Internal Program Review
Self-Study Report

Program Name
TRiO Student Support Services

Credentials Offered
NA

Self-Study Completed by:
Kendall May

Date Completed:
10/01/13

A. Introduction

Trio Student Support Services is a federally funded program designed to increase persistence and completion. Students are selected for the program and must meet federally mandated criteria. The three qualifying criteria are low income, first generation, and disability. Two-thirds of the participants must be low income and first generation. Remaining participants selected may qualify under one criterion; however, at least one third of all disabled participants must also qualify as low income.

B. Alignment with Mission, Strategic Goals and Core Themes

The TRiO SSS program is required to provide Academic Tutoring, Post-secondary Course Advising, Financial Aid Technical Assistance, Financial Literacy, and Transfer information. These mandatory services support a student in their pursuit of education. Eligibility in the program implies students have limited knowledge of the college environment and statistically are less likely to graduate than their peers not belonging to the previously delineated population.

D. Student Participation and Success

The TRiO SSS must serve 140 students in each academic year. AY 2010/2011 is excluded from participant count. This allowance is made by the Department of Education in the first year of a new grant. AY 2011/2012 is the first year number funded is measured. The program served 140 students as stipulated by the grant.

E. Student Learning Outcomes

Each year the Department of Education requires the grantee institution to submit an Annual Progress Report. The grant narrative for Helena College requires the following outcomes:

> 50% of participants will persist from the beginning of one academic year to the next (graduation, and or transfer counts toward persistence)
> 80% of participants will maintain good academic standing (2.0 GPA)
> 38% will graduate with a degree or certificate within 4 years
> 6% of new participants served each year will transfer with an associate' degree or certificate within 4 years

The APR for AY 2011/2012 reported the results for the following outcomes:

> 77.86% persistence rate attained
> 89.29% good academic standing attained

Graduation and Transfer rates will not be measured until December of 2014 (4 year mark for 2010/2011)

G. Faculty/Staff Profile

Kendall May, the Director of the Program, has a graduate degree (MPA) as required by the Grant Narrative and was approved for hire by the Department of Education's Program Specialist. Kendall attends training on a yearly basis that is provided by the Council of Education Opportunity to keep abreast of federal regulations and best practices. Kendall is in his 5th year of employment at the college and has extensive knowledge of the college's academic programs and student services. Kendall is also a certified teacher and has extensive knowledge of secondary education which is pertinent in working with freshman students transitioning into the post-secondary system.

Terri Haun, the Academic Specialist for the program, has a master's degree in accounting. Terri regularly attends training provided by ASPIRE (Regional association) and Montana ASPIRE (local chapter). Terri also attends a National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) state level meeting to improve advising skills as that is a primary function of her position. Terri is in her 5th year of employment at the college and she has extensive knowledge of the financial aid system after having worked in that department prior to her hire as the TRiO Academic Specialist.

Dauneen Durrant, the Administrative Assistant, has an Associate Degree and is currently working on a Bachelor's Degree. She is a prior participant of the TRiO program and has extensive knowledge of the program gained from her participation and employment. She is using her current academic pursuit to enhance her skills.

H. Fiscal and Physical Resources

The TRiO program is funded by a federal grant. The grant award is $220,000 a year over a 5 year period. The first grant award period was for AY 2010/2011. The program was not staffed until December of 2011 and recruitment of students did not take place until January 2011. Temporary space was provided for the program during this establishment period. Excess funds of the first year were carried forward to the next grant award period for AY 2011/2012. It should be noted that the grant period award and budget begins September 1st of each year.

The space for TRiO can currently accommodate 25 students (18% of participants). This space will need to be expanded as the active participation rate is increased.

I. Recommendations and Preliminary Implementation Plan

The current grant ends August 31, 2015. In order to be competitive in the next grant competition the program needs to meet the established goals of the current grant. Increasing the active participation of the 140 selected participants is the recommended course of action that will have the largest impact on meeting the established goals.

The TRiO staff will track students via the Starfish software system and use provided information of faculty and student services personnel to identify participants in need of TRiO services. Direct communication with identified students will aid staff in increasing active participation.

The TRiO staff will provide notes of communication with participants via the Starfish software system to aid faculty and student services personnel in providing solutions and support to students who are struggling in academics or have issues that are detrimental to student success.

A secondary budget will be established to provide funds for activities beneficial for increasing participation. This is necessary because of federal budget guidelines that prohibit or restrict certain expenditures.

Additional space will be necessary in the future to accommodate TRiO when increased participation is accomplished.

K. Appendix

1. TRiO-SSS Annual Performance Report (APR) for AY 2011-2012