _____ Annual x

Findings: “Good academic standing” at Stark State College is a 2.0 GPA or better. 85% of participants in academic year 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 met this objective.

Review Committee/ Process: The TRiO staff reviews and records the GPAs of each participant at the end of the academic year. Standards of Academic Progress (SAP) are sent to students by the college, and TRiO staff assist students in drafting appeals letters if they fall below the 2.0 GPA standard.

Proposed actions for next term/academic year: Academic, transfer, financial literacy, financial aid, and personal advising.

Improvements: Since the outcome measure has been achieved, no significant change is necessary.

Goal/Objective 3a & 3b. Graduation/Transfer Rates

Outcome Measure: (a) 40% of new participants served each year will graduate with an associate’s degree or certificate within 4 (four) years, and;

Outcome Measure: (b) 20% of new participants will transfer with an associate’s degree or certification within four (4) years.

Graduation/Transfer Rates				
Reporting Year	Objective (a)	Objective (b)	Performance	Objective Met
2010-2011	40%	20%	NA	NA
2011-2012	40%	20%	NA	NA
2012-2013	40%	20%	NA	NA

Terms of Assessment: Summer _____ Fall _____ Spring _____ Annual x

Findings: No data is available as yet, since the 2010-2011 cohort won’t be evaluated until the end of the 2014-2015 academic year.

Review Committee/ Process: TBD

Proposed actions for next term/academic year: Continued services as defined by grant.

Improvements: TBD

Goal 4: To provide high quality learning support services to students

Outcome Measure 1: Advisor Evaluations

Terms of Assessment: Summer _____ Fall _____ Spring _____ Annual x

Findings: Three students returned evaluations that gave the advisors straight As..

Review Committee/Process: In May of 2013, Advisor Evaluations were distributed to students both digitally and in hard copy. They were asked to grade the TRiO staff on an A-F scale in: timeliness, professionalism, preparation, level of comfort, knowledge of college practices, and overall impressions of the advisor. Three surveys were returned, with A’s given in every category without comment.

Proposed actions for next term/academic year: Continue to find effective ways to have students fill out the evaluation.

Improvements: No significant change necessary.

Outcome Measure 2: Focus Group/SWOT Analysis

Review Committee/ Process: A SWOT analysis was conducted with 5 students on an individual basis, with their respective Retention Specialist present. The “outcome” category wasn’t discussed, since they are specifically defined by the grant. A summary of each category is as follows:

Strengths
<p>Summary: While many strengths were identified, the following were a recurring theme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff members are able to help • Diversity • Quiet atmosphere • One-on-one service • Help in improvement of study/time management/organizational skills, etc. • Open door policy • Help with services outside of scope of program • Help with FAFSA • Help with financial literacy • College visits • TRiO contract helps keep students focused • Study techniques are vital • Helps ease concerns about finances
Weaknesses
<p>Summary: Students weren’t able to cite many weaknesses with the TRiO SSS program, though a few were presented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wasn’t aware of the program for 2 years • New students tend to go to the back room and not interact with other students • Communal atmosphere has decreased in the past year • Only open until 4:30
Threats
<p>Summary: Students could only identify a small set of threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSC losing the program

- **People are reticent to join the program for fear of being labeled**

Testimonials from SWOT Analysis

- **“Wouldn’t be where I am without them.”**
- **“I see the light at the end of the tunnel.”**
- **“My self-worth and confidence has increased.”**
- **“Calming atmosphere”**
- **“I could have a ‘whine session’ before starting my studies.”**
- **“It provides more structure for me.”**
- **“The college visits were great!”**
- **“Last semester was very crowded.”**
- **“I miss how we all hung out.”**
- **“It’s not an IEP.”**
- **“I would be scared if the program wasn’t here.”**

Terms of Assessment: Summer _____ Fall _____ Spring _____ Annual x

Findings: Students are highly satisfied by the quality of services provided by the TRiO SSS program.

Review Committee/Process: Reviewed findings with the TRiO SSS staff. Staff will continue to offer the same service, while honing specific skill sets. The change in camaraderie can be traced to a specific student, since graduated, who was an immensely popular, gregarious figure. His outgoing nature and positive personality welcomed students immediately. Though the SWOT analysis revealed that the office is still friendly, it will be hard, if not impossible, to replicate the unique dynamic this student brought to the program.

Proposed actions for next term/academic year: Continue services as defined by grant.

Improvements: No significant change necessary.

Outcome Measure 3: Case studies

Terms of Assessment: Summer _____ Fall _____ Spring _____ Annual x

Findings: Case studies were conducted in the 2013-2014 academic year on three students with unique sets of challenges and skills. Nancy is a 43 year-old single white female with 5 developmentally delayed children, only one of whom still lives with her. She is in third semester and carries a 4.0 GPA. Alicia is a 47-year-old single African American woman in her fourth semester at SSC. She originally started in the health field, but has since transitioned to Health and Human Services. Lindsay is a 23 year-old white female in her 3rd semester at SSC, seeking a degree in Physical Therapy and hoping to transfer to a four-year institution. All three studies reflect the numerous challenges that TRiO students face, including low-income, first-generation college students. Specifically, Nancy needed to reintroduce herself to the academic culture, having been out of school for more than 25 years. Her most obvious need was alleviating anxiety. Among her interventions, she was taught pre-test taking breathing techniques, as well as improved study habits, including studying at school instead of home. Nancy also had to learn the culture of education, 30 years removed from school. Her underlying problem was the ability to effectively manage her time. Nancy was taught to use a calendar to better plan her busy calendar, including using the Stark State student planner. Lindsay came to school with a lack of focus as to what major she wanted to pursue. After listing her life’s goals with her Retention Specialist, Lindsey hit upon

an interest in Physical Therapy. As a result of her newly focused attitude, Lindsey increased her GPA from 1.6 to 2.5.

Improvements: At least two men should be included in future case studies.

Assessment Report Review Rubric

Directions:

Mark the response to each item. If any item is not completed in its entirety the appropriate response is No. An Assessment Report review committee will use the same rubric to evaluate your assessment report.

Are the goals for the department/ service area measureable?

Yes No

Comments:

Is a mix of quantitative and qualitative measures used to assess outcomes for each goal?

Yes No

Comments:

Was research conducted and findings determined for each goal?

Yes No

Comments:

Is there a review process in place for the department/ service area?

Yes No

Comments:

Are action steps outlined where applicable?

Yes No

Comments:

Was the self-assessment and action plan completed?

Yes No

Comments:

Was the assessment measures inventory completed?

Yes No

Comments:

Key Assessment Terms

Competencies/Goals are clear, meaningful statements of purpose or aspirations for the academic program or support service. Programs and services typically have several goals.

Outcome Measures are direct or indirect measures of student learning or of support services. Direct measures provide evidence of actual learning, e.g. paper, exam, artistic performance. Indirect measures provide evidence about characteristics associated with learning, e.g., student perception surveys, focus group interviews, alumni surveys. See below for detailed examples.

Research is the systematic collection and evaluation of outcomes data.

Findings are the results of research.

Review Process is the method(s) by which findings are discussed and reviewed by faculty, staff, and administrators.

Proposed Actions are the result of the review process and are based on findings.

Improvements are positive changes in student learning or support services as noted through the assessment process. It takes at least two iterations of the research and review process to document systematic improvement.

Examples of Direct Measures of Student Learning/Services

- **Scores and pass rates on standardized tests** (licensure/certification as well as other published tests determining key student learning outcomes)
- **Writing samples**
- **Score gains** indicating the “value added” to the students’ learning experiences by comparing entry and exit tests (either published or locally developed) as well as writing samples
- **Locally designed quizzes, tests, and inventories**
- **Portfolio artifacts** (these artifacts could be designed for introductory, working, or professional portfolios)
- **Capstone projects** (these could include research papers, presentations, theses, dissertations, oral defenses, exhibitions, or performances)
- **Case studies**
- **Team/group projects and presentations**
- **Oral examination**
- **Internships, clinical experiences, practica, student teaching, or other professional/content-related experiences** engaging students in hands-on experiences in their respective fields of study (accompanied by ratings or evaluation forms from field/clinical supervisors)
- **Service-learning projects or experiences**
- **Authentic and performance-based projects or experiences** engaging students in opportunities to apply their knowledge to the larger community (accompanied by ratings, scoring rubrics or performance checklists from project/experience coordinator or supervisor)
- **Graduates’ skills in the workplace rated by employers**
- **Online course asynchronous discussions** analyzed by class instructors

Whenever appropriate, scoring keys help identify the knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions assessed by means of the particular assessment instrument, thus documenting student learning directly.

Examples of Indirect Measures of Student Learning/Services

- **Course grades** provide information about student learning *indirectly* because of a series of reasons, such as: a) due to the focus on student performance or achievement at the level of an individual class, such grades do not represent an indication of learning over a longer course of time than the duration of that particular class or across different courses within a program; b) grading systems vary from class to class; and c) grading systems in one class may be used inconsistently from student to student
- **Grades assigned to student work in one particular course** also provide information about student learning *indirectly* because of the reasons mentioned above. Moreover, graded student work in isolation, without an accompanying scoring rubric, does not lead to relevant meaning related to overall student performance or achievement in one class or a program
- **Comparison between admission and graduation rates**
- **Number or rate of graduating students pursuing their education at the next level**
- **Reputation of graduate or post-graduate programs accepting graduating students**
- **Employment or placement rates of graduating students into appropriate career positions**
- **Course evaluation items related to the overall course or curriculum quality**, rather than instructor effectiveness
- **Number or rate of students involved in faculty research, collaborative publications and/or presentations, service learning, or extension of learning in the larger community**
- **Surveys, questionnaires, open-ended self-reports, focus-group or individual interviews** dealing with *current students'* perception of their own learning
- **Surveys, questionnaires, focus-group or individual interviews** dealing with *alumni's* perception of their own learning or of their current career satisfaction (which relies on their effectiveness in the workplace, influenced by the knowledge, skills, and/or dispositions developed in school)
- **Surveys, questionnaires, focus-group or individual interviews** dealing with the *faculty and staff members'* perception of student learning as supported by the programs and services provided to students
- **Quantitative data**, such as enrollment numbers
- **Honors, awards, scholarships, and other forms of public recognition earned by students and alumni**

[Adapted from Maki, P.L. (2004). *Assessing for learning: building a sustainable commitment across the institution*. Sterling, VA: AAHE; and Suskie, L. (2004). *Assessing student learning: A common sense guide*. San Francisco, CA: Anker Publishing Company, Inc.]