

PROMISING PRACTICES EXCHANGE

Please send your completed forms to Joe Holliday: jholliday@sbctc.edu.

1. Which of the five areas of Strategic Enrollment does this practice address? (Check all that apply)

- Alignment with K-12
- Re-engaging Adult Students
- Onboarding New Students
- Retaining Students
- Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

2. Name of practice: Strategic Enrollment Management at South Puget Sound Community College

3. Description of practice:

South Puget Sound Community College began the academic year 2019/20 with an Operational Plan goal of creating and instituting a strategic enrollment plan. As the year progressed and the world suddenly found itself facing a pandemic, the work of the team assembled to create the plan suddenly shifted to creating a short-term plan for outreach, recruitment, and student support to encourage student enrollment and persistence during the pandemic.

4. Results: What evidence do you have that this practice is achieving desired results?

The Strategic Enrollment Management Team consisted of staff members from Enrollment Services (Outreach and Recruitment, Placement, K12 Partnerships & Advising), Transition Services, International Students, Career and Technical Education/Workforce Education (administrators and faculty), Faculty, and Public Relations and Marketing. The purpose of the team is to create a comprehensive plan for Outreach and Recruitment to attract and retain a diverse student body while serving the needs and partnering with our surrounding community. Using the framework and recommendations created by the WACTC Strategic Enrollment Task Force as a guiding document.

The team's first priority was to create a long-term Strategic Enrollment Plan, however as the pandemic continued to affect the college's operating environment it became clear the focus needed to take a short-term approach and begin the work of strategizing how to ensure the college met its enrollment goals for summer and fall 2020 when the community partners, the primary sources for student enrollment, were shut down in response to the pandemic. The community partners included High schools, community centers and agencies, and work-force education partners. All of the identified partner agencies, centers, and high schools were operating, as the college was,

remotely. This presented a challenge as the team members were accustomed to making weekly and monthly in-person visits, meeting with staff as well as potential students. An additional sense of urgency soon emerged as summer and fall enrollment numbers appeared to be trending downward as the new student enrollment period began.

The team began its work of addressing enrollment for summer and fall 2020 by first determining what our current options and resources are, and what can we do remotely to create outreach and recruitment opportunities for potential students. The college acted quickly in converting to operating in a remote operating environment. One of its primary strengths is its IT infrastructure and tools such as a Customer Relation Management database, and its use of many software applications to contact students such as texting and Hobsons Starfish Student Account Portal, which allowed the college to transition to operating remotely in a very short period of time. The majority of its classes were delivered virtually beginning spring 2020. The website was quickly transitioned to offering Virtual meeting rooms for student services and academic supports and resources. Website information was updated frequently and offered enrollment information and several contact options for students seeking to connect with Outreach and Recruitment staff, Advising, Counseling, Financial Aid, and Academic Support Services. Staff monitored virtual meeting rooms, responded to emails, and held virtual meetings with new, currently enrolled and perspective students as requested. The Strategic Enrollment Management Team relied on these web resources to hold virtual admissions information sessions, virtual open-houses, virtual campus tours, and virtual financial aid workshops. We also established and maintained contact with as many community partners as possible.

Two of the important community partners during this time and the most responsive were the high schools and local workforce agency. We partnered to offer the high school students and especially seniors options for completing needed credits to complete graduation requirements as well as offered juniors the opportunity to participate in the Running Start program. The college's Running Start enrollment is on average 1,200 students each quarter which is significant as the total student population is just over 3,500. Key to our strategies for increasing and maintaining summer enrollment, was to increase our outreach and recruitment efforts to Running Start students. Our partner school districts assisted us in getting messages out to their students boosting our summer enrollment numbers by 200 students. PR and Marketing were key in the messaging and the response was more than we expected in a short period of time. We also partnered with our local Workforce Education agency to send out joint mailings and emails. Not only did we meet our enrollment numbers for summer 2019, but were 6% over. We continued to leverage these relationships for fall 2020 to mitigate the decreasing enrollment numbers. We had a slight decrease in fall enrollment of 9%, and winter 2021 with an 11% decrease. Statewide the fall enrollment numbers for our sister colleges was down 14% on average.

5. Based on your review of the Excellent Practices Rubric, please indicate whether you believe this practice is emerging, promising, or excellent. (Select only one)

Emerging

Promising

Excellent

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Submission date: 2.8.2021