

Research Briefs

KEY FINDINGS

- The three services used the most were Campus Visits, Dual Enrollment Academies, and Dual Enrollment College Express Program.
- Four services exceeded the 90% satisfaction rate: Career Fairs (92%), College Knowledge Activities (96%), Assessment (95%), and The Campus Experience (95%).
- STC partners suggested more collaboration and information-sharing.

IMPLICATIONS

For Practice:

- Align curricular expectations and textbooks between STC and local school districts.

For Policy:

- Periodically administer the partnership satisfaction survey to monitor satisfaction with the services.
- Develop models together with school district representatives for enhanced collaboration and information-sharing.

For Research:

- Conduct interviews to recognize the areas for collaboration and information sharing.
- Use focus groups to elicit detailed feedback on areas of improvement.



Satisfaction Survey of South Texas College (STC) Partners AY 2009

STC's vision and mission to create a college-going culture necessitates the College to partner with 16 school districts in the two counties it serves. The Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (SAEM) plays an integral role in this commitment to opening the door to higher education for everyone in the Rio Grande Valley. Through its different departments and services, SAEM is dedicated to providing its partner schools' students with support and guidance from application to graduation and beyond. In tune with STC's data-driven approach to institutional decision making, the partnership survey was conducted to measure the satisfaction of its partners with these services and to provide them an opportunity to suggest improvements. This brief presents the findings and highlights of their implications.

Background

Increasing the college-going rate of all students within the College's region is a fundamental goal for STC and is supported by its vision and mission to "lead the transformation of the region to a 'college-going' culture whereby attending and completing higher education is expected for all." Thus, STC's Division of SAEM partners with the local public school districts by (1) collaborating with K-12 to improve high school graduation rates, college readiness, and enrollment in higher education, (2) developing vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment exchanges and integrations with K-12 and other institutions of higher education, and (3) leading the development and collaboration of family outreach programs to promote the expectation of going to college. During the academic year of 2008-2009, STC provided 23 major services to these partner schools. To gauge the satisfaction with its outreach programs and services, STC conducted a survey of its partners

Purpose of Study

This study was conducted to examine the satisfaction of partners with the services provided to them

by STC and to identify areas of improvement.

Methodology

STC's Research and Analytical Services (RAS) department administered the satisfaction survey to the partner school districts. A mixed methods approach, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative analysis, was used in this study. Initially, the survey asked school district employees whether or not they used an STC service and subsequently rate the service they had used on a five-point satisfaction scale from "Very Satisfied" to "Very Dissatisfied". Additionally, an open-ended question on the survey elicited partner schools' feedback about areas for improvement. Responses on 40 completed surveys were analyzed.

Research Questions

The questions which this study sought to answer were:

1. Which services provided to partner schools were used most?
2. How satisfied were the partner schools with the services they used?
3. What were the suggestions by the partner schools for improvements?

Findings

Usage of Services

Out of the 23 major services STC provided to partner schools, ten of

them were rated on at least 50% of the returned surveys (Table 1). The services are ranked from highest to lowest usage. *Campus Visits* had the largest number of respondents (32), followed by *Dual Enrollment Academies* (28), and *Dual Enrollment College Express Program* (26).

Satisfaction with Services

Out of 32 respondents who rated the *Campus Visits* (the service with largest number of survey responses), 81% of them were "Very Satisfied" and 88% were "Very Satisfied" or "Satisfied" with this service STC provided. Four out of ten services had a higher than 90% satisfaction rate. These four services are *Career Fairs* (92%), *College Knowledge Activities* (96%), *Assessment* (95%), and *The Campus Experience* (95%). While four other services' satisfaction rates came close to 90% (*Campus Visits*, *Dual Enrollment College Express Program*, *Orientation*, and *College Nights*), two services (*Dual Enrollment Academies* and *College Bound/College Connections Application Events*) indicated room for improvement (Table 1).

Areas for Improvement

Aside from accolades indicating that participants found STC to be "helpful" and that it "provides great opportunity for students", an issue that arose from open-ended responses suggested that communication needed to be addressed. It was apparent from the comments that

Satisfaction Survey of South Texas College (STC) Partners

Table 1 - Usage of and Satisfaction with STC Services

STC Services to Partner Schools	Number Rated	Very Satisfied		Very Satisfied AND Satisfied	
Campus Visits	32	26	81%	28	88%
Dual Enrollment Academies	28	19	68%	21	75%
Dual Enrollment College Express Program	26	16	62%	23	88%
Career Fairs	24	19	79%	22	92%
Orientation	24	19	79%	21	88%
College Bound/College Connections Application Events	24	14	58%	18	75%
College Knowledge Activities	23	18	78%	22	96%
College Nights	23	18	78%	20	87%
Assessment	22	18	82%	21	95%
The Campus Experience	21	18	86%	20	95%
Parent Nights	18	15	83%	17	94%
STC Summer Leadership Institute for High School Counselors and Teachers	18	14	78%	16	89%
Early College High Schools and STEM Academies	18	12	67%	15	83%
College for Kids and Teens/Academic Camps	16	11	69%	14	88%
Test Prep & Remediation	15	12	80%	14	93%
House Regional Meeting for Public Schools and Education Centers	15	11	73%	12	80%
McCCTI	13	6	46%	9	69%
Community Organizations	12	9	75%	10	83%
It's Never too Early to Start Planning for College Book Covers	9	8	89%	9	100%
Adopt an Elementary School	9	5	56%	6	67%
Science and College Knowledge TAKS Workshops	8	7	88%	8	100%
Summer Bridge Math Program	8	6	75%	7	88%
PSJA College, Career, & Technology Academy	7	6	86%	7	100%

NOTES: Overall sample size is 40. Each respondent rated every service they used and/or are very familiar with. The line separates services used by 50% or more of the respondents from services used by less than 50% of the respondents.

Respondents have rated the events/programs they have used via a 5-point scale. **Very Satisfied** and **Satisfied** are the two highest points on the scales.

The events/programs are listed in descending order by **Number Rated** and then in descending order by **Percent Very Satisfied AND Satisfied**.

respondents want more communication in the form of meetings and added information-sharing. For example, responses indicate that meetings to “go over expectations and share insights” as well as to “address curriculum expectations” would be welcomed. The key area for improvement was to amplify collaborative efforts to align curricular expectations and textbooks. Additionally, the need for sharing more data, such as “the number of students from the serviced school applying to STC”, was mentioned.

Implications for Further Research

Championing a culture of excellence based on evidence is one of STC's well-regarded strategic directions. It

involves, among other things, generating and utilizing relevant, timely, and accurate data for implementation, evaluation, and improvement purposes of its programs and initiatives. The set of initiatives analyzed in this study concern strategic partnerships STC establishes and maintains with area school districts. These partnerships are of extreme importance and social value considering that the ultimate goal in this region is for every child to grow-up believing that they will go to college.

While the findings of this study provide a strong baseline for assessing the satisfaction of STC's partners with the services it provided to them, they must also be viewed in terms of opportunities for future research. The partnership satisfaction survey should be administered periodically to monitor the

satisfaction. Furthermore, focus groups should supplement the single open-ended question in the survey to elicit partner schools' feedback on areas of applaud and areas for improvement. This study revealed, based on the responses to the open-ended question, that these partnerships can be improved through collaboration and sharing information. As a next step, STC should conduct interviews with school district representatives to recognize the areas and to develop the models for collaboration and information-sharing.