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The Research & Planning Group
for California Community Colleges

Transfer Practices at Porterville College

**Case Study #4 of 7 Featuring Colleges with
Consistently Higher Than Expected Transfer Rates
Fall 2008**



Part of the Transfer Leadership Center Project

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**Prepared by the Center for Student Success of the Research & Planning Group
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Abstract: This report is one in a series of seven case studies of California community colleges with higher-than-expected transfer rates. Each case study is based on a site visit conducted in Spring 2008 by two Center for Student Success researchers to document and investigate the full spectrum of factors, inventions, strategies and practices that each college is implementing to support transfer.

The case studies are part of the Transfer Leadership Center (TLC), the most comprehensive study to date of two-to-four-year transfer in California.

The California Community College State Chancellor's Office awarded the TLC in Spring 2007, based on a competitive grant competition and grant written by Dr. Andreea Serban, Superintendent/President, Santa Barbara City College. The project has been implemented by the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges (CCC), the Center for Student Success (CSS) of the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges, and California Partnership for Achieving Student Success (Cal-Pass). The study is administered by the Santa Barbara City College and guided by an Advisory Committee including leading experts on transfer.

Readers of the case study presented here may also be interested in the following, which are available on-line at <http://www.rpgroup.org/css/TransferLeadershipCenter.html> and <http://www.sbccc.edu/tlc>

- TLC Literature Review
- TLC Cross-Case Analysis (an analysis of all seven colleges in the study)
- TLC Case Study #1: De Anza College
- TLC Case Study #2: Irvine Valley College
- TLC Case Study #3: Los Angeles Southwest College
- TLC Case Study #4: Porterville College
- TLC Case Study #5: Reedley College
- TLC Case Study #6: San Diego City College
- TLC Case Study #7: Skyline College

For questions about any of these research papers, please contact Dr. Andreea Serban at Serban@sbccc.edu or Eva Schiorring at ESchiorring@rpgroup.org

PORTERVILLE COLLEGE TRANSFER PRACTICES AND STRATEGIES CASE STUDY

Introduction: In Spring 2007, the State Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges awarded the Transfer Leadership Center (TLC) study to investigate two-to-four year transfer practices and strategies. As part of the study's qualitative component, research teams from the Center for Student Success of the Research & Planning Group of the California Community Colleges conducted site visits to seven community colleges with higher-than-expected transfer rates. The site visits included extensive interviews and focus groups conducted with students, college counselors, faculty, administrators, classified staff, representatives from special programs, and high school counselors.

It should be emphasized that the research focused exclusively on what each of the seven colleges are doing to support and increase two-to-four year transfer. Accordingly, the case study that follows should be read not as an assessment of the featured college's overall performance, but rather as a review and analysis of one particular area of operations. Moreover, the case studies focus on what appeared to the researchers to be the most salient elements of the colleges' efforts to encourage and support transfer. The case studies are therefore not intended to present an exhaustive list of all transfer-related initiatives and practices at each college.

In addition to case studies on each of the seven colleges, the research team developed a cross-case analysis to identify common factors which appear to contribute to higher-than-expected transfer rates. The cross-case analysis – as well as the research protocols and the literature review upon which the protocols were based – can be found at <http://www.sbcc.edu/tlc>

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A special thank you goes to Dr. Antonia Ecung, Dean of Instruction at Porterville College, for her invaluable assistance coordinating interviews and focus groups before and during the visit. Thank you also to Frances Carrera, Transfer Center Coordinator, for the time she so generously spent with the Research Team and for the key role she played in recruiting students to the focus group sessions.

CASE STUDY: PORTERVILLE COLLEGE

Porterville College
President: Dr. Rosa Flores Carlson
Central Region: Tulare County, CA
Fall 2007 Enrollment: 3,856
Ethnicity 50% - Hispanic 34% - White 2% - African American 6% - Asian/Pacific Islander 7% - Other
Gender 66% - Female 33% - Male
Age 26% - 19 and younger 28% - 20 to 24 12% - 25 to 29 8% - 30 to 34 25% - 35 and older
Faculty 79 Full-Time and 80 Part-Time
Counselors 8.5 FTEs, including categorical counselors

SUMMARY

"I'm proud to say that most faculty and staff support the transfer function of the college. Although having a center is nice, if the center is all we had, then we'd miss some wonderful opportunities to promote, encourage and facilitate transfer. One of the reasons we have positive transfer rates is due to the fact that the concept of transfer is integrated across campus, not just relegated to one center in one building."

– *Porterville Administrator, February 2008*

In a rural, economically disadvantaged region where only 12 % of residents over 25 years of age have a baccalaureate degree, Porterville College (PC) provides affordable educational opportunities to low-income and first-generation college students. The PC approach to student success is one of natural progression. The college meets students "where they are at" upon entry and then gradually guides and encourages them to set ever higher goals. Another ingredient in the PC approach is role modeling. PC faculty and counselors – including the large number of PC graduates who are employed by the college – tell students "I was exactly where you are now. If I can succeed, so can you."

A small college by enrollment, PC's culture is student-centered and community-minded. The system is largely informal, but although the division of labor may not be entirely clear among those working to support student success, the message conveyed to students is deliberate and consistent: an AA is good; a BA is very good. At PC, transfer is officially promoted and supported by counselors, the transfer center coordinator, faculty advisors, and special program representatives. In addition,

transfer is widely perceived as a campus-wide priority that the entire PC staff collaborates to support and advance – from the receptionist who makes the nervous freshman feel welcome and wanted at PC to the president whose radio broadcasts to the local community present PC as an affordable and first step toward a BA Degree.

PC operates several programs and services that directly or indirectly support transfer. These include Liberal and Integral Studies for Transfer Opportunities (LISTO) and Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), which are academic support programs that combine to serve approximately 800 students or a bit less than one fifth of the PC student population. LISTO started in 1999 as a TRIO-grant that supports transfer for first-generation and disabled students. EOPS, launched in 1971 to strengthen the academic performance of economically and socially disadvantaged students, strongly promotes transfer and offers a range of services to help participants pursue this goal. Additional programs and services supporting transfer include a required one-unit college success course that emphasizes transfer and a cadre of faculty advisors who provide discipline-specific transfer advice and support.

PC has developed and continuously works to strengthen its partnership with local high schools and transfer institutions. At the entry side of the equation, high school and PC counselors collaborate to encourage and prepare students to enroll at PC upon graduation from high school. At the other end of the equation, Porterville has partnerships in place with several universities, including five Transfer Admission Guarantee Agreements.

Factors and Indicators Contributing to Higher-Than-Expected Transfer Rates at Porterville College

FACTORS	INDICATORS
Student-focused environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ High degree of contact between students and faculty ➤ Personal touch and willingness among faculty, staff and administrators to take extra steps to help students succeed ➤ Family feeling – shared responsibility for student success ➤ Student success course (mandated)
Transfer culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Communication to students of ever-higher expectations ➤ Continuous use of role modeling by faculty, counselors, and others ➤ Informal but effective flow of information from counselors to faculty about transfer ➤ Message conveyed to students that the instruction they are receiving prepares them for four-year transfer
Strong, strategic relationship with local high schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Expectation of college introduced early and repeatedly by high schools and Porterville College outreach team ➤ High schools and college collaborate to offer students a guided path to college
Strong relationship with four-year universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Transfer Admission Guarantees with five universities ➤ Faculty advisors available to guide students on transfer and career opportunities in a range of majors ➤ Faculty and counselors use their relationships with four-year colleges to assist and advance PC students ➤ Efforts to bring more universities to conduct outreach on campus ➤ Tours to university campuses

<p>Strong support programs that emphasize transfer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) includes transfer workshops and tours to four-year colleges ➤ Liberal and Integral Studies for Transfer Opportunities (LISTO) is a cohort-building initiative that supports transfer through counseling, peer support, community-building activities and university visits
<p>High level of commitment to institution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Large number of Porterville graduates among staff ➤ Very low turn over among faculty, counselors and classified staff ➤ Widespread consensus about mission and purpose ➤ Widespread commitment to students and community

1. METHODOLOGY

The site visit was conducted February 4 and 5, 2008. It included 12 interviews and six focus groups with a total of 46 participants (see Appendix 1). In preparation for the site visit, the research team reviewed Porterville's 2006 College Self-Study, the 2006 Transfer and Articulation Program Reviews, the college website and other documents relevant to transfer. Documents provided by the college during the site visit were reviewed after the visit, including statistical information provided by the institutional researcher, flyers and other information provided by the Transfer Center, the 2008 Academic Guidebook and Student Learning Outcomes developed by Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS). Appendix 2 provides a list of documents used to generate the case study.

2. COLLEGE OVERVIEW

2a. Community and College Profile

The College Community: Located in Tulare County, PC was established in 1927 as part of the Porterville Union High School and College District. PC continued its relationship with the high school district for the next 40 years until 1967 when it joined the Kern Community College District.

Between 2000 and 2006, Tulare County experienced a 14% population increase that was nearly twice the state average. At the time of this report, 56% of the county's 420,000 residents are Hispanic, compared to 36% statewide. Tulare County is also younger than the state average, with 32% of its residents under 18 years of age. The area is low-income compared to the rest of California, with a 2004 medium income of \$34,810, an amount representing 70% of the state average that year. More than one in five residents (21%) lived below poverty in 2004, compared to 13% statewide. In terms of education, 12% of residents over 25 years of age hold a Baccalaureate Degree, compared to 27% statewide.

The City of Porterville, in which PC is located, has over 43,000 residents. Like the surrounding county, Porterville has expanded rapidly during the past decades. In 2005, 49% of Porterville's residents were Hispanic and 42% were White. Among the Hispanic residents, 62% were under 18. By comparison, 29% of White residents fell into this age group.

Student Profile: More than 25% of PC's 3,800 students are 19 years of age or younger and more than 50% are 24 years of age or younger. With sharp and rapid increases in the enrollment of Hispanic students, the ethnic composition of the student population has changed considerably during the past 10 years. During the 1998-99 academic year, the student population was 30% Hispanic. Nine years later, during the 2006-07 academic year, this percentage had increased to 50%. Thus, while the total number of students enrolled declined slightly from 5,700 during the 1998-99 academic year to 5,373 during the 2006-07 academic year, the participation of Hispanic students increased by about 1,000 during the same period. One implication of this shift is that the college is serving a large population of first-generation college students.

The ratio of women to men in the student body is two-to-one.

Mission Statement: "With students as our focus, Porterville College provides our local and diverse communities an excellent educational experience that fosters intellectual curiosity and growth, lifelong learning, and prepares our students for personal and academic success."

In interviews, informants continuously and consistently echoed the mission statement by describing the college as student-focused and by explaining what they do in terms of how their role at the college supports student achievement. Their comments included the following:

“The curriculum is hard, I’ll grant you that, but I’m going to do everything I can to get you through..... I think that [attitude among faculty]...is a big part of this campus.”

– *PC Faculty Advisor*

“The more you know yourself [about how the college works] the more helpful you are to the students.”

– *Classified Staff*

“If a student is going to a college we don’t have a transfer agreement with, we’ll start working to develop transfer agreements with them.”

– *College President*

“The distance to UCs and CSUs means that we create partnerships so we can offer students a pathway.”

– *High School Outreach Coordinator*

2b. Transfer Profile

Transfer Indicators: The cohorts who were tracked for the purpose of the transfer study (see Appendix 4) ranged in size from 424 to 497 full-time, first-time Porterville students. The actual transfer rates for these cohorts ranged from a low of 32 in 1998-99 to a high of 37 in 1999-00. The actual less-than- expected transfer rate ranged from five in 1998-99 to 10 in 1999-00.¹

In absolute numbers, transfer to UCs and CSUs between 2001-02 and 2005-06 ranged from a low of 122 students in 2005-06 to a high of 159 during the previous academic year. The percentage of transfers continuing to a UC ranged from a low of 5% of all transfers in 2003-04 to a high of 16% of all transfers in 2005-06.

Transfer Center, Articulation and Counseling Staff: The PC Transfer Center was launched in 1989. It has changed location several times since its inception and recently moved from the student cafeteria into a small office in the back of the Counseling Center of the Student Services Building. The Transfer Center Coordinator (TCC), who also works as a general counselor, explained that she uses the office when providing transfer counseling to students. In the Fall, she allocates 60% of her time to transfer, and in the Spring 30-40%.

The TCC shares responsibility for providing transfer counseling to students with two general counselors. One member of this team also serves as PC’s Articulation Officer. In addition, transfer counseling is provided by two full-time and two part-time EOPS counselors and by a part-time LISTO counselor. The Coordinator of Matriculation and the Director of Disabled Students Programs & Services (DSP&S) along with one part-time counselor from each of these two programs also provide transfer counseling services. Overall, PC has a staff of 8.5 FTE counselors whose duties include transfer counseling.

The Transfer Center Program Review Report indicates an annual case load of 200 contacts. The TCC estimated that 25-50% of students accessing transfer services are new students and that 51-75% use the services closer to transfer.

During the past three years, the college has had several different TCCs, all long-time PC staff. The current TCC previously worked as Outreach Coordinator to local high schools.

¹ The transfer rates used for this study were drawn from the 2005-06 Report, which contained the most up-to-date data available. Subsequent editions of the Transfer Rate Report (due out late in fall 2008) will include more recent cohort years (and drop the oldest cohort years); also, the rates themselves will be somewhat - although in most cases not markedly - different. To better understand how the rates may change, please see Appendix 4.

The Transfer Center function and activities were described by the TCC as including:

- Transfer counseling
- Coordination and promotion of transfer workshops
- Coordination and promotion of seven universities that come to Porterville once or twice a year

2c. Transfer-Related Investments:

Originally grant funded, the Transfer Center does not at this time have a separate budget. The articulation officer has a \$5,000 annual budget from general funds, while 10 faculty advisors providing transfer advice and support are paid up to \$4,500 from a Title 5 grant. The high school outreach budget is assembled with contributions from LISTO, Matriculation, Career & Technical Education Programs and other sources. “Everybody kicks in what they can,” an administrator explained. Similarly, funds for tours to four-year colleges are contributed by EOPS and LISTO. The administrator explained that EOPS has the largest budget for this expense. Contributions, in the form of gifts to high school students during Seniors’ Day, are provided by the community.

2d. The Student Transfer Experience

To assist the reader in “seeing Porterville College through a student’s eyes,” the researchers created the following profile. The information that shaped Yolanda’s story came from interviews and focus groups with students, counselors, faculty advisors, high school counselors and representatives from academic support programs.

Composite Case Study: Yolanda knew about PC from cousins and friends who had enrolled at the college and from PC’s visits to her high school where a college outreach person gave her and the other seniors an assessment test and helped them complete applications for financial aid. Her first experience of actually being on the college campus was during the PC High School Senior Day. Yolanda can still recall walking up to the health sciences booth and being welcomed by Alicia, a PC nursing student. Alicia had taken Yolanda’s blood pressure and told her how she had come to PC three years earlier with no real plans about what to do.

Yolanda’s first semester at the college was not very productive. She arrived as an undeclared major uncertain of what classes to take. Then a friend persuaded her to enroll in Ed 101. Taught by a counselor, the one-unit course taught useful skills for how to plan and succeed in your education. Ed 101 also emphasized transfer and spent three or four class sessions on this subject. While taking Ed 101, Yolanda scheduled a counseling appointment with her instructor who, when she said she might be interested in teaching, directed her to talk with a faculty adviser about teaching careers.

Nancy, the faculty advisor, talked with Yolanda about career opportunities in education. Yolanda noticed that their first meeting was 50 minutes long. Nancy said she was able to give Yolanda so much time because she doesn’t have to see nearly as many students as the counselors do. During their second meeting Nancy pointed to her own PC Diploma on the wall and encouraged Yolanda to become more involved in the college community. She suggested that Yolanda should take EOPS transfer workshops and participate in site visits to four-year colleges. Yolanda, who in the past had only been outside of Tulare county twice in her life, felt both nervous and excited when she signed up for the next university site visit. Now, a veteran of three university site visits, Yolanda’s perception of what is possible has changed quite dramatically. There are people just like her at Bakersfield, Cal Poly and even at UC Davis. One day, she just might be one of them, a university student who lives on campus and does well enough in her courses to one day become a teacher herself.

3. COLLEGE CULTURE

3a. Messages & Information about Transfer

Informal, College-Wide Support for Transfer: The first line in the 2008 Academic Guidebook for new staff is “Welcome to PC where students are our focus.” During the site visit, the student-centered culture was highlighted repeatedly as faculty, counselors, administrators and the College President spoke about the responsibility PC has to its students and to the entire local community.

The interviews and focus groups suggested that many Porterville faculty and counselors can personally relate to the challenges their students confront in being the first in their family to attend college and/or in coming from low-income families. “I was out in the field picking when I was growing up,” one faculty member said. The President of the college noted that “I’m a Hispanic girl and the first in college in my family....and I went to a community college.” The President said that she draws from her own experience when speaking to students, encouraging them to believe that if she can do it, so can they.

The kinship that so many faculty and counselors feel with their students and the generally accepted notion that “the college plays a critical role in shaping the future of the entire community” inject additional meaning into everyday work at the College. This, in turn, increases job satisfaction and minimizes turnover. Working at the college, several informants implied, is much more than a job. “Once you start working at Porterville, you don’t leave,” one informant commented.

High School Counselors View PC as a First Step on the Road to Transfer: PC’s student-centered culture and the college’s role and responsibility in the local community were also highlighted in the high school counselor focus group. “We can call them [PC faculty and counselors] and get help for our students right away,” a high school counselor explained. In responding to a question about who they call at the college, the high school counselors listed by first name not one but a long list of individuals. “If I need help with financial aid, I call Erin. If it is about transfer I call Frances,” and the list went on. “We know the people [who work at PC] on a personal, social and professional level. We link students into services that are available at PC and we are confident....it is like handing over our students to somebody we trust.”

One informant noted that “[I present] PC [to students] as a stepping stone to get your feet wet. You can still live at home.” Another informant added that “the nearest university is 50 miles away,” and pointed out that many local residents rarely leave Tulare County. The high school counselors, like other informants, explained that many local parents – especially those of Hispanic/Latino ethnicity – are reluctant to have their child leave the area to attend college.

“Many of us went through all this [what the students experience] in the past. We were students here [at PC] and some of us had to start from basics,” reported a high school counselor, recalling her own time as a PC student. It turned out that the majority of the high school counselor focus group participants, like this woman, had attended PC.

3b. Transfer Goals and Plans

The underprivileged and low-income nature of the Porterville area was highlighted throughout the site visit as interviewees explained that many students at the school are the sons and daughters of farm laborers and the first in their families to go to college. Within this context, the college sees itself as the agent that can help local youth rise up and achieve. The college is thus not only responsible for providing educational opportunities to local youth and others seeking an education, but also for making students believe that they have or can develop the skills, talent and confidence required to take advantage of these opportunities and succeed at Porterville and beyond.

College representatives seemed to agree that student achievement is best supported by a gradual approach that begins with simply getting the students to come to the campus. One counselor spoke of a student who had driven to the campus twice only to sit in his car in the parking lot. The third time the student came he summoned the courage to walk onto the college grounds. The next step is to nurture students' confidence that they can learn and succeed in getting an AA or AS degree. "It is a great achievement to get that far, I tell the students. But once they are moving in that direction, I start talking with them about possibly taking an even greater step toward a four-year degree." A faculty member teaching child care development said "most of the students come in to get a child care certificate. I encourage them to do this, but soon start talking with them about taking the next step and getting their AA." The student focus group included a student who had entered the college with the goal of spending a semester getting her child care certificate. The student reported proudly that she just got accepted into Cal State Fresno's BA Program in Child Development.

The college president also underscored how important it is to continuously but gradually increase the aspirations of (potential) students. She described how she had counseled a very bright student who wanted to become a dental assistant to go ahead and pursue this goal, "but you should start thinking about the next step you can take and about coming back to school to create more opportunities for yourself." The college president has just begun to broadcast this message to the local community in weekly five-minute radio announcements where she highlights the affordability of a community college education and opportunities that Porterville students have to transfer to four-year universities. "I tell them you can come to PC from high school with 24 units and graduate from here in a year and transfer to a four-year [institution]." The target audience for these broadcasts includes parents of high school juniors and seniors.

3c. Communication and Collaboration among Transfer Agents

Communication between counselors and faculty about transfer is informal but effective. The articulation officer, also a counselor, highlighted that one of the benefits of working in a small college is that "if you have a question...say I want to know if an English course can be tweaked to meet the articulation requirements for one of our top CSU-transfer universities. I just pick up the phone....and that can be on the weekend. I call Susan, the Chair of Language Arts. I love the fact that we can do this."

The communication between counselors and faculty advisors is similarly informal and effective. The faculty advisors explained that they received only a very limited amount of training (from the DSPS counselor) and had learned "on the job" how to write an education plan, conduct research on ASSIST, etc. But the steep learning curve did not prove an obstacle: "If I have a question, I just pick up the phone and call one of the counselors," one of the faculty advisors explained. Again, the communication is informal, but intentional and effective in getting the job done.

There appeared to be some instances of limited communication between the providers of transfer support. Faculty seemed to be largely unaware of the resources that the Transfer Center provides. The LISTO coordinator and counselor have limited interaction with the Transfer Center and, to some extent, with the counselors, relying instead on the LISTO counselor and on information they can access through the LISTO program.

4. SERVICES AND PROGRAMS SUPPORTING TRANSFER

4a. Role and Scope of Counseling, Transfer Center and other Transfer Support Services

PC counselors strive to provide as many services as possible to as many students as possible for as little money as possible. As an example, the Transfer Center Coordinator divides her time between general and transfer center counseling. The other four counselors similarly serve both as general and transfer counselors. The articulation officer, who is also a general counselor, spends less than a day a week on articulation. Clerical and support services are extremely limited.

Students requesting transfer counseling will be referred to one of five general counselors. If she is available, students will be referred to the Transfer Center Coordinator, but all the other counselors have the experience and expertise required to provide the service. All are well-versed in using ASSIST and other transfer reference tools.

LISTO and EOPS have their own counselors who provide students with transfer coaching and advice. Both programs require that students meet twice a semester with a program counselor to develop and/or update their education plan.

Faculty advisors are also available to provide discipline-specific transfer information and support. (See section on faculty advisors below)

4b. Scope, Quality and Use of Articulation Agreements

The College President serves on the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium which includes representatives from Central Valley community colleges, CSUs and UCs. She explained that her participation in this group provides her with a big-picture view of transfer opportunities and with opportunities to promote the program-to-program articulation agreements she feels are needed to advance transfer.

In pointing to students' fear of leaving the area, the President identified as a new initiative a collaboration between Cal State Bakersfield and Porterville that will offer students the opportunity to earn a BA in Child, Adolescent and Family Studies at Porterville College. The program will start in September 2008 and as of the time of this report had been introduced on the cover of the PC website.

For students seeking to transfer to other universities, faculty members are ready to provide the hands-on and customized assistance that characterizes the college environment. "If we don't have a transfer agreement and one of our students says 'I'm going to X College' we start working to develop such a transfer agreement," the President explained.

One participant in the faculty focus group explained that while the counselors are very committed and effective in their work, they lack the discipline-specific knowledge that faculty members have. Accordingly, a student with transfer questions relating to a particular discipline may obtain more precise information by going to the faculty advisor (see Faculty Advisory section below) than to the counselors. As an example, the faculty member pointed out that universities often change their requirements and that ASSIST is typically a couple of semesters behind in catching these changes. Faculty in the discipline is likely to know about this – counselors may not. The faculty advisors also noted that they share the information they gain from doing hands-on research on transfer with their colleagues so that entire departments gain expertise from having one representative serve as a faculty advisor.

4c. Financial Aid Scholarship Information

The high school outreach team includes two individuals who provide financial aid advice and assistance to prospective PC students. Information about financial requirements and assistance is also a key component in EOPS workshops, which compare and contrast the cost of attending community college, CSUs, UCs and independent colleges and universities.

4d. Special Services and Programs Supporting Transfer, Including Academic Support Services

Faculty Advisors: In October 2003, a Title V grant included funding to pay nine faculty to provide transfer support to students interested in pursuing baccalaureate degrees in their discipline. The faculty advisors are paid to serve in this capacity for five hours a week.

In comparing her job to that of the counselor, one faculty member noted: “You are a familiar face, somebody they [the students] have had a class with...it is much more personable to a lot of students than someone in an office they see once every couple of years.”

The faculty advisors also take more time with students than counselors. “I notice I spend about 40-45 minutes [with a student] and during that time some counselors see four or five students.” “I have the same problem,” another focus group participant and faculty advisor added – “It takes me an hour and a half to do an ed plan for a student.”

While the faculty advisors spearhead the discipline-specific counseling, it is important to note that other faculty members also contribute to support students: “I think the majority of the faculty are involved in advising in one way or another,” a faculty member commented.

Tutoring Services: When faculty realized that the Tutoring Center had no faculty available to help students, they resolved the situation by developing a schedule that ensured full coverage in English and Math. As a result, the Tutoring Center now has a Math and an English instructor available to help students during all hours. The commitment to students and learning what this arrangement underscores is captured in the following faculty quote: “None of them [the informant’s colleagues] will just come in and work and go home....I think most of the instructors on campus seem to be very nurturing and very caring.”

One-Unit Student Success Classes: The College offers three one-unit education courses that are taught by counseling staff. The first, Education 101, covers “study skills, time and stress management, graduation and transfer requirements.” Ed 101 has a strong transfer emphasis, and an instructor explained: “I spend three to four of the 16 sessions on transfer.”

Counselors strongly encourage students to enroll in this course during their first semester as it helps them develop goals and understand the resources available to assist them in their PC education and with transfer. Education 101 is also a way for counselors to connect one-on-one with students who get additional points for the class when they schedule a counseling appointment. In focus groups several students said they wished they had taken Education 101 during their first semester at PC.

5. TRANSFER OF SPECIAL STUDENT POPULATIONS

PC informants continuously emphasized that the college does not target any one group with its transfer advocacy, but rather “works with the general student population.” Nevertheless, the College has developed a large EOPS Program that serves 500-700 students and the Title V-funded Liberal and Integral Studies for Transfer Opportunity (LISTO) which serves an estimated 200 students. The LISTO counselor estimated that 100 LISTO students participate in EOPS.

EOPS: “Transfer has always been a goal for EOPS,” the EOPS Coordinator explained. “The first thing they told me to do when I took the job was to develop a transfer workshop.”

The notion of transfer is introduced to EOPS students in a required orientation session. The material covered in this session is continuously revisited and improved based on student feedback. EOPS students who, according to the coordinator, often “don’t think of transfer but just want to take a few classes to get a better job” are typically very afraid of college. Through EOPS, these students take

required workshops, access counseling services, develop an education plan, and participate in field trips to universities.

The Liberal and Integral Studies for Transfer Opportunity (LISTO) Program is “a learning community that helps build academic and social networks between students, faculty and staff.” Launched in 2002, LISTO serves an estimated 200 students. It is staffed by a full-time coordinator, a part-time counselor, and paid student mentors. LISTO grew out of a TRIO-grant-funded initiative that was in place from 1999-2001 and was designed to support transfer for first-generation and disabled students. When TRIO sunset in 2001, LISTO continued its mission, although the participation requirements were relaxed.

LISTO students are required to meet the LISTO counselor twice a semester and to have an education plan. They have additional access to tutoring, and enjoy opportunities to participate in special events such as the four-year college visits. LISTO has its own small office in the Student Services Building, a location that previously was occupied by the Transfer Center. Student focus group participants highlighted LISTO’s informal nature and its community and cohort-building initiatives. They also commented that there was “always somebody there [in the LISTO office] available to help them.” Hence, whereas in the Counseling Office you cannot just “pop in with a question,” LISTO’s door is always open and the office always has somebody available who can help students answer their questions. Some informants described LISTO as “a large club.”

6. TRANSFER CONNECTIONS

6a. High School Partnerships

PC has very strong connections to local high and adult schools. The Senior Day at PC has already been highlighted as the event that brings high school students and their families on to the community college campus. To keep high schools updated on PC’s offerings, the college and high school counselors conduct an annual meeting – called “Team Collaboration” – to discuss student needs and to introduce new PC courses and opportunities provided through PC support programs. In addition, PC representatives make regular visits to local high schools and high school counselors. Overall, PC counselors and staff work with their high school counterparts in a collegial way that reflect that the two institutions are partners in the task of helping local youth succeed.

6b. University Partnerships

The college has strong relationships with several four-year institutions, including CSU Bakersfield, CSU Fresno and UC Davis. Transfer Admission Guarantees, for students with 30 UC-transferable units completed, are in place with UC Davis, UC Santa Cruz, UCSB, UC Riverside and UC Merced. Guaranteed Admission Agreements are also in place with CSU Bakersfield, Fresno, Stanislaus, Fresno Pacific, University of Pacific and UC Merced for students with 60 UC-transferable units and the IGETC completed (Appendix 5).

At the present, seven representatives from transfer institutions visit PC and recruit on a regular basis. The commitment to expose students to four-year college opportunities is also reflected in PC’s tours to not just nearby university campuses, but also to sites such as UC Santa Cruz. In focus groups, students explained how these visits had opened up their minds to the possibility of actually leaving the area and going to college somewhere else.

7. BUILDING CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Capacity Building: In response to the question of how and where they would invest additional transfer funds, several informants wanted to hire more counseling staff – including one whose time is devoted entirely to transfer. Another high-demand item was the desire for more field trips to four-year campuses.

Key Findings: The findings suggest that Porterville’s student-centered culture plays a key role in explaining the college’s higher-than-expected transfer rate. The following list identifies variables that contribute to create and sustain this culture:

- faculty advisors
- special services and support targeting first-generation college students
- required one-unit introduction to college success strategies and transfer opportunities
- formal and informal efforts to build community among students
- hiring of successful students and college graduates to serve as cheerleaders, advocates and role models
- carefully planned visits to four-year college campuses
- continuous use by faculty, counselors and others of personal history as a source of inspiration and confidence-builder
- a gradual approach to achievement that includes the following steps:
 - get the students inoculated with academic goals and preparation in high school
 - invite the students onto the college campus
 - help the students define and pursue doable and confidence-building goals
 - continue to raise the bar – AA is good, BA is very good

The college’s **strong relationships with the local high schools** also bear highlighting. It is expressed in frequent contacts between high school counselors and a large number of college faculty and counselors, in systematic and strategic outreach to high school students, and in special, high-visibility events targeting students and their families.

Appendix 1: Porterville College Study Participants

Porterville Study Participants	
Interviewee Position	Comment
College President	
Transfer Center Coordinator	Also serves as a general counselor
High School Outreach Representative	
Financial Aid Director	
VP of Academic Affairs	This position is vacant
VP Student Services and Manager of TC budget	Sick during site visit. Subsequently submitted written response to interview questions
Dean of Instruction	
LISTO Coordinator and Counselor	
Academic Senate President	
Articulation Officer	Also serves as a general counselor
Institutional Researcher	
EOPS Coordinator	
Total # of Interviewees	12

Focus Group Participants	# of Participants
High School Counselors	9
Students close to transfer	5
Students participating in support programs	9
Classified Staff	2
Counselors	4
Faculty Advisors	5
Total # of Focus Group Participants	34

Total # of Informants	46
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Appendix 2: Documents Reviewed for Porterville College Case Study Analysis

- College Self-Study (2006)
- Progress Report on Accreditation Recommendations (2007)
- Program Review: Instructional/Student Services (2006)
- Program Review: Transfer Center (2006)
- College website
- College's organizational chart
- EOPS SLOs
- Statistics from institutional researcher
- Academic Guidebook
- Informational flyers distributed by Transfer Center Coordinator to students

Appendix 3: Porterville College Descriptors

Descriptors		Comment
History and location		
Year founded	1927	
Address	100 E. College Avenue Porterville 93257	
District	Kern Community College District	
Other colleges in district	Cerro Coso and Bakersfield	
Distance to nearest community college	30 miles to College of Sequoias	
Distance to nearest four-year colleges	50 miles to CSU Bakersfield 120 miles to UC Merced	
Students and Faculty		
Average Student Enrollment 2005-2007 (Fall Semester)	3,820	
% Students Receiving Some Financial Aid	70 %	
% Students Receiving Federal Grants	56 %	
Counseling FTE (Full Time Equivalent), including categorical counselors	8.5	
Counseling FTE (Full Time Equivalent), excluding categorical counselors	2.5	
Top Majors Declared	Undeclared 1171 (31%) Nursing 487 (13%) Liberal Studies 355 (9%) Child Development 306 (8%) Social Science 232 (6%) Psych Tech 221 (6%)	Data from Spring 2005
BA indicator	12% of residents in Tulare County have a BA	

Appendix 4: Porterville College Transfer Indicators

Porterville College Cohorts	Residual (Actual-Expected Transfer Rate)	Actual Transfer Rate	Cohort Size
1998-99 Cohort	4.9327	31.75	441
1999-00 Cohort	10.1706	36.56	424
2000-01 Cohort	8.8978	35.41	497

Source: Transfer Rate Study of the CCCs, 2005-06 at <http://www.cccco.edu>

All seven colleges selected for the study showed consistently higher-than-expected transfer rates (a relatively large, positive residual) in the 2005-06 transfer rate study conducted by the Chancellor's Office. Cohorts of first-time college freshmen who completed a minimum of 12 units of community college coursework and who attempted a transfer-level Math or English course at some point during their enrollment were followed for six years from the time of their initial enrollment to determine the number and proportion transferring within that timeframe. As indicated previously, the "expected" rates factor in the percent of students who are age 25 or older and the bachelor plus index of the region.

Subsequent editions of Transfer Rate Study will include more recent cohort years and drop the oldest cohorts. Beyond adding more recent cohorts, future editions will reflect some changes in the underlying data which will affect transfer rates. Most differences will not be marked (a transfer rate of 58.05 might be recalculated as 58.15, for example), but in a few cases differences may be more significant. The ARCC report, which uses the same transfer rate data, cites three primary reasons for these changes, as follows:

“Why are the rates for some of the indicators for the same cohort different in the 2008 [ARCC] report when we compare them to the 2007 [ARCC] report?”

The changes could occur in a college's denominator, the college's numerator, or both. The changes in the data relate to the following factors:

- 1) The course cleanup project (Curriculum Reporting for the Community Colleges, CRCC): The course changes can and did alter the student headcounts in the cohorts, as well as their outcomes.
- 2) Student Identifier (SI) updates: With the announcement of the SB00 cleanup project for 2007-08, more districts started to submit SI updates to get a head start on the project.
- 3) Improvements in the methodology for extracting the cohort for the NSC match: With the 2008 report, we began to request all records from students, as opposed to restricting by date. This change resulted in identifying fewer students as first time.”

Source: www.cccco.edu/Portals/4/TRIS/research/ARCC/ab1417_faq.doc

Appendix 5: Porterville College's Agreements with Four-Year Colleges and Representative Visits

Transfer Admission Guarantee	Articulation Agreements	College/University Representative Visits (2007-2008)
UC Davis	CSU Fresno	CSU Fresno
UC Santa Barbara	CSU Bakersfield	CSU Bakersfield
UC Santa Cruz	UC Davis	Fresno Pacific
UC Riverside	UC Santa Barbara	University of Phoenix
UC Merced	UC Riverside	Chapman University
	Chapman College	National University
	Fresno Pacific	UC Merced
	University of La Verne	