

Cuyamaca College
Technical Assistance Visit
El Cajon, CA

California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office
DSPS Program
Linda Vann, Specialist

Conducted by

Dr. Gail Conrad, Consultant
DSPS Solutions/Interwork Institute, SDSU
San Diego, CA

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Interwork Institute | DSPS Solutions
Access and Achievement

TEAM COMPLEMENT:

Team Leader – Gail Conrad, DSPS Solutions, Consultant

CCCCO Leader – Linda Vann, DSPS Specialist

COLLEGE STAFF PRESENT FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE VISIT:

College Staff – Dean Nicole Jones; Beth Viersen, DSPS Coordinator; Mary Ascher-Fitzpatrick, LD Specialist; Rachelle Panganiban, DSPS Counselor; Brian Josephson, AT Specialist; Valerie Peterson, SSS; Lekaa Yaldekko, SSA; Jennifer Moore, LRS Specialist; Roberta Gottfried, Test Proctor.

Additional time was spent on follow up phone calls with two faculty to clarify or inform on meeting that was held on campus (2 hours).

BACKGROUND TO COLLEGE AND DSPS:

DSPS – The College has had a few changes in the Vice President of Student Service position in the past few years. During that time, the DSPS program has grown to serve 1500 students. There is a faculty coordinator providing day-to-day operations of the department. The other contract positions include a fulltime Learning Disability Specialist, a fulltime DSPS Counselor, a fulltime Access Technology Specialist, and a 50 % Speech Pathologist. Other faculty positions are adjunct (part-time). The visit is requested to work with the DSPS faculty and staff to identify possible solutions for meeting the growing needs of the students with disabilities.

Prior to meeting with the faculty and staff, we reviewed the job descriptions, the budget, and the service activity reports (SARS) provided by the DSPS coordinator. The job descriptions appear to match the time of hire for the individuals. Additional history includes that the DSPS Coordinator has been in this role for about 10 years, previously having served in the colleges High Tech Center. The program has grown during that time from 400 students to the current 1500 students. Many positions in this department have been in place since before the growth period.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ISSUES:

1. Review Title 5 changes with faculty if necessary – a short discussion to review the recent changes to the regulations and the affects that have occurred on the campuses. Also discussed the impact of new initiatives beyond DSPS, such as the SSSP/Student Equity and most recent Guided Pathways and the legislative discussion of the possible dissolution of categorical programs. This forces the college to look at individual student success to completion and how the DSPS program can provide support to the most individuals to meet those needs. Also discussed the need to look at service delivery in the area of strategies to get directly to students in natural ways within the college.

The imbalance of current workload was a major discussion with DSPS having only one FT counselor for 1500 students. This was very concerning with the smaller loads for AT/HTC support, LD assessment, and Speech & Language.

One additional concern has been the intense needs to support interpreters for the small number of students that are Deaf or Hard-of-hearing (DHH). It was noted that Grossmont has a FT position to coordinate this service and their student numbers are only slightly larger than this college.

2. Identification of college needs and prioritization of those concerns – In meeting with faculty, all felt that they had good rapport with the college community and served on a number of committees to share the concerns of DSPS and the students they serve.

These committee assignments assist the college to meet requirements related to accessible websites, dual enrolled students, and campus-wide initiatives specific to Cuyamaca, such as the accelerated reading and math programs.

In recent years the activity in the AT/HT Center has reduced with smaller numbers of students using the HTC and limited use of alternate media. Discussion of shared services through database work for alternate media with sister college. Also needed to work on improved support for AT with the classified staff during the time when instructor is no on schedule. Discussed the reduced numbers of students needing Learning Disability (LD) assessment and the possible issue related to the broader use of previous documentation to identify LD and the accelerated push for students to complete their education with work that supports the AA/AS degree or transfer degree. LD Specialist has made presentation and run classes, but referrals are small and classes have been small with some cancellation. Class for the Speech & Language specialist has been successful and although faculty was not here to discuss, the team discussed the fact that the individuals teaching skills are very good.

Meeting also held with the classified staff to discuss issues related to their positions and the DSPS program. They felt that they were able to present a very positive approach to all students as the frontline or first responders in the DSPS Office. There was some concern that one staff person was often called upon to be the translation person for students that were often referred to DSPS by other offices to explain a service. They felt this was adding to the office workload. The office staff (and coordinator) were also providing cart transportation on the campus and felt it was not being used appropriately by students, with staff having to hunt for the student as they were not in the parking space yet. Staff in other areas (proctoring/AT) felt it was not something that they wanted to be part of their job.

Concerns in the test proctoring area were related to use of bathrooms in a locked building impacting staff supervision of testing and the impact of mid-term and finals schedules on the workload, which is assisted during finals with the HTC closed for use (allowing for more testing areas). The LRS specialist is available to assist testing during these times and also assists the students in HTC and the faculty that is handling AT (she clarified that it is often when the faculty is off schedule that she handles the AT).

We were unable to meet with students as it was between semesters, but did review the Student Survey that was done in the fall semester. Many comments that dealt with “did not know about this service” were probably due to new students at the college. There were some comments about services being “different at Grossmont” and would possibly want to consider how to make it simple for students that are shared to get information on the differences when possible.

3. Discuss budget concerns with DSPS Coordinator – We were unable to meet with the VPAS as they are unavailable due to a previous appointment. We did meet with the dean and discussed the ratio of students to counselor in the program and the need to improve that ratio to be similar to that of general counseling or better due to increased needs of accommodations along with other counselor requirements.

Additionally, we discussed the fact that the DSPS allocation is provided to offset the costs to provide accommodations to students with disabilities (a federal mandate) and that most colleges find it necessary to provide additional funds to support necessary services, identified in the SSARCC report as college effort. The new DSPS formula will be looking at college effort provided at the college in increasing reimbursement amounts by the reporting data of 2018 (this year) for 2019-2020 DSPS Allocation. This information should be shared with the VPAS.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ISSUES RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A. Look at upgrading job descriptions to meet current needs. Faculty would benefit from broader descriptions and the possibility of instructional roles instead of non-instructional roles. When dealing with low activity, the conversion to the 50% side of the college equation could be helpful to the greater college budget and assist students more efficiently in small group classes instead of one-to-one strategy sessions. Match teaching strengths with possible classes that could support students with disability for success in the transition to college or selection of career.
- B. Discuss the sharing of the interpreter supervisor position with Grossmont to deal with low use services for DHH and high load due to technical nature of the process.
- C. Consider changing the cart transportation service to a bus stop service so that searching for students is minimized by the cart driver while still meeting the need for access from building to building and parking lots.
- D. Identify funds to support more DSPS Counseling support to have ratio be no greater than general counseling in order to provide accommodation support and college

initiative support. Implementing Guidelines recommend one fulltime coordinator when a program has 500 students and the counseling ratio should be closer to that ratio to allow for timely provision of services. Appointments that are 2 months out for students would be too long to meet college access needs.

- E. Informational to the college is that additional requirements are coming to meet the 504-access technology needs of the college in general and this may be a consideration when looking at the time spent for the AT person on committees or in other departments to meet these upcoming requirements and distribute the limited work in this area to other departments.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES PROVIDED:

APPENDICES: None at this time.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THIS REPORT OR OTHER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ISSUES PLEASE

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