

# Student Services Program Review Report Sierra College, 2017

Department/Program Name: Counseling Department-General Counseling

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Ideally, the writing of a Program Review Report should be a collaborative process of full-time and part time faculty as well as the appropriate educational administrator, instructional assistants, classified staff members and students who have an interest in the present and future vision of the program at all sites throughout the district. The Program Review Committee needs as much information as possible to evaluate the past and current performance, assessment, and planning of your program.

## **1) Relevancy: This section assesses the program's significance to the students, the college, and the community.**

1a) To provide context for the information that follows, describe the basic functions of your area and/or program.

If applicable, also explain how the program aligns with state mandates, priorities set by external agencies, or any other relevant organizations.

### **General Counseling provides the following core services as outlined in Title V:**

#### **Academic Counseling and Advisement:**

- **Counsel new, returning, and incoming transfer students to improve academic success and retention.**
  - **Provide follow-up and early alert for at risk students**
  - **Provide specialized counseling for students on academic probation and those returning from dismissal**
  - **Help students improve GPA through academic renewal**
  - **Connect students with on and off-campus academic support services**
  - **Develop and review abbreviated and comprehensive Student Education Plans (MAPS) on Degree Works that are aligned with the student's degree, transfer, and/or career goals. For students planning to transfer, this generally requires individualized research and planning beyond what can be provided through Degree Works.**
  - **Develop student education plans that meet federal Financial Aid regulations for re-instatement and maximum unit appeals.**
  - **Initiate course substitution and course equivalency petitions**
  - **Evaluate high school and other college coursework and tests for prerequisites and course articulations and clear to register**
  - **Review certificate and degree status in collaboration with evaluators**
  - **Liaison with instructional departments and campus committees and workgroups, e.g. Curriculum Committee, Academic Renewal, R4S, etc.**

### Transfer Counseling:

- **Facilitate successful, efficient and timely transfer**
  - Help students identify four-year institutions that are aligned with student goals
  - Help students select first-choice and back-up academic pathways to their goals
  - Develop individualized, comprehensive Student Education Plans (MAPS) that are aligned with single or multiple transfer goals to CSU, UC, private and out-of-state destinations
  - Certify completion of IGETC general education and CSU pass along GE
  - Develop transfer plans and application timelines
  - Connect students with on and off-campus transfer support services
  - Evaluate and certify other college coursework for transfer
  - Assist with applications, scholarships, etc.
  - Review and certify TAG applications (guaranteed UC transfer)
  - Develop and deliver transfer workshops
  - Develop and maintain effective partnerships with other college and university admissions offices and academic departments

### Career Counseling:

- **Facilitate career choice and successful entry into the workplace**
  - Administer and interpret a variety of career assessment instruments
  - Facilitate career exploratory and experiential activities on and off campus
  - Provide career counseling and occupational guidance
  - Guide students through the process of career decision-making and planning
  - Advise students regarding job search, online tools, and the application process

### Personal Counseling:

- **Ameliorate personal barriers that may impede academic success and retention**
  - Increase student self-awareness of personal and mental health issues and their effects on student success
  - Provide short-term personal counseling and assist with problem-solving, and decision-making
  - Assess for possible mental health problems and other life issues e.g. financial, homelessness, etc.
  - Connect with appropriate college and community resources as appropriate
  - Provide support “bridge” for students transitioning to and from mental health services
  - Accept referrals for personal counseling from the Hub, Early Alert, Health Center, instructors, managers, and the CARE team
  - Provide workshops and department trainings to raise awareness of mental health issues in the classroom and on campus

### Crisis Intervention:

- **Assess, stabilize, and assist students in crisis to promote student and campus safety**
  - Provide immediate intervention and short-term counseling for students in acute distress
  - Assess risk of harm to self or others and ensure safety
  - Facilitate referrals to and coordinate services with appropriate crisis resources
  - Provide consultation to faculty, staff and administrators who are concerned about a distressed student in their classroom or service area
  - Provide mental health crisis intervention training for students and employees

- Provide campus-based advocacy, information and referral services for students who have experienced any form of sexual violence.

### General Counseling Mandates:

- California Community College General Counseling services are mandated under Title V to include academic, transfer, career, personal and crisis counseling.
- The Student Success Act of 2012 (SSSP) mandates services including counseling, education planning, career counseling and early alert/follow-up support services. SSSP specifically prioritizes services for at-risk students, including those on academic probation and basic skills students. SSSP requires that in addition to providing counseling and short-term Student Educational Plans to an average 2000 new and transfer non-exempt students each semester (which we already do), we provide counseling and *comprehensive* Student Educational Plans for *all continuing, non-exempt students in their first few semesters*. In the past, we *encouraged* continuing students to return to counseling for educational planning but only a portion do. *In addition*, SSSP requires that we start providing counseling and Student Educational Plans to what the Research Office estimates as 2,000 “returning” students (returning after 3 or more years) each semester. *In addition*, SSSP requires that we begin providing specialized counseling and case management for at-risk students, e.g. academic probation, former foster youth. The Research Office estimates that about 2200 students are on academic and/or progress probation each semester
- The Veterans Program aligns with the Veterans Administration requirements regarding educational benefits for veterans and their families.
- In alignment with Federal Title IX guidelines, General Counseling provides counselors with 40+ hours of specialized training to serve as Title IX campus advocates for survivors of sexual violence.
- State and Federal Mental Health Grants awarded to the District in recent years called for mental health awareness raising and the creation of a district-wide CARE Team. The CARE team is a district-wide behavioral intervention team that meets regularly to identify, case manage and/or provide crisis services for high risk students with possible mental health issues. The Federal Grant ended in Fall 2017 but the CARE Team continues to provide direct services to high-risk students and consultation/training services for the larger campus community. All counselors continue to provide personal and crisis counseling.

Beyond General Counseling, there are a number of mandates supporting the provision of specialized counseling services for special populations e.g. Umoja, Puente, RISE, DSPP, TRiO, GSP, Wonoti, Veterans etc., some of which originated in General Counseling. Previous program review reports included data for some of these programs. However, administrative re-organizations have separated all but Veterans services from General Counseling. Therefore, this report will include only General Counseling and Veterans data. In practice, General Counseling works closely with all these special population counseling programs and participates in combined bi-weekly department meetings throughout the year. We all share over-arching student learning outcomes that are common to all counseling services.

1b) How does your program support the district mission, as quoted below, and align with student needs? Please include an analysis of how your program supports ISLOs (Institutional Student Learning Outcomes) or the district’s strategic planning goals.

*“Sierra College provides an academic environment that is challenging and supportive for students of diverse backgrounds, needs, abilities, and goals with a focus on access,*

*equity, student-centered learning, and achievement. The college is committed to practicing diversity and inclusion, and recognizes that a diverse and inclusive curriculum and workforce promotes its educational goals and values. Institutional learning outcomes guide the college's programs and services, encouraging students to identify and expand their potential by developing knowledge, skills, and values to be fully engaged and contributing members of the global community. Sierra prepares students by offering Associate's and transfer degrees, certificates, career and technical education, foundational skills, as well as lifelong learning and enrichment."*

### **General Counseling Mission Statement:**

General Counseling plans to update its mission statement, vision and goals in March/April 2018 to align more closely with current re-engineering efforts. We expect many significant changes in how counseling services are delivered in the coming years. However, the current mission statement is as follows: "The Counseling Department will provide effective academic, career, and personal counseling, crisis intervention, follow-up, orientation, and other services to our students and potential students throughout the district, regardless of location or category. The department's services will be consistent with the "Standards of Practice for California Community College Counseling Programs" of the Academic Senate for the California Community Colleges."

### **General Counseling supports the District mission in the following ways:**

- Counselors provide individualized services for a very diverse student population working towards certificate/degree completion, job entry, transfer, and career advancement. A tenet of all effective counseling is working within the student's values, experiences, perceptions and world view, with respect to the uniqueness of each individual. General counseling provides ongoing training for all full-time and part-time counselors in multicultural competency. Counseling services are culturally sensitive and available in multiple languages to serve a diverse student population. Translators are on hand when needed.
- Counseling services are offered in a variety of modalities and with multiple points of entry (online, drop-in, appointment) to enhance access for all students. The program is continually assessing student access and seeking ways to improve.
- Counseling helps students identify and ameliorate issues that negatively impact their learning and academic performance, including disabilities, mental health concerns, family conflicts, drug/alcohol abuse, poor study skills, financial difficulties, and time management problems.
- During each counseling session, counselors assess each student's goals, needs and abilities and offer appropriate advising to help students achieve their academic, career and life goals.
- All counselors assist students with academic, transfer, career, technical training and life-long learning information.
- Counselors facilitate student engagement in campus life by encouraging them to join student clubs and organizations and to participate in campus and community workshops and events. This sets the stage for lifelong participation and contribution to community life.

### **General Counseling supports the District's ISLO's in the following ways:**

## I. Educational Effectiveness

- a. Provides advisement, counseling, information and referral in a variety of different formats (individual, group, workshop, online) to meet the diverse needs of students pursuing certificates, degrees and transfer. Online advisement (email, live chat) continues to be offered and has been helpful in meeting the needs of distance learning and evening students who have not had full access to on-campus counseling services.
- b. Provides specialized counseling for historically underrepresented and at-risk populations, e.g. veterans, probation/dismissed and LGBTIQ students. Almost all counselors have completed Safe Space training.
- c. Assists the Transfer Center in providing transfer counseling and workshops to increase numbers of transfer
- d. Provides districtwide employee training and consultation on how to identify, assist and refer distressed students; participates on the CARE Team (behavioral intervention team) for students in high distress.
- e. Continues refining electronic educational planning (Degree Works) so that students can easily access their educational plan, track their academic progress, and determine certificate and associate degree requirements to enhance success and retention rates.

## II. Organizational effectiveness

- a. Continues implementing improvements identified through intensive business practice analysis of the Student Services Division to identify and resolve roadblocks students encounter as they apply, enroll, progress, and complete certificates or degrees. Improvements include 1) identifying high demand classes and sequence patterns to help instructional departments to schedule classes and 2) refining data entry practices so that Degree Works Maps can be used as a tool to predict demand for classes in future semesters (schedule building).
- b. Replacing a cumbersome and inefficient paper process for course articulations with an electronic database system (TES) which allows counselors, department chairs, deans and evaluators to track course articulations and avoid duplications of effort.
- c. Almost all full-time counselors are participating on R4S committees/workgroups to re-engineer Sierra and enhance student success and retention.

## III. Resource Development

- a. Was successful in competitive federal and state grants and received funding over a 5 year period to enhance community partnerships, campus mental health awareness and infrastructure of personal/crisis/mental health counseling. These improvements were successfully institutionalized and continue even after the grants have ended. Examples include Kognito online mental health training for students and employees, awareness-raising classroom presentations and employee workshops, and district-wide CARE Team services to the campus community.
- b. Counselors continue to provide SSSP-mandated services which generates funding.

1c) Please analyze your program and its success in supporting each of the strategic goals with which your program aligns. Please provide evidence in support of this analysis, including program goals and outcomes in this analysis, as appropriate. When relevant, please refer to student learning outcomes, assessment, and evaluation in your reply.

Goal 1: Achieve equitable access and increase student success, retention and persistence in order to increase the number of students who complete certificates and degrees or transfer to four year colleges and universities while maintaining high levels of academic integrity.

Quality improvement is an ongoing discussion in lead meetings, workgroups and bi-weekly department meetings. In response to departmental discussion, review of SLO's and outcomes, and anecdotal student feedback, we have made many program improvements.

#### *Achieve Equitable Access:*

- Students are served by an increasingly diverse, multi-cultural and multi-lingual group of counselors, classified staff and student workers.
- Full-time and part-time counselors received specialized training by outside providers on meeting the unique needs of Hispanic/Latino and Native American students, with emphasis on promoting access and equity.
- Information about counseling services, including personal, crisis, mental health, and Title IX services, is routinely disseminated via trainings provided by counselors to Success Coaches, peer mentors, ambassadors and Resident Assistants to enhance student referrals to services, thereby increasing access.
- We implemented online SARS scheduling for same day, drop in appointments, which has significantly improved show rates and provided timely services for students
- We continue to provide email, online drop-in and chat to provide easier access for all students.
- We continued block scheduling for part-time counseling, a system which has proven effective in providing more consistent student access to part-time counselors
- We continued to employ flexible scheduling options ("overflow) which has proven highly effective in increasing counselor availability for complex advisement appointments, personal counseling, and crisis intervention
- Beginning in 18/19, counseling coverage will be extended to 7 pm Monday- Thursday to provide more access for evening students.
- Beginning in 18/19, counseling coverage will be scheduled to more closely align to peak demand periods as identified by data analysis of student contact records (SARS).
- A confidential phone line and email were initiated in 2017 to enhance access for students experiencing sexual violence. Specially trained campus advocates return all calls and emails within 24 business hours when the College is in session.

#### *Increase Certificates and Degrees:*

- Counselors routinely check academic progress with students on Degree Works and work with them to develop realistic maps towards completion of their goals. Students working towards transfer do not necessarily have to earn an associate degree prior to transfer; however, counselors will encourage them to do so when appropriate.
- Counselors routinely help students identify barriers to success, e.g. study habits, time management, etc. and help students develop strategies to overcome them.
- Counselors routinely help students address personal concerns, e.g. finances, work, housing, or mental health concerns that create barriers to success.
- Counselors provide career counseling to help students research and develop clear goals and academic pathways to achieve those goals.

***Increase Student Success, Retention and Persistence:***

- It is impossible to draw a direct correlation between the provision of one or more counseling appointments and a student's ultimate academic success beyond anecdotal evidence from students attributing their success to the help they received from a counselor. There are simply too many variables involved. However, research suggests that those students who have well defined academic and career goals and an academic map showing them a clear pathway to achieve their goals are more likely to succeed and persist. General Counseling's SLO's (see below) presume that those students who understand and can articulate their goals, identify potential barriers and strategies to overcome them will be more likely to succeed. Our SLO's assess the student's learning in this area.

Goal 2: Identify and close success and equity gaps amongst underserved and/or underrepresented student populations.

- General counseling provides multicultural and multilingual services for all students and provides back up crisis intervention when special population programs are impacted.
- General counselors work closely with special population programs to identify and refer students and to coordinate services and programs.
- All FT and PT counselors receive ongoing training and meet regularly to assess student needs and research, enhance and/or develop appropriate services.

Goal 3: Provide professional growth and develop a climate of inclusion in order to support highly effective and innovative teaching and learning, support services, operations, and collaboration.

- During this review period, counselors completed half-day trainings in Indigenous Psychology, Hispanic-Latino Counseling Issues.
- They also attended a day-long training that included experiential learning in diversity and inclusion to build knowledge and skills to develop innovative and effective support services.

1d) Optional Additional Data: Describe any other contributions of your program not incorporated in the prompts above and relevant to the district goals, mission, and values. These may include but are not limited to contributions to diversity, campus climate, cultural enrichment, community ties, partnerships and service. Please include specific data and examples when these are available and relevant to the analysis.

- General Counseling did an extensive analysis of the most frequently required courses across majors and for transfer in fall and spring semesters and presented the data to Dean's Council. The report illustrated the "mismatch" between the most frequently needed courses and the courses that were actually being scheduled each semester. The data gave impetus to further analysis and schedule changes by instructional departments to maximize student access to the classes they need.
- Almost all FT General Counselors are participating extensively in R4S and its related workgroups. Feedback is relayed through extensive discussions in departmental meetings.
- Counselors participate significantly in shared governance and coordinate or contribute to events that enhance the campus climate. Some examples:
  - Academic Senate



- **New Legacy**
- **Gender Equity Committee**
- **Academic Standards**
- **Curriculum Committee**
- **Banner/Degree Works**
- **Career and Technical Education**
- **Educational Effectiveness**
- **Program Review**
- **Spectrum**
- **Student Services Coordinating Council**
- **Dismissal Appeal Committee**
- **SCFA**
- **Mental Health: Send Silence Packing, Kevin Hines (speaker), Spring Mental Health Day, Regional CCC Mental Health Forums**
- **Veterans Day and Health Fair**

## **2) Currency**

2a) Service Outcomes and Student Learning Outcomes Assessment: Considering any relevant information, please describe and analyze your program’s development and assessment of Service Assessment Outcomes and/or Student Learning Outcomes. Please describe any improvements or changes made to the program as a result of this analysis.

Outcomes and outcome data:

Although Student Service Programs now have the option of assessing SSLO’s, General Counseling decided to continue assessing PSLO’s. Our services are provided by counseling faculty and our goal is to facilitate student *learning* through the counseling process. We believe it is important to continue assessing our effectiveness in this area. Service delivery is also important and faculty agreed to add SSLO assessment in future semesters.

In fall 2013, we assessed our progress in achieving program goals that were established in 2010 (see attached). Very significant progress had been achieved and most program goals had been accomplished. Looking to the next three years, all the counseling programs, along with Personal Development (the instructional “wing” of the program), developed and adopted the following five over-arching SLO’s common to all our student populations. These would be our “program” SLO’s. Then, the special population counseling programs, e.g. TRiO, EOPs, DSPS, Puente, etc., adjusted or added to these to meet their individual needs: we called these “course” outcomes. General counseling’s program and course SLO’s are the same:

As a result of counseling services, students will be able to:

1. Identify their educational goal
2. Choose appropriate classes to meet their educational goal
3. Identify the steps for successful transfer
4. Identify factors that impede and/or promote their academic progress
5. Formulate strategies to achieve academic, career, and life success



For General Counseling, it was decided that we would assess all five SLO's in Spring 14, Spring 15, and Spring 16, review in the fall semesters, and implement changes or new activities in summer/falls. (See attached). We met as a department on each subsequent Planning and Assessment Day to review survey results and anecdotal evidence and use this information to improve/develop new services.

### Spring 2014

Throughout Fall 13, we discussed the inherent weaknesses in the administration of the SLO assessment instrument we were using. Among other problems, the results were based on the *student's* perception of what they had learned. This was equivalent to asking a science student what they thought they had learned in chemistry, in lieu of administering an objective assessment tool such as an exam. To get more accurate data, General Counseling developed and adopted a quick, two-question survey (see attached) that attempted to measure actual learning. However, we were not satisfied with the brevity of the tool after a pilot run.

We then developed a longer "On the Spot" assessment tool in Survey Monkey that assessed all our SLO's. Counselors were asked to spend the last few minutes of each session orally assessing the degree of learning demonstrated by the student during a summary of the session. After the session, the counselor would record the results by completing the survey online (See attached list of questions). The survey was administered from April – July 14. The results (attached) were reviewed in Fall 2014. We could not make definitive conclusions because of the small sample size of 95 surveys. Counselors reported that although they liked the improved validity of the results, it was very difficult to take time between counseling sessions to do the online assessment. We decided to return to our customary scantron surveys and try the online assessment in alternating years. Small sample aside, the "On the Spot" results indicated that while a majority of students mastered the concepts discussed during advisement sessions, a substantial number (about a third) remained confused or needed prompting to formulate answers. Realizing that new students in a group counseling situation may be even more confused, we decided to re-visit our new student group counseling content and process to make improvements to enhance student learning and retention. The results of this assessment led us to make substantial changes in our new student group counseling presentation, which we assessed in Spring 2016. Changes included:

- Shortening, simplifying and standardizing the content of the presentation
- Adding a "quiz" with prompts to engage students and reinforce learning
- Improving "check in" so that students with language barriers and special needs could self-select individual counseling
- Increasing the number of counselors in attendance so that students would have more individual time with a counselor

We also developed and implemented a brief, online student survey that used Survey Monkey to assess SLO's. Students were asked to complete the survey before they left the New Student Group Counseling Session. We soon abandoned this assessment tool because after 1 – 2 hours in the lab, most students wanted to leave without having completed the survey. In addition, we ran into repeated technical difficulties administering the survey in that particular lab space. We assessed the effectiveness of these changes in Spring 2016.

### Spring2015

We began survey collection of Scantrons in fall 14 and continued into spring 2015. We collected surveys from 211 students—again, a small sample size. Students were able to write in comments. Overall results were excellent although the sample size was too small to draw definitive conclusions (see table attached); students perceived themselves as having had a positive learning experience. The biggest struggle was collecting a sufficient number of surveys during this time period, when counselors were already very busy learning and using new technologies during counseling sessions. It was frequently difficult, especially during rush periods, to take the extra time to explain the survey process to students and escort them to the survey area. In department meetings, we decided to explore the feasibility of having student workers intercept departing

students and asking them to do the surveys. This was implemented for a brief period. However, staff and student workers reported being unable to take time to do this during rush periods. We eventually decided to abandon this approach. Because of the challenges in collecting a sufficient number of surveys, we decided to continue Scantron assessment in fall 2015.

### Spring 2016

a) We reviewed the results of an additional 90 student scantron surveys. All but four reflected satisfactory success in achieving student learning outcomes. Again, usefulness was limited due to the small sample size. We had many discussions during department meetings and informal conversations over the course of months to resolve barriers that made it difficult to collect surveys. Counselors proposed:

- 1) Limiting assessment to an intensive, 3 week period to avoid “assessment fatigue”
- 2) Establishing the number of assessments each counselor was expected to collect
- 3) Lengthening appointment times from 30 to 60 minutes for the 3 week period to allow more time for counselors to administer in-office oral or written assessments
- 4) Developing a written “quiz” for students to take, which would require less counselor time—or give the option, and
- 5) Organizing an SLO workgroup to come up with other options. A workgroup was formed in fall 2016.

b) We decided to undertake another pilot assessment in collaboration with the Personal Development department: Based on previous SLO assessment, we believed that new students had difficulty understanding and retaining the large amount of information presented all at once in New Student Group Counseling and in counseling sessions. We hypothesized that better results would be obtained if they could learn this information in shorter, more hands-on sessions over a period of weeks. A counselor/PDev instructor developed curricula to embed in College Success classes to help students learn academic pathways and select appropriate classes. It was thought that this approach might enhance or replace the need for new student group counseling. A brief module was done each week in class along with an in-class small group or homework assignment which would eventually become the student’s complete MAP. The assignments were graded and used to assess SLO’s 1, 2 and 3. In the pilot, thirty students completed the assignment, 15 with a passing grade on their first attempt. All eventually completed successfully but with instructor assistance. The pilot was broadened to several other PDev classes. Anecdotal feedback from instructors was mixed. The PDev 6 instructors reported having insufficient class time to cover the material. PDev 1 instructors reported that students struggled with the assignments and that they could learn as much from a one-on-one counseling appointment. We decided to abandon this in-class pilot.

However, we retained the homework assignment questions (see attached). These questions were designed to give the counselor necessary information to create an accurate student education plan. The questions were refined further based on the pilot experience. They are now included in an online survey that students will complete when they are requesting a comprehensive MAP through our online counseling services. All general counselors will work on completing these MAPS during non-peak periods. We anticipate that this online service will greatly enhance program productivity and effectiveness.

c) Based on discussions and meetings going back to spring 2014, a counselor workgroup was created to improve the New Student Group Counseling content and presentation. We created a written “questionnaire” based on presentation content. Presenters would pause at the appropriate time and prompt students to answer the related question on their questionnaire. The Questionnaire included questions about the student’s education, career and transfer goals and reflected their understanding of academic pathways and GE course selection. The students would then bring the completed questionnaire to a counselor, who would go over the answers while developing a student education plan with the student. Afterwards, counselors submitted the student’s questionnaire for assessment. We collected over 1200 questionnaires. We decided to use the questionnaire as an SLO assessment instrument to determine if, after the presentation but before meeting with

the counselor, students could identify their academic goal (certificate, degree, transfer or undecided) and match it to the appropriate GE pattern as explained during the presentation. We consulted with the Office of Research who confirmed that 450 questionnaires would be a good representative sample. The questionnaires were manually “graded.” Roughly 2/3 of students satisfactorily or minimally “passed. “ About 1/3 of students demonstrated little or no understanding of the concepts presented.

We reviewed results in Fall 2016 and again in Spring 2017. The results suggest that although some students did well, a significant number would likely benefit more from a different approach. Research suggests that a “just in time” approach (information given in small, manageable “chunks” when the student realizes s/he needs it) may be far more effective. We did not continue assessing or making improvements because work was getting underway to “re-engineer” Sierra College and significant changes in onboarding were anticipated.

### Spring 2017

The SLO workgroup recommended that we go back to the “On the Spot” oral assessment in spring 2018 provided it can be done in a time-limited period during non-peak periods.

We continued informal, anecdotal assessments of SLO’s as New Student Group Counseling continued. Counselors continued to report that a significant number of first-year students either did not understand or did not retain important academic information about academic pathways and course selection. After numerous discussions, counselors proposed to management that we bring back the one-on-one counseling appointment for new students. Because this would strain current resources, it was agreed that we would continue new student group counseling but follow up with individual, one hour appointments during non-peak periods. We would also provide individual appointments for DSPS and ESL students at all times. This pilot was implemented in 2017/18. We plan to assess its effectiveness in future months.

In the space below, please describe or attach the cycle you have developed for outcomes assessment.

The Counseling Program is in a state of continual quality improvement. We conduct ongoing formal and informal SLO assessment throughout the year. Counselors have the opportunity to assess the outcomes of student learning in virtually every counseling session. They routinely share their observations and recommendations in lead meetings, workgroups, email discussions, and bi-weekly in-service department meetings. We are continually analyzing this information and using it to problem-solve, make program improvements and develop new programs and services. We initially decided to assess all five SLO’s in Spring 2014, Spring 2015 and Spring 2016. Because of challenges in collecting assessment results, we occasionally extended assessment into the summer or fall terms. We conducted an informal assessment (anecdotal evidence) in spring 2017.

2b) Professional Development: Describe how departmental activities serve to improve teaching, learning and scholarship. Please be sure to specifically include flex activities, departmental meetings and activities, conferences, outreach to other colleges, research and implementation of best practices, changes in legislation, mandates from regulatory agencies, required faculty certifications, health and safety trainings or other factors. How do these activities contribute to your program’s self-assessment and planning?

In addition to maintaining counseling skills and knowledge, community college counselors must learn and organize a vast amount of information about academic regulations, majors, careers, course prerequisites, transfer requirements, employment, four-year institutions, campus and community services, technology updates, federal, state, and/or College policies and procedures. In many cases, this information changes weekly. Failure to stay current can result in dire consequences for the students we serve. Counselors must also keep up to date with changing regulations and technology updates. Therefore, we place high priority on professional development activities.

Full-time Counselors are required to attend a minimum of 40 hours of bi-weekly in-service training each year. Part-time counselors are required to complete a minimum of 16 hours of training a year provided by the department. Trainings cover academic, financial aid, transfer, career, and personal/crisis counseling topics. Much of the academic training has targeted use of new or updated technologies, such as Degree Works and TES. All counselors were required to attend last year's CTE Boot Camp. Another Boot Camp is scheduled for this spring. Speakers have included other college representatives and campus and community resources that provide training and information on a wide range of topics. Recollections are disseminated electronically to all counselors. Training information is also developed, maintained and updated through written and video materials on Canvas. In addition to regularly scheduled in-services and flex activities, counselors were offered the following intensive trainings (3-4 hours each) over the last 3 years: Indigenous Psychology, Suicide Risk Assessment, Hispanic/Latino Counseling Issues, Cultural Diversity Training, Substance Abuse Training, Title IX/Sexual Violence, Mental Health First Aid, and Mental Health/Distressed Students. This is in addition to the many conferences and trainings counselors have attended on an individual basis and through flex.

2c) Optional Additional Data: Enter additional data or other information here that you believe to be an indicator of your program's effectiveness and explain why.

**3) Effectiveness: This section assesses the effectiveness of the program in light of traditional measurements.**

3a) Retention and Success/Service Outcomes – Please analyze your success in achieving your program goals (including Service Outcomes and/or Student Learning Outcomes), using whatever data is relevant to your program. Describe any changes you have made that have improved the effectiveness of the program as well as any barriers you may have encountered in making these or other changes. If applicable, please include any analysis related to Student Success or Equity. If you determine that you need to improve the program's performance in any way, please describe how you plan to achieve this goal.

General Counseling does not receive success and retention statistics from the Office of Research like instructional programs do. Any statistics that we provide must be self-generated. This presents challenges due to limitations in staff time and the limited ability of technology resources such as SARS (our student appointment system) to generate consistently reliable data. However, we can make the following conclusion from existing data: Past Program Review reports correlated Student Educational Plans (SEP's) to District success and retention rates. However, 100% of new, non-exempt students now receive an abbreviated Student Educational Plan. We know this because Banner blocks their registration until the student has met with a counselor. *Therefore, the Counseling Program's Retention and Success rates for students who get an SEP are essentially the same as the District's overall rates for new students*

The following is a review of program goals and accomplishments.

#### FY 2013-2014 General Counseling Three Year Goals

**1. Develop, implement and assess new delivery methods for counseling and matriculating a growing number of students throughout the district**

Results: We have increased the use of technology tools to improve accessibility and delivery of counseling services throughout the district and for our evening students, e.g. email counseling, TES, Early Alert, Degree Works, and Advocate. We have worked with instructional faculty to develop templates, which are recommended pathways of classes for students to follow. We have made improvements in scheduling appointments which have increased productivity and student access. We have made some improvements in New Student Group Counseling but this is an area that continues to need work. We are outreaching to second semester (12+) students and increasing the number who have MAPS, which are shown to increase student success and retention.

**2. Develop and begin implementing programs and strategies to comply with the Student Success Act, including standardized, electronic data collection and reporting**

Results: There is a new classified manager position who oversees data collection and reporting for SSSP. We have successfully developed and implemented new programs such as FFY to meet the needs of high risk and under-served populations. We have significantly increased the number of MAPS (comprehensive Student Education Plans), but this is an area that continues to present challenges. More work is needed to bring more students into Counseling and to provide the resources counselors need to produce MAPS under time-limited conditions during counseling appointments. New approaches are underway.

**3. Increase retention and success rates for historically underrepresented students**

Results: We have no correlative data that directly ties General Counseling services to retention and success rates. However, anecdotal feedback from students suggests that we are making progress in creating a welcoming and supportive environment that encourages all students to excel. We have also assisted in the development and implementation of special population counseling programs to meet the unique needs of our diversified student population. All counseling programs participate in bi-weekly in-service training where we can assess our services and learn best practices from each other.

**4. Continue to provide focused training for FT and PT counseling faculty**

Results: Our training program equals or exceeds neighboring districts'. A continuing challenge is scheduling all recommended training within the time limits of in-service meetings. See 2B for details on training programs.

**5. Develop and assess student learning outcomes and engage in ongoing program improvement**

Results: General counseling has engaged in ongoing assessment, review, planning and implementation over the three-year period and has met its assessment goals. See 2A for details on SLO assessment.

## 6. Increase retention and success rates for student veterans

Result: The Veterans Success Center is recognized nationally for its success in serving student veterans. See chart below for statistics.

## 7. Raise awareness of student mental health needs and resources throughout the District

Results: Counselors, in addition to other CARE Team members, have reached out to thousands of students district-wide to raise campus awareness. Outreach efforts are reflected in the increased numbers of students seeking personal counseling and the increased number of instructors and managers referring students to General Counseling for personal counseling and crisis intervention services (See usage trends below)

SLO Assessment: Here are some of the program improvements that were made as a result of our SLO assessments:

1. Multiple modifications were made to New Student Group Counseling content and delivery, e.g. developing a standardized presentation, assigning dedicated and trained staff to present, increasing counselor coverage to provide sufficient time for education planning
2. Individual counselors developed, shared, and/or increased use of learning tools during counseling sessions, e.g. visuals, online tools, to enhance student understanding and retention
3. More outreach was done to reach out to students in their second semester to bring them in for comprehensive student education planning, when they are more receptive and understand the benefits of longer-range planning
4. Training was increased for counselors in mental health, community resources and Title 9 to help students overcome personal barriers to success
5. Individual, one-hour appointments for new students are now being offered during non-peak times.
6. Counselors will begin providing online MAPS for students using methodology and tools developed by counselors teaching PDev classes.
7. Counselors will continue coordinating with special population counseling programs to enhance the success of historically underrepresented populations.
8. Counseling will continue building partnerships with community resources to enhance student access to services and ameliorate barriers such as homelessness and mental health issues.
9. CARE/Campus Advocate counselors will continue training and outreach to meet the needs of students experiencing mental health problems or sexual violence in any form.

**Veteran Success Center:** The chart below reflects success rates for all student veterans as reported by the Veterans Success Center. Approximately 90% of all enrolled student veterans are processed through the Center.

<b>FY 13/14</b>		
	<b>Retention</b>	<b>91%</b>
	<b>Success</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>FY 14/15</b>		
	<b>Retention</b>	<b>89%</b>
	<b>Success</b>	<b>74%</b>
<b>FY 15/16</b>		
	<b>Retention</b>	<b>88%</b>
	<b>Success</b>	<b>71%</b>

**3b) Usage Trends - Identify and explain the usage trends in your program’s data. Address separately the data for on ground, on-line, and usage at the various centers when applicable. Comment on the significance of these trends as well as the challenges experienced within the program. If you see a need to improve any trends, outline a plan that will achieve the changes you are seeking. Please explain your reason for this determination and describe how you will incorporate these assessments in your plans for improvement. If applicable, comment on both the past performance and the future direction of the program as a whole as well as on location and mode of delivery.**

A significant challenge in generating usage data is created by the limitations of the program’s student appointment system (“SARS”). SARS software was created for scheduling student appointments, not for assessing program usage, effectiveness and trends. Compounding software limitations is the way our program has added codes and changed input procedures over the years, creating historical inconsistencies in the data. For example, we can generate a report that tells us how many “no show’s” we had. However, we cannot easily extrapolate how many of those “no show” slots were filled with other waiting students. Another example: We are not capturing all the additional counseling that is provided by counselors via phone and email. Personal and crisis counseling is significantly under-reported, because relatively few students self-identify that need when they are scheduling. Instead, such problems tend to emerge in the course of an academic appointment. A priority goal for the program over the next three year period is to improve the collection of counseling scheduling data so that we can more accurately predict and plan for student needs, as well as to more accurately reflect the true scope of services that counselors provide.



## Districtwide Usage Trends

	FY 2013/2014	FY 2014/2015	FY 2015/2016	FY 2016/2017
Sierra CCD Fall Headcount	18,962	19,127	18,758	18,430
<b>BY MODALITY:</b>				
Drop-In Counseling	5,603	6,177	9,150	10,927
Appointments	56,937	66,587	74,407	74,961
Online Drop-In	N.A.	10	52	916
E-mail <sup>i</sup>	9,103	4,916	N.A.	1,425
Chat <sup>ii</sup>	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
New Student Grp. Counseling <sup>iii</sup>	4,734	4,886	N.A.	N.A.
Quick Question Counseling <sup>iv</sup>	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Transfer Workshop <sup>v</sup>	189	326	128	162
<b>BY REASON CODE:</b>				
Academic- General	21,577	27,742	28,383	24,608
Academic Renewal	192	323	871	547
ADT Petition	N.A.	45	177	103
Athletic Counseling	371	711	1,430	1,294
Career Counseling	214	1,619	833	185
Course Substitution	62	89	49	61
Crisis Intervention	30	62	62	100
Degree/Cert Review	554	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Degree/Cert Petition	102	832	768	804
Dismissal Re-admit	206	208	253	216
Financial Aid Petitions	1,030	1,053	919	906
Former Foster Youth	24	144	10	N.A.
IGETC Review/Petition	150	289	234	259
No Show's <sup>vi</sup>	10,579	11,295	11,580	9,415
Personal Counseling	94	207	222	373
Probation	219	284	231	172
Returning Student	880	940	947	912
Student Ed Plan- ABR	8,055	12,609	15,831	18,660
Student Ed Plan- CMP <sup>vii</sup>	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	703
Transfer Counseling	23	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.
Transfer Out	1941	2,251	1,915	1,371
Veterans Counseling	2,163	3,176	1,811	2,265

The chart above reflects the closest estimate available of district-wide usage trends in General Counseling. We conclude from these numbers that:

- Total counseling contacts have steadily increased each year in spite of fluctuations in District enrollment.
- Academic counseling continues to predominate as the main reason students seek counseling.
- We do not have an explanation for the sudden increase and decrease in career counseling from 14/15 to 15/16. It's possible that instructors gave a career assignment during this time period prompting students to access information from counselors.
- No show rates showed a significant decrease in FY 16/17. We attribute that trend in part to reducing the number of appointments that can be scheduled online and in part to increasing the number of drop-in versus scheduled appointment slots. The no show rate in FY 16/17 was about 10%, which counselors believe is a reasonable goal. Reducing further would likely require imposing disincentives, such as charging a cancellation fee like the Health Center.
- Email advisement, chat and other online services continue to be very popular with students. We expect usage to increase.
- We are also seeing a steady increase in Title IX students at the Rocklin campus, a reflection of district-wide awareness campaigns for employees and for students.
- Personal and crisis counseling has steadily increased but is likely an undercount, as *very few* students self-identify when they schedule counseling appointments. Personal counseling often arises from discussions about academics, e.g. what's happening outside school that's causing poor grades. Unresolved personal problems can significantly impair academic success and retention.

Here is how a sample of Sierra College students responded to the National College Health Assessment that was administered in Sierra College classrooms in Fall 2017:

In the last 12 months:

- 12.7% reported emotional abuse in their relationships
- 23% felt things were hopeless
- 17% were exhausted (not from physical activity)
- 21% felt very lonely
- 22.7% felt very sad
- 18.5% were so depressed it was difficult to function
- 19.5% reported overwhelming anxiety
- 9.2% seriously contemplated suicide
- 2% made suicide attempts

We expect to see a continuing increase in need for personal counseling and crisis intervention, which reflects state and national trends. We also expect to see unresolved personal and mental health issues continue to impact district-wide student success and retention trends.

3c) Productivity –Analyze the significance of the trends as well as the challenges experienced within the program. . If you determine that you need to improve the program’s performance in any way, please describe how you plan to achieve this goal.

In General counseling, we have 14.65 FT Counselor FTE available for direct student contact as of Fall 2017. This excludes reassigned time: a number of counselor hours are reassigned to lead positions, who perform vital coordination functions such as developing and implementing counselor training programs. Our part-time counselors may work for general counseling and for special population counseling programs as needs arise. Unlike other districts, our part-time counselors are trained to provide all the services that full-time counselors provide.

In February 2018, for the first time, FT counselors received a program-wide and individual productivity report to consider as we seek ways to improve productivity and share best practices. Overall, as a program, we concluded that our productivity is satisfactory, but can be improved, e.g. through more strategic scheduling of counselors during peak times and through improvements in the process for how students are scheduled for counseling. We are currently seeking ways to increase appointment fill rates, increase the number of MAPS developed for students, and reduce no show and cancellation rates. We also discovered that our student appointment system (SARS) does not accurately reflect or capture the extent of direct and related services provided to students. A workgroup has been formed to develop recommendations for interpreting the data we have, improving the scope and accuracy of data collected and reported, and helping us set goals and identify strategies for maximizing efficiencies as we transition to counseling in interest areas. We have an insufficient number of FT counselors to staff all interest areas and so PT counselors will continue to play a crucial role in delivering timely services.

3d) Referring to your ePAR Report of Goals, Strategies, Actions, and outcomes assessment cycle and relevant assessments/evaluations, please describe your program’s plans to maintain or increase its effectiveness and evaluate your efforts to achieve these goals.

It is very difficult to develop program plans as we anticipate the many significant changes that will come to General Counseling as we implement interest areas. We simply do not have sufficient information at this point to do concrete planning. We await information from R4S and our management. We are excited to begin this work! However, in the meantime, we do know that we want to continue working on the goals that have been referenced in this report:

1. A counselor scheduling workgroup has been formed and is currently working with management to optimize efficiencies in scheduling FT and PT counselors.
2. Counselors will be using unfilled appointment times, if available, to do student outreach and develop comprehensive SEP’s online (MAPS) for students who are confident in their major and transfer university plans.
3. Counselors will work with managers and staff to develop an optimal balance of scheduled versus drop in appointments.
4. All counselors will be assigned evening hours effective FY 18/19 to provide more student access.

5. Further revisions to New Student Group Counseling are now on hold as the District will soon be implementing new onboarding. Counselors are participating in District efforts to plan and implement academic pathways. We implemented Quick Question Counseling (counselor in lobby to answer quick questions) which has increased student access to counseling.
6. We anticipate many, many changes with the implementation of the “re-engineering” of Sierra College and so we are sure to add to this list as changes evolve.

3e) Optional Additional Data: Enter additional data or other information here that you believe to be an indicator of your program’s effectiveness and explain why.

**4) Resources: This category assesses the adequacy of current resources available to the program and describes and justifies the resources required to achieve planning goals by relating program needs to the assessments above.**

4a) Please describe the future direction and goals of your program for the next three years in terms of sustaining or improving program effectiveness, relevance, and currency. Please include any analysis of relevant performance assessments in your explanation.

Again, the future will become more clear as R4S completes its work. Our future direction and goals for the next three years tentatively include:

- Meeting SSSP deliverables
- Providing MAPS for all students who know their academic goal in their 2<sup>nd</sup> or subsequent semester
- Continuing to provide quality and timely training for all FT and PT counselors, including training in multicultural competency
- Continuing to improve equitable access to counseling through technology, expanded evening hours, and other strategies
- Continuing to work towards improving success and retention for under-served and under-represented populations
- Continuing to refine services and data collection for crisis and Title IX students
- Enhancing outreach efforts to students via classroom presentations, campus events, and online tools

We will refine these goals as interest areas are further developed.

4b) Equipment and Technology: Comment on the adequacy of the program’s equipment and technology funding level for the District as well as specific sites. Include a projection of equipment and technology needs for the next three years as well as a justification for needs. Please include analysis of any relevant performance assessments in your explanation.

- Improve telephone access to the Rocklin Counseling Center front office during peak hours. Our staff do a great job answering phones immediately; however, high call volume prevents many calls from ever getting through. Technical limitations prevent the addition of more phone lines. Voice mail messaging isn't feasible due to extremely high usage and insufficient staff resources to manage it.
- The increase in technology-based counseling and advising, and the need to develop more online and virtual counseling services may require new computers with expanded memory and updated software.
- Improvements to SARS and Banner to enhance data tracking and reporting
- Continued training for counselors and staff in new technologies

4c) Staffing: Comment on the adequacy of your program's faculty, classified, and student help staffing levels for the overall District as well as specific sites. Include a projection of staffing needs for the next three years and justification for any increases. Please include analysis of any relevant performance assessments in your explanation.

**General Counseling has added positions during this program review period. We still have one unfilled FT counselor position due to retirement. Over the next three years we anticipate an additional FT counselor retirement. We will likely seek two replacement positions to meet SSSP requirements and to develop and implement counseling services in interest areas.**

4d) Facilities: Comment on the program's fill rate and the adequacy of the facilities for the District as well as specific sites. Include a projection of facility needs for the next three years as well as a justification for any increases. Please include analysis of any relevant performance assessments in your explanation.

**During this program review period, general counseling facilities in Rocklin were significantly expanded and updated. Facilities are adequate at Rocklin, NCC and TT.**

4e) Please check the appropriate boxes in the chart below indicating the general reasons for the resource requests described above (please check all that apply):

Function/Role	Maintenance	Development	Growth	Safety	Outcomes	Other success measures	No Requests
X							

## 5) Summary/Closing

5a) Evaluate the program's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities/future directions, challenges.

### Strengths:

- We plan, implement, assess, report and revise on an on-going basis via bi-weekly department meetings. General counseling is in a continual quest for improvement.
- We provide a structured and regularly scheduled training program for part-time and full-time counselors
- We offer a robust online counseling program and other online services that enhance student access to services
- We create efficiencies by maximizing use of new technologies in counseling service delivery

- We provide services in a variety of formats to meet student needs, e.g. individual, group, workshop, online, classroom
- We provide prompt and effective crisis intervention for students thanks to innovations in scheduling that provide more day to day scheduling flexibility.
- We have a new .5FTE lead counselor position dedicated to CARE/Campus Advocacy and a lead for DSPS.
- We are recognized at state and national levels for outstanding services for student veterans, including the new Veterans Center in the LRC
- We have increased counselor diversity through FT and PT hiring to more effectively meet the needs of our diverse population.
- We have significantly increased counselor participation in the larger campus community through R4S, shared governance and union representation, building stronger liaison relationships with instructional departments.

Weaknesses:

- SARS, our student appointment system, is limited in function and is not capturing all the actual services provided to students. It does not provide counselors with an accurate reflection of services they have provided, making it more difficult to assess productivity and predict student needs and trends.
- Most counselors find that 30 minutes is insufficient time to work with the student to complete accurate and comprehensive SEP's. Increasing appointment time from 30 to 60 minutes would strain current resources.
- Implementation of new technologies continues to be a challenge.
- New Student Group Counseling is not meeting expectations in spite of several revisions in content and format.

Opportunities/Future Directions:

- R4S recommendations and the implementation of interest areas will have a dramatic effect on how General Counseling operates. We anticipate that counselors will be assigned to interest areas and will be working with other faculty, managers and staff to develop and deliver new, innovative and data-driven services. We are excited about future directions but it is premature to speculate on the specifics.

Challenges:

- Helping to implement the re-design of student services
- Providing high-touch, quality services to significantly more students with limited resources
- Improving our ability to capture data that can help us assess our effectiveness and develop services more strategically
- Training counselors and maintaining their currency, especially in new technologies and features
- Providing short-term personal/social counseling, crisis intervention services and mental health referrals to an increasingly "stressed" student population. The results of the 2017 National Student Health Survey at Sierra College underscore the prevalence of stress, anxiety and depression on campus and their impact on student retention and success.

5b) Please provide any other information the Program Review Committee should consider.

5c) How has the author of this report integrated the views and perspectives of stakeholders in the program?

**The author has integrated the views and perspectives of stakeholders through ongoing department meetings, workgroups, and meetings/discussions with managers, staff and students.**

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<sup>i</sup> This number reflects the number of direct email contacts to the reassigned “email counselor.” However, all counselors advise students by email. These additional email contacts are not necessarily reflected on our Student Appointment System (SARS).

<sup>ii</sup> Contact information is not collected.

<sup>iii</sup> All new, non-exempt students are required to complete counseling in order to be cleared for registration. In the last two years, these student contacts have been included in drop in numbers.

<sup>iv</sup> Student contacts for Quick Question Counseling are included in drop in numbers.

<sup>v</sup> Transfer workshops are offered through Career & Transfer Connections but are facilitated by general counselors.

<sup>vi</sup> This number is offset by the number of students who fill the untaken slot. .

<sup>vii</sup> We did not begin separately tracking MAP’s (comprehensive SEP’s) until 16/17.