ADMISSIONS PROGRAM REVIEW

Suffolk County Community College
Ammerman Campus: 2002-2003

OVERVIEW

A self-study of the Admissions Office was initiated with the development of two instruments – a survey for distribution to the Suffolk County High School Guidance community and another survey for distribution to Suffolk County Community College students. Both surveys (attached) were designed to evaluate the effectiveness and overall impression of the Admissions Office from the position of both the student and guidance counselor perspectives. The surveys were developed by Kate Rowe, Ph.D., Executive Director of Admissions & Enrollment Management and Anthony Napoli, Director of Institutional Research & Assessment.

While the surveys were being designed, sent out to their respective populations and results tabulated, a campus committee was established. The committee was composed of: Beverly Bromel, Ph.D., Chairperson of the Math Department, Dorothy Cofone, Admissions Counselor, Eliana and Melany Martins, students, and Jeffrey A. Lang, Director of Admissions.

PART 1. SCHOOL COUNSELOR SURVEY RESULTS

The overall impression by the High School Guidance Counselors was positive. To the topics addressed, 73% of the Counselors felt the supply of applications and catalogs with which we provide them was adequate, 90% of the Suffolk County Community College representatives provide adequate information to their school, and 88% of the information given by Suffolk County Community College to their school meets the needs of their students.

Where Guidance Counselors were asked, what additional information would be helpful,

93% indicated Admissions representative visit to guidance staff
95% indicated Program coordinator presentations to selected classes
95% indicated Student outcomes information
90% indicated SCCC information workshop for guidance personnel
88% indicated Specific program material
85% indicated High school senior on-site SCCC acceptance program.

The College catalog was highly rated by the Guidance Counselor community. 95% of those Counselors surveyed (who responded) indicated the catalog was useful. Of the above 95%, 80% felt it was very useful. On the topic of the College view book, 88% felt the view book was useful or very useful. A small percentage (2%) felt the view book was
not useful. What did surprise me was that 5% was not even aware of our view book. Perhaps one suggestion for the future would be to distribute the view book more widely to the high schools in Suffolk County.

Again, the response to the Honors brochure was much the same. 80% of those counselors surveyed who responded felt the Honors brochure was useful or very useful. 2% did not find it useful and 15% were not even familiar with it! This needs to be corrected by both mailing the brochure to High School Guidance Counselors with a cover letter from the College Honors Directors and a Guidance Counselor breakfast at which we address honors at Suffolk County Community College.

The financial aid brochure was rated similarly to that of the Honors brochure with even more Guidance Counselors unfamiliar with it (22%). I would suggest a similar approach to that of the Honors brochure. I think however we would need to examine whether the Guidance Counselors would be interested in a breakfast at which financial aid at SCCC was discussed.

59% felt the College calendar was useful/very useful while 34% felt it was either not useful or they were not familiar with it.

The Suffolk County Community College Quick Guide was considered useful/very useful by the Guidance Counselors (73%). 19% were not familiar with it. Perhaps because it was a new brochure last year, the Guidance community will be more familiar with it in subsequent years.

The Program of Study brochure was found useful/very useful by 71% of the Guidance community. 22% indicated they were unfamiliar with it. My sense is that they know the brochure but because it does not have a cover entitled Program of Study, they merely know it as something else.

The College CD ROM was viewed by the guidance counselors who responded to the survey to be not useful or unfamiliar (41.5%) with them. This unfamiliarity suggests guidance offices have not “caught up with the times” and do not use CD ROMs perhaps because of school budgets. In many cases, they still rely on college view books, brochures and college guides. Honestly, this finding is not surprising. Other colleges which choose to jump on the CD ROM band wagon have experienced similar responses for the guidance community.

When reviewing admissions representatives, Guidance Counselors found the Suffolk County Community College representatives to be well-informed and helpful, professional in their demeanor, easy to reach, and that they respond in a timely manor to messages or requests.

On the subject of telephone contact with the Admissions Office, overwhelmingly (90%) of the Guidance Counselors have indicated calling the Admissions Office. Because of the operational design of the College, the majority of the Guidance Counselors have
called more than one admissions office (one of the three campus admissions offices or that of Central Admissions). My personal suspicion is that Central Admissions is the other Admissions Office called regardless of which campus office called. Their satisfaction with the experience was predominately very satisfactory (68%) followed by another 15% who were satisfied with the experience. Only one person - 2.4% of the population, was dissatisfied with the experience.

Of Guidance Counselors who have brought groups to one of the College campuses, 15% have brought groups to the Ammerman Campus – twice the number of visits to any one of the other campuses. The majority of Guidance Counselors however have NOT brought groups onto any campus of Suffolk County Community College. Of those who brought groups onto one of the campuses, none were dissatisfied with the experience.

**PART 2. STUDENT SURVEY RESULTS**

Of the students who completed the survey from the Ammerman Campus, an overwhelming percentage (83%) were full-time students who studied only during the day (42%). This same group of students indicated they applied mostly between May and September (62%) with the remaining students (32%) applying before May.

Most of the students (43%) got their applications from their high school guidance office or the Admissions Office directly (26%). The remaining students obtained applications at college fairs, through the mail, at Suffolk County Community College Open Houses, or downloaded them from the Web site.

Most of the students surveyed indicated they received an admissions application, a program of study brochure and financial aid information in the mail in a timely manner (77%). The same student’s surveyed also indicated that they received the material they requested (77%). Again, 77% of those surveyed felt the material they received was well-organized and easily understood as well as helpful in understanding the admissions process, and the academic programs at Suffolk County Community College.

There was a fairly even split between those who called the Admissions Office and those who did not (41% called, 55% did not). It would suggest most students allow the system to run its course and wait for the appropriate communication from the Admissions Office. One could extend this hypothesis; the admissions process works and our material provide enough answers so that a large percentage of students don’t require further explanation (unless it is perhaps accomplished personally with a visit to the Admissions Office).

Of those individuals who called, most wanted information about the application process and/or to request an application. Of those same students, the majority found the staff member helpful and that they received the material they requested.

At first glance, a big surprise was that 47 percent of the respondents had contact with a representative of Suffolk County Community College before attending vs. 47 percent who had not. That would suggest, with our limited professional staffing, we do rather
well covering the high schools in Suffolk County and that we are available to the public both in and out of the office. In fact, according to the survey, an overwhelming percentage of those students responding to the survey indicated a campus visit was where they meet an Admissions representative.

The information regarding question 11 is questionable. When asked, was your meeting with the Admissions representative helpful, 49% said yes, 5% said no and 45% did not respond. What were the non-respondents thinking? Why so large a percentage? Did they have a negative experience and did not want to say?

The response to questions 12 and 13 are not surprising. When asked, during the application, acceptance, and registration process, did you visit the Admissions Office, 71% replied that they had. Their reasons for visiting are also not surprising because of the office/professional function. First time students are usually academically counseled by the Admissions Counselors and many applicants pick up applications and drop off documents routinely. Most of the respondents received at least partial or all the information they needed when visiting the office (64%).

And lastly, the majority was at least satisfied with the service the received from the Admissions Office – 83%.

PART 3.

Council for the Advancement of Standards (CAS) in Higher Education
Admission Program Standards Self-Assessment Worksheet

In reviewing the Admissions Office via the CAS (Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education) Admissions Program Standards Criteria Rating Summary Sheet, the operation does not come out as glowing in all areas. In part, the results are different because the CAS Admissions Program Standards Criteria Rating Summary Sheet (referred to in this report as CAS APSCRSS) surveys the admissions operation in greater depth and those who completed the report have a better understanding of the office, Suffolk County Community College and the profession in general.

MISSION

In statements related to the Admissions operation and its connection to the institution mission statement the Admissions Office gets high marks. Because Admission is reviewed systematically according to guidelines and those guidelines in most cases relate directly to the mission of the College, the operation fully meets expectations.
PROGRAM

This section of the survey had been written using broad statements, most of which do not relate to the Admission program. Statements such as, "The program promotes student learning and development by encouraging physical fitness." or "... encouraging leadership competence" do not relate to the program of Admission while statements such as, "The program promotes student learning and development by encouraging intellectual development" or "... encouraging appropriate personal and career choices" are fully met by our office.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership as it relates to Admissions at Suffolk County Community College is, when using the CAS scale, "a mixed bag". Some statements such as: "Appointed leaders are selected on the basis of formal education and training", "... relevant work experience", and "... relevant professional credentials" got high marks. Other statements such as "The admission program leader articulates a vision for the organization" and "The admission program leader sets appropriate goals and objectives" score low marks. If the "vision for the organization" means the mission of the institution that objective is met however there has never been an instance in which the present Admissions Director at the Ammerman Campus has ever been asked to participate in a meeting at which vision was the topic or at a meeting at which the outcome of a "vision" meeting was discussed. The same can be said of statements such as: "... sets appropriate goals and objectives". The Office of Admissions is given the admissions goals (i.e. a 3% increase) and the objectives are limited to staffing, budgets and other non-departmental factors. Most of the statements in this category fall in the "Partially Met" area.

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT

Under this category, Admissions receives a solid "C+" or "B+". "Current policies and procedures have been established and are accessible" as well as "The program is managed effectively to achieve its stated goals" reflect a favorable view of the office and how it integrates with the College. The only areas which score poorly are in the areas of: "The program organization exhibits effective management through inclusion of well considered conflict resolution procedures" and "appropriate staff recognition and reward processes". In the last two categories, I see no foreseeable change on the part of the College.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Generally speaking, this category is looked upon positively by those into the admissions office and by those outside the operation. Professional staff members hold appropriate degrees and clerical staff members are qualified to perform many (if not all) the office duties on a day-to-day basis. The office has effective supervision for Interns and others. Training, salary levels and fringe benefits are seen favorably. In this category, the
Admissions Office fails to provide adequate professional development in the areas of regional and national workshops and conferences.

**FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

Perhaps because this is a County institution, departmental financial resources are a poor topic. Granted, a lot of what is needed for the operation of the office is funded through other offices and budgets however the meager budget distributed allows for only the bare office essentials (paper, pens, toner, etc). The budget does not allow for “creative necessities (event signs, a sufficient quantity of “give-aways”, money for receptions, seminars, etc.). The areas under this topic which were viewed positively are those of reimbursement, remuneration and external contractual agreements. Each received “Fully Met” or one step below.

**FACILITIES, TECHNOLOGY, AND EQUIPMENT**

All statements under this topic received very high evaluation with the possible exception of the first: “The admission program has adequate facilities to carry out its mission and goals. This topic received a low evaluation principally because of space limitations in the admission lobby and the clerical area.

**LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Again, perhaps because it is a county institution, this area is well covered. Top scores were given to every statement with the exception of: “Staff members are well informed about institutional policies regarding personal liability and related insurance coverage options”. The previous statement received a “Partially Met” response.

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITY, ACCESS, AND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

Perhaps of all parts of this survey, this section received almost unequaled compliments. Its short coming was in the area of “Program hours of operation are responsive to the needs of all students, including traditionally under-represented, evening, part-time, and commuter students.” The respondent to this section felt office hours could vary with more regularity to accommodate the evening/part-time student.

**CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

If there is one thing this survey has pointed out, it is the lack luster strength of the admissions office to work well with the community (High School Guidance Offices aside). Where it is true, the admissions office has assigned industrial recruitment and the recruitment of under-represented populations to two of the professionals on staff as part of their responsibilities, the efforts are difficult at best because of divided responsibilities between two offices (in one case) and other in-house responsibilities in the case of another professional. The intention is there, simply not the commitment of human resources.
DIVERSITY

In responding to this part of the survey, the admissions office does not fit the mold as defined in this category. As a service office, we work within the framework of our function and do not “promote cultural educational experiences” outside the available course selection or student club parameter. The office and its staff are more aware of its role to promote ethnic and cultural diversity within the admissions process. The first statement under diversity in the CAS survey does incorporate much of the role of admission. “The admission program makes concerted efforts to nurture environments where similarities and differences among people are recognized and honored”. The admissions staff is ethnically diversity, multi-lingual and because of the cultural and ethnic backgrounds of the staff, the office is able to offer service to people in a comfortable unbiased environment.

ETHICS

The ethics displayed in the admissions office reflect very highly on the CAS survey. In every instance the staff and office meet or excel in the 24 statements listed under this category. To some extent, the job of the office and its staff to meet or excel in this category is a result of established guidelines or procedures established by the College and County however their willingness to adhere to these standards demonstrates not only a wellness to comply with policies but the convictions of the office staff itself.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Generally, the assessment and evaluation of the admission program was viewed to be partially met to that of fully met. The weakest link pertains to the statement: “The admission program regularly conducts systematic qualitative and quantitative evaluations of the program to determine whether and to what degree the stated mission and goals are being met.” To some extent, even though there is no routine evaluation of the program, the responsibility to monitor the program’s adherence to the College mission and goals is that of the director of the program.