Los Angeles Southwest Community College

Achieving the Dream External Evaluation

California State University, Fullerton

Center for Research on Educational Access & Leadership

July 15, 2012

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Executive Summary

This is an initial evaluation report of the program Achieving the Dream (ATD). It was the intent of the ATD project to develop strategies and program components that would address student success, building stronger connections between faculty and students, and providing faculty with professional development opportunities. Program components of the ATD project include: 1) implementing mandatory student orientations, 2) strengthening existing tutorial services and English and Math labs, and 3) implementing a Faculty Learning Academy. The purpose of this summative report is to provide a synopsis of the overall quality and effectiveness of each intervention based on student and faculty feedback. This document focuses on the design and implementation of ATD at the Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC).

The following evaluation goals were addressed by the data collection and reporting process, which began in Fall of 2011:

Extended Orientation:

- Determine the number of First Year Experience attendees
- Determine the number of in-person orientation attendees

Support Services:

- Identify the percentage of students who’s Math 115, English 21, and English 28 scores increased by 5%
- Assess the effectiveness of the extended Math/English lab hours & tutor’s instruction

Faculty Academy:

- Document program design and implementation of Faculty Academy
- Evaluate the pilot group’s perceived effectiveness of Faculty Academy.
Using quantitative and qualitative data, this report documents program interventions and highlights perceptions of a new student orientation, a Freshman Experience Program, Supplemental Instruction, and the Faculty Academy. Participants provided valuable information regarding program strengths and challenges, effective and ineffective training offered, and recommendations for the program.

Moreover, this report includes an examination of progress and program effectiveness for the 2011 ATD project. This evaluation provides an overview of: current relevant literature, evaluation methodology, presentation of findings from each intervention, discussion of findings, and recommendations for future planning and program development.

In order to evaluate interventions and objectives, data was collected through student surveys from Extended Orientation and Supplemental Instruction (SI). In addition to the surveys, interviews were conducted with participating faculty and two instructors from the SI component. The data about program effectiveness, successes, and challenges include an interview with the FEP director.

The number of First Year Experience attendees was 116. The number of students that participated in new student orientation was 75. Students’ displayed academic improvement due to the effectiveness of extended Math/English lab hours & tutor’s instruction. The program also documented program design and implementation of Faculty Academy. As well as evaluation of the pilot group’s perceived effectiveness of Faculty Academy. The program implemented all evaluation goals and interventions outlined in grant proposal.

Overall students believed the Extended Orientation was beneficial and gave very positive feedback about the experience. Many of the students reported the orientation was engaging and offered valuable information about campus life. Students also stated the orientation better
prepared them for their first day of instruction. The data shows that having a New Student Orientation is a positive asset to the student’s academic awareness and success at Los Angeles Southwest College.

Students who participated in the supplemental instruction intervention also reported positive experiences. Many of the students believed having the SI was valuable, and reported grade improvements when they took advantage of the SI. The sessions allow for students to ask questions and get extra help from someone in addition to the professor.

Faculty members participating in the faculty academy believed the workshops were beneficial to the learning environment. Findings from faculty interviews illustrated that faculty members believed they gained additional tools that could be immediately applied to the classroom environment. Participating faculty members also expressed a desire for additional workshops and even that additional time be allotted to the session.

The program is encouraged to continue its efforts to address the additional needs of LASC students. A continued effort to keep students engaged and involved with new student orientation is recommended and additional training and greater flexibility of hours for SI’s are recommended for program improvement. Faculty members also expressed that additional time for workshops was needed in order to maintain professional development and improve in-class strategies and effectiveness to improve student learning and academic success.

Introduction

In 2011, Los Angeles Southwest College (LASC) received funding for Achieving the Dream (ATD) implementation project on campus. The goal of ATD is to strengthen the opportunity for incoming student success through improved intervention programs. To support the proposed plan a mandatory in-person New Student Orientation and three interventions were
implemented: Freshman Experience Program (FEP), Supplemental Instruction (SI), and Faculty Academy. Prior to the implementation of ATD’s New Student Orientation, incoming students were not required to attend orientation. However, in speaking with the LASC students, many indicated a desire to have a required orientation program to better acquaint themselves with the campus and available resources. As a result, new students are required to attend orientation before they are eligible to receive their assessment scores and register for classes. Students are also required to complete an assessment before meeting with a counselor.

LASC representatives gathered quantitative and qualitative data to identify areas of program improvement and students’ academic needs based on student participation in the first year of ATD. Results revealed that only a small percentage of LASC students have been successful through the basic skills sequence for English and Math. Data also indicated the majority of students in the cohort were not successful in completing the course sequence, thus impacting retention rates. Furthermore, through an examination of quantitative and qualitative data, it is clear that students are not aware of and/or do not know how to access various student and academic support services available to them. According to the Achieving the Dream implementation proposal, data revealed a gap in four areas pertaining to student success including: 1) Identifying skills for student success, 2) identifying previously acquired skills and needs, 3) sense of value of self-worth, 4) relationships with faculty.

As a result of the findings, LASC through ATD developed strategies that connect student success, direct engagement with faculty, and faculty professional development. The strategies included: 1) implementing student orientations which includes the Freshman Experience Program and a mandatory, in-person New Student Orientation, 2) strengthening existing tutorial services and English and Math labs through Supplemental Instruction, and 3) implementing a
Faculty Learning Academy. The Freshman Experience Program is a four day orientation opportunity for incoming students that occurs the week before the start of the fall semester in order to orient students to the campus and services provided. Supplemental Instruction focuses on strengthening the learning support services in the form of labs and tutoring for developmental English and Math. The Faculty Academy provides faculty with professional development focusing on improving faculty/student communication and engagement. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the quality and effectiveness of each intervention based on student and faculty feedback. Included in this report is the methodology of data collection, findings from each intervention, discussion, and recommendations for future planning and development.

**Program Purpose and Goals/objectives**

The purpose of Achieving the Dream is to increase the number of participating students who complete and pass developmental courses, as well as those who re-enroll the following semester. The interventions implemented in order to achieve these objectives were evaluated to assess progress toward the program’s goals. These interventions include: Extended Orientation, Support Services, and Faculty Academy (See Table 1).
Table 1: Interventions and Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interventions</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Extended Orientation</td>
<td>• Determine the number of FEP orientation attendees</td>
<td>• 75 students will attend (FEP) Orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Determine the number of in-person orientation attendees</td>
<td>• 1500 students In-person orientation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Support Services</td>
<td>• Identify the percentage of students who’s developmental Math and English scores increase</td>
<td>• Increase math 115, English 21, and English 28 success rates by 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Faculty Academy</td>
<td>• Document program design and implementation</td>
<td>• Fall semester: Develop the Academy, identify pertinent topics and stands, identify facilitators, and recruit faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluate pilot group’s perceived effectiveness of Faculty Academy</td>
<td>• Spring semester: Begin Academy with pilot group of 10 faculty and collect analyze data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Review of Literature

First Year Experience

Orientation programs offer students the opportunity to get better acclimated and be successful in a new environment. Over 96% of colleges and universities report having some type of New Student Orientation (Mayhew, Vanderlinden, & Kim, 2010). The high percentage of colleges and universities that offer New Student Orientation illustrates the importance of having some type of orientation for incoming students. Orientations offer knowledge about the campus and services, thus providing students a sense of comfort in their new academic surroundings prior to the first day of instruction (Tinto, 1993).

Research indicates that students of color benefit significantly from having New Student Orientation. Orientations help students adjust socially, develop friendships, and utilize campus
services (Mayhew, Vanderlinden, & Kim, 2010). Additionally, when students are orientated to a school in a positive way, it allows them to be more receptive to learning (Mayhew et al, 2010). Therefore, having mandatory orientation meetings for students can potentially have a positive impact on student success and learning.

Supplemental Instruction

Supplemental instruction was developed at the University of Missouri in Kansas City in 1973 as a means to increase student success in “difficult” courses (Hurley, Jacobs, & Gilbert, 2006). Since then, SI is used at more than 1500 colleges and universities (Martin, 2008). The main objective is to come to terms with students’ high failure rates and retention problems by enhancing classroom instruction with additional assistance specific to the course (Malm, Bryngfors, and Morner, 2011).

Research shows that students who participate in SI tend to perform better than students who do not participate in SI (Jacobs & Stone 2008). Therefore, there is a positive correlation with having the presence of SI in the classroom. Having SI available and active in the classroom also allows students to ask questions freely or get help without the feeling of intimidation they may feel with faculty members (Ning & Downing, 2010).

The SI model of student academic assistance helps students, specifically those classes with a high failure rate, over time master content while they develop and integrate effective learning and study strategies (Arendale, 2001). SI has shown to decrease the percentage of failures in the specific course as well as increase course grades for those students who attend the sessions (Ardendale, 2001; Blanc, DeBuhr, & Martin, 1983; Congos & Schoeps, 1993; Malm, Bryngfors, and Morner, 2011; Ramirez, 1997; Zaritsky & Toce, 2006).
Faculty Academy

Professional development is defined as training to expand faculty abilities as teaching professionals to improve student success (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, & Orphanos, 2009). At LASC, Achieving the Dream implemented the Faculty Academy program component to advance their own skills as an instructor as well as contribute to closing the achievement gap with students in developmental courses. Research reveals that having faculty professional development improves the performance of students due to the fact that faculty are better equipped to understand the needs of their students. Furthermore, research indicates that when faculty are engaging and have deepened knowledge on how to teach different types of students, students’ success improves (Saxe, Gearheart & Nasir, 2001).

Ferguson (2002) refers to content, pedagogy, and relationships as the keys to success in professional development programs. Because students often learn best when they are taught and engaged by someone they can relate to, it is vital for instructors to learn and apply pedagogy and the culture of students in order to positively impact student success (Ferguson, 2002). In addition, in order to fully understand the needs of students from disadvantaged backgrounds, programs such as the Faculty Academy provide this understanding to classroom instructors (Easton & Davis, 2009). Often faculty are trained in pure academia, but not in how to teach students (Kane, Rockoff, Jacob & Staiger, 2011). Having the Faculty Academy is a way for professors to better serve their students. Moreover, research reveals that students who come from disadvantaged or low income backgrounds are often taught by teachers who are under prepared (Darling-Hammond, Berry, & Thoreson, 2001) and are likely to enroll in school’s less equipped for academic success.
Evaluation Methodology

Participants

The Center for Research on Educational Access and Leadership (C-REAL) collaborated with the coordinators and directors of each intervention division to obtain the necessary data for analysis. The ATD proposal provided data needed in order to gain access to participants and interview data.

Extended Orientation

According to ATD Plan, the goals of the Freshman Experience Program were to have 75 students attend during the first year, 125 students attend during the second year, 175 students attend during the third year, and 225 students attend during the fourth year of the program. Because the intervention was in its first year, the focus of the results will come from students from year one.

Supplemental Instruction

Student surveys were collected from the English SI department chair. A total of 132 participants responded to the survey. In addition to the student surveys, the C-REAL team interviewed one of the English supplemental instructors.

While the student surveys relative to the Math SI were administered; the data was not made available for evaluation purposes. Conversely, an interview was also conducted with a Math SI’s in order to gather information about perceptions of the program.

Faculty Academy

Faculty members across all disciplines were encouraged to submit applications in Fall 2011 for the academy. In the Spring of 2012, the pilot academy enrolled eight professors for
participation. The C-REAL evaluation team interviewed three of the eight faculty participants to gain insight into their experience with the academy. The interviews were audio recorded, and sent to a professional transcriber. After transcription the interviews were analyzed through a coding system called ATLAS ti, for further analysis.

Data Collection

All semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted in a place that was agreed upon by the participants. Interviewees granted verbal and formal consent for the interviews to be audio recorded. After interviews were conducted, audio recordings were sent to a professional transcriber. Notes and transcriptions were then inserted into an open-coding system (ATLAS TI) for analysis.

Extended Orientation

The Office of Outreach and Recruitment at LASC conducted a survey during the Fall and Spring semesters of 2011 regarding New Student Orientation. The survey was given to 513 students in the Fall, 322 students in Spring part 1, and 32 in spring part 2. The survey used likert questions to gauge student’s response to questions. The purpose of the survey was to examine how students’ perceptions of New Student Orientation effectiveness.

Supplemental Instruction

A mixed-methods approach was also utilized in the data collection for supplemental instruction. One-on-one interviews were conducted with both Math and English supplemental instructors. Due to data collection occurring during the summer, only two of thirteen instructors were interviewed. In addition to interviews, surveys were administered to students who received
Supplemental Instruction in English and Math classes. Surveys were designed to gauge perceptions and the effectiveness of the supplemental instruction (SI).

**Instrument**

**Extended Orientation.** A survey was administered to FEP participants. Students were given a series of 12 statements and asked to rate their experience on a Likert-scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree. A total of 77 students completed the survey.

**Supplemental Instruction.** The English division provided the C-REAL team with end of the semester surveys completed by students who attended supplemental instruction. Questions in the survey centered on frequency of SI use, result of interaction with instructors from the SI team on their student experience, and recommendations for improvement. In addition to the survey, a interview was developed to explore the experiences, feelings, challenges, benefits, and recommendations of the supplemental instructors themselves (See Appendix A).

**Faculty Academy.** An interview protocol was developed to explore the experiences, feelings, challenges, benefits, and recommendations of the faculty academy. The protocol had a total of twelve questions that went into great detail asking the faculty about their experience in Faculty Academy (See Appendix B).

**Analysis**

Atlas TI was used to code all data collected. A coding guide was created before the analysis began. During the coding process of the faculty academy interviews, several themes emerged and were added to the coding guide.
Findings

Findings covered several areas of Achieving the Dream program. The following section will cover the analysis from the 1) Mandatory New Student Orientation, 2) Freshman Experience, 3) First Year Experience 4) Freshman Year Coordinator, and 5) Supplemental Instruction.

Mandatory New Students Orientation

A total of 513 students participated in Fall, 322 students in Spring part 1, and 32 in Spring part 2. A brief survey was given to participants that aimed at understanding students’ perceptions and experiences with New Student Orientation. The orientation consisted of academic awareness to Los Angeles Southwest College with regard to steps for applying for financial assistance, as well as counselor advisement on personal career academic goals. The orientation also provided tips and skills to college success, and an overview of all student service programs and organizations offered at LASC.

When asked about if the workshop topics provided were relevant to the majority of students during the Fall 2011 (74%, n = 378) strongly agreed that they were. Similarly, during Spring part 1 and part 2 the majority of students also strongly agreed (64%, n = 206 and 78%, n = 25; respectively) and (32%, n = 102 and 22%, n = 7; respectively) agreed that the workshop was relevant to their lives as a student and as a person (see Table 2).
Table 2: Relevance to students’ personal and academic life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 n = 513</td>
<td>(378) 74%</td>
<td>(59) 11%</td>
<td>(12) 2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 pt.1 n = 322</td>
<td>(206) 64%</td>
<td>(102) 32%</td>
<td>(10) 3%</td>
<td>(3) 0.9%</td>
<td>(1) 0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 pt.2 n = 32</td>
<td>(25) 78%</td>
<td>(7) 22%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Majority of students either strongly agree or agree that the presenter was engaging and kept the students interested in the topic (see Table 3).

Table 3: Engagement of Presenter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 n = 513</td>
<td>(415) 81%</td>
<td>(93) 18%</td>
<td>(4) 0.7%</td>
<td>(1) 0.2%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 pt.1 n = 322</td>
<td>(231) 72%</td>
<td>(86) 27%</td>
<td>(5) 2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 pt.2 n = 32</td>
<td>(25) 79%</td>
<td>(7) 22%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked if the presenter was very informative, the majority of the students either strongly agreed or agreed. For Fall (81%, n = 416 and 18%, n = 93; respectively), for Spring part 1 (73%, n = 234 and 26%, n = 83; respectively), and Spring part 2 (84%, n = 27 and 16%, n = 5; respectively) (see Table 4).
Table 4: Informative Presenter

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 n = 513</td>
<td>(416) 81%</td>
<td>(93) 18%</td>
<td>(4) 0.7%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(1) 0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 pt. 1 n = 322</td>
<td>(234) 73%</td>
<td>(83) 26%</td>
<td>(3) 1%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 pt. 2 n = 32</td>
<td>(27) 84%</td>
<td>(5) 16%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students were then asked if the presenter was able to answer any question about College and LASC. The majority of students either strongly agreed or agreed. For Fall (76%, n = 390 and 22%, n = 111; respectively), for Spring part 1 (70%, n = 224 and 27%, n = 86; respectively), and Spring part 2 (81%, n = 26 and 19%, n = 6; respectively)(see Table 5).

Table 5: The presenter was able to answer questions about college and LASC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 n = 513</td>
<td>(390) 76%</td>
<td>(111) 22%</td>
<td>(9) 2%</td>
<td>(2) 0.3%</td>
<td>(1) 0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 pt. 1 n = 322</td>
<td>(224) 70%</td>
<td>(86) 27%</td>
<td>(12) 4%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 pt. 2 n = 32</td>
<td>(26) 81%</td>
<td>(6) 19%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost all of students strongly agreed or agreed that other students could use a workshop similar to the workshop that they attended. One student (0.3%, n = 1) from Spring 2011 disagreed, and one student (0.2%, n = 1) from Fall 2011 strongly disagreed (see Table 6).
Finally students were asked if the workshop encouraged them to think about taking classes or a class at LASC. Only two students from Fall 2011 disagreed or strongly disagreed (0.2%, n=1 and 0.2%, n=1; respectively) (see Table 7).

**Table 6: Other students could use this workshop**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 n = 513</td>
<td>(423) 82%</td>
<td>(80) 16%</td>
<td>(9) 2%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>(1) 0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 pt.1 n = 322</td>
<td>(221) 69%</td>
<td>(92) 29%</td>
<td>(8) 2%</td>
<td>(1) 0.3%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 pt. 2 n = 32</td>
<td>(24) 75%</td>
<td>(8) 25%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 7: This workshop encouraged me to think about taking a class or classes at LASC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011 n = 513</td>
<td>(422) 82%</td>
<td>(82) 16%</td>
<td>(10) 2%</td>
<td>(1) 0.2%</td>
<td>(1) 0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 pt.1 n = 322</td>
<td>(226) 70%</td>
<td>(82) 25%</td>
<td>(15) 5%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2011 pt.2 n = 32</td>
<td>(22) 69%</td>
<td>(9) 28%</td>
<td>(1) 3%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Freshman Experience Program**

The Freshman Experience Program (FEP) occurred a week before the start of the fall semester and spanned over the course of four days. First time students, who enrolled during the spring and summer, were invited to participate in the program. The purpose of the Freshman
Experience Program was to strengthen the opportunity for incoming student success. As mentioned before, according to the ATD Plan, the goals of the Freshman Experience Program were to have 75 students attend during the first year. A survey was administered to FEP participants. Students were given a series of 12 statements and asked to rate their experience on a Likert-scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. A total of 77 students completed the survey.

Participants were asked whether or not they felt the Freshman Experience program was engaging and informative. Of the 77 students who participated in the program, 76% (n= 59 students) strongly agreed and 24% (n = 18) agreed that it was engaging and informative (see Graph 1).

**Graph 1: The Freshman Experience was engaging and informative**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants responded to whether they felt that participating in the Freshman Experience Program introduced them to college topics and services that they did not previously know. Out of the 77 students, 62% (n = 47) strongly agreed that they learned about topics and services that they had no prior knowledge of. Thirty six percent (n = 28) of students agreed that they were introduced to a new topic. Most students felt they learned about new topics or services while participating in the Freshman Experience program.
Students were then asked if they felt that various presenters were able to address their questions about college and about LASC. Out of 77 students, 90% (n = 69) felt that various presenters addressed their questions about college and LASC. More specifically, 73% of students (n = 56) strongly agreed and 17% (n = 13) agreed that their questions were addressed.

**Graph 2:** The various presenters were able to address my questions about college and LASC

Students who participated in the Freshman Experience program were asked if they felt more prepared on the first day of classes because of the program: 98% (n = 75) felt that they did. 73% of the students (n = 56) strongly agreed that they felt more prepared on the first day of classes because of the program. 25% of the students (n = 19) agreed that they felt more prepared on the first day of classes. The remaining 2% (n = 2) did not agree or disagree that they felt more prepared on the first day of classes.
Graph 3: I felt more prepared because of the Freshman Experience Program

Students were asked if they agreed that the information they received will help them succeed in college classes. Of the 77 students, 73% (n = 56) strongly agreed that they did receive helpful information for their college classes, while 25% of the students (n = 19) agreed that the information they received would help them in their classes.

Graph 4: I received information that will help me succeed in my college classes

Seventy-seven students, 71% (n = 55) strongly agreed that they received helpful information about the different student support services. In addition, 27% of students (n = 21) agree that the information they received about various student support services was helpful.
Graph 5: I received helpful information about various student support services

Most students, 66% (n = 51) strongly agree that they received information that prepared them for involvement in student life at the college and 27% (n = 21) agree.

Almost all of the students would recommend the Freshman Experience Program for all LASC students.

Graph 6: Students recommendations for the Freshman Experience for all LASC students
Students were asked if they would make the Freshman Experience program mandatory for all LASC students. Sixty-five percent (n = 50) of students *strongly agreed* that they would make the program mandatory and 21% (n = 16) of students *agreed*.

After the Freshman Experience Program, felt they would know where to go if they were failing a class. Over half of the students 42% (n = 32) *strongly agreed* and 38% (n = 29) *agreed*. Most participants would know where to go get Study Abroad information 86% (n = 66), 52% (n = 40) *strongly agree* and 34% (n = 26) *agree* they would know how to access Study Abroad information. Almost all of the students said they know where to go get information regarding Financial Aid 75% (n = 55) *strongly agreed*, 25% of students (n = 19) *agreed*.

**First Year Experience**

A total of 116 students participated in the First Year Experience (FYE). Of the 116 students, 60 took basic skills courses offered by the college. During the Fall 2011 semester, the program saw a 95% success rate for this population of students, with 111 student completing the program out of the original 116. Of that 111, the average GPA was 2.25, and 84 (75%) completed all the classes they had registered for. The average credit load for students in Fall 2011 was 8.99, and the average credit load for the entire academic year was 9.98. Moreover, FYE had a 78.45% retention rate as students transitioned from the Fall to the Spring semester, showing that FYE is beneficial for students in their first year.

**Student Comments**

One student who participated in the program had been out of school for 30 years and felt as if the Freshman Experience Program was just what he needed. Students had much to say about Mr. B., the director of the program; they felt that he was inspirational, encouraging, and extremely supportive. There were very few negative comments made about the Freshman
Experience Program. One student stated that more activities during the program would have been helpful. Another student recommendation was to have “follow-up” meetings throughout the semester to track the progress of students.

Below are a few comments made by students who attended the Freshman Experience Program:

- “I love having the Freshman Experience because it let me know that Southwest is here to help!”
- “The Freshman Experience was a very enriching experience for me. Mr. Barron was very enlightening, encouraging, helpful, and thorough. I truly appreciate his leadership and motivational skills.”
- “I think if you haven’t been to school in years, Freshman Experience is the place to start. It’s like going to kindergarten and Mr. B is our teacher. He made us ready for college and he was funny. Me, I’ve been out of school for 30 years and he opened his hands and just welcomed us to LASC.”
- “Mr. B changes students’ lives!”

Freshman Year Experience Coordinator Interview
An interview was conducted with the Freshman Year Experience Coordinator to gain insight on the overall successes and areas for growth. Ming Huei has worked in higher education for the last 17-18 years and has a strong desire to work with disadvantaged students. Overall, Ming-Huei indicated that it was the type of campus that attracted her to the program. As a coordinator, the overall responsibilities are to manage and coordinate the activities of the Freshman Year Experience and to fulfill the responsibilities of the grant. Ming-Huei stated that
the overall theme is to ensure students retain and are able to navigate their first year at LASC, as well as accomplish the goal of the student.

When asked about expectations of the program, Ming-Huei discussed collegial support was something that she had hoped for. However, she expressed that being challenged by their was a lack avenues for collaboration, communication, in the gap with the disadvantaged. Ming-Huei indicated that she had not anticipated the lack of motivation among students to be as problematic.

Although Ming-Huei initially expressed concerns about some of the challenges she was also hopeful. She discussed that in the Spring they offered an incentive as a way to track students. Students had to turn in two progress reports, attend workshops, and complete the program in order to receive a gift card. Originally she expressed concern because only 8 students were eligible for the incentive. However, where she viewed the scenario as a success was in the overall GPA: the eight students had raised their GPA’s to a 3.5 or better. She felt that these students performed better than she had anticipated.

Other challenges expressed by the coordinator were lack of resources, commuting, and lack of clarity with campus policies. As with many other community college, South West is experiencing budget cuts, and this has been problematic in terms of resources. It was not until recently that Ming-Huei was given an office. Her administrative assistant is also working with limited resources.

Also noted was that many of the students struggled with transportation to and from campus and activities and that it was difficult for students to be successful with such an obstacle. And lastly, consistency with communication and policy across campus presented their own set of
challenges. Often times, she felt that many of the policies seemed fluid and that many administrators were either vague or inconsistent and that this created problems for planning.

When asked about future plans for the program, she again stated that it was difficult to plan because of budgetary restrictions and limited resources. However, she indicated that the program would continue to engage and build relationships with students, work on collaboration with other faculty members and colleagues, and attempt to recruit faculty involvement for the summer and future support.

**Supplemental Instruction**

There was a survey administered to students who received Supplemental Instruction in English and Math classes. The survey was given in an effort to gauge the effectiveness of (SI) as perceived by the students. In order to attain this information, questions centered on ideas such as frequency of SI use, results of interaction with the SI team on their student experience, and recommendations for improvement to the program. The results of both the English classes follows.

**English**

Student surveys were collected from the English SI department chair. A total of 132 participants responded to the survey. In the English SI survey, there were a total of seven questions. The first question asked students how often they saw the SI tutor for help or sought tutoring outside of the classroom. In response, 42.0% of the students (n = 55) reported that they see an SI tutor at least once a week, 9.2% of the students (n = 12) reported seeing an SI tutor at least five times throughout the semester, 18.3% of the students (n = 25) reported that they saw a SI tutor a few times throughout the semester. While 8.4% of the students (n = 11) reported seeing
an SI tutor once in the past semester. Another 22.1% of students (n = 29) reported that they never saw an SI tutor outside of the classroom.

When students were asked how often they attended an SI Session, results that were yielded varied. Approximately 28.8% of students that responded (n = 38) claimed to have gone to one of these sessions every week, while 8.3% of students (n = 11) reported to have attended one of these sessions at least five times in the semester. Another 14.4% of the students (n = 19) reported to have attended these sessions a few times throughout the semester, while 12.1% reported only attended once this semester. The largest percentage of students , 36.4% (n = 48), reported they never attended these sessions led by SI tutors (see Graph 8).

Graph 7: Attendance at SI Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance at SI Sessions</th>
<th>1 per week</th>
<th>5 per semester</th>
<th>few per semester</th>
<th>once a semester</th>
<th>not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance at SI Sessions %</td>
<td>28.80%</td>
<td>8.30%</td>
<td>14.40%</td>
<td>12.10%</td>
<td>36.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When asked why they did not attend SI sessions, students reported a variety of reasons. Not having the time to attend the sessions was cited as the most common reason as to why students did not attend. 30.3% of students indicated this to be the cause (n = 40); while another
17.4% of students (n = 23) felt as though the times that the SI tutor offered sessions were too difficult to attend. The smallest percentage of students (6.1%, n = 8) felt the sessions were important to attend.

When asked about how helpful the presence of the SI tutors in the class sessions were, overwhelmingly positive results were reported. More than half of the students (59.8%, n = 79) felt as though the presence of the SI tutor was extremely helpful, while just over a quarter (28.0%, n = 37) of the students felt the presence of the SI tutor was very helpful. A small percentage of students (6.8%, n = 9) felt as though the presence of the SI tutors was only somewhat helpful, and the smallest group of students (2.3%, n = 3) felt as though the presence of the tutors was not helpful at all.

When asked about the effect that having an SI tutor in the classroom had on the scores in their English class, the students reported varying results. Slightly less than half of the students (42.7%, n = 56) reported that their English grades improved a great deal by at least a full letter grade, while just over a quarter of the students (27.5%, n = 36) reported that their scores improved by at least a half letter grade. A much smaller group of students (5.3%, n = 7) reported that their grades remained the same, and about one-fifth of the students (19.8%, n = 26) reported that they were not sure what effect the SI tutors had on their English scores (see Graph 9).
When students were asked to rate their experiences with the SI tutors, there appeared to be a large consensus made by much of the group. Just fewer than three-quarters of the students (73.3%, n = 97) reported that they had generally positive responses from the SI tutors, while 10.7% of the students (n = 14) reported neutral responses. There was a small percentage of students (0.8%, n = 10) who reported having a negative response from an SI tutor, and 15.3% (n = 20) of the students elected not to answer this question.
Lastly, when students were asked about recommendations to strengthen the English SI tutor component, the answers appeared to reflect much of what had been reported by many of the preceding questions. Almost half of the students (47.0%, n = 62) reported that they did not see any room for improvement and had generally positive comments for the program. A smaller portion of the students (16.7%, n = 22) reported that they would like to have better scheduling of the SI component, and it was reported that many of the students (32.6%, n = 43) felt the program can be improved, but they were not sure how.

**English**

In addition to the student surveys, the C-REAL team interviewed one of the English supplemental instructors. The participant self-identified as an English major at California State University, Dominguez Hills, and had hopes of becoming an English professor in the future. The SI was referred by their professor for the job because of the grades they received in undergraduate English at a four-year institution. Prior to being assigned to the classroom or
tutoring setting, the SI went through brief training where different scenarios were presented what could be experienced while on the job. Training was for two days, to ensure the SI can be fully prepared before starting. When asked how effective the training was, the SI indicated that everything was made completely clear, and a packet with important information was provided.

Relationships with professors were an area of interest. When asked about the relationship with the professor, the participant discussed the importance of having a good relationship with not only the professor, but also with the students in order to foster student success in the classroom. Additionally stated, “It wouldn’t work if I didn’t have a good relationship with the professor.”

Along with having a good relationship with the professor, students have to be receptive to the SI. The participant indicated that in order to create a good relationship with the students, they would walk around the classroom to monitor the students and build rapport. The SI saw themself as the middle man between the professor and students. The SI believed that they helped students to develop and get over fears of speaking up in class. The SI expressed that “[The students] ask me those questions that [they] don’t want to ask the professor.” Additionally, according to the participant, having that bond with students cures their fear of the classroom in terms of speaking in class or speaking with the professor.

Overall the experience of having the Supplemental Instruction model was positive. The SI stated “Actually, I really, really enjoy tutoring here.” When asked about recommendations, the participant indicated that they felt it would be beneficial to have the program expand to have more students and tutors participate. It was also noted that the Supplemental Instruction Model should be put in every developmental English class to fill the gaps between instructors and students.
Math

A math SI was interviewed in addition to the English SI. Similarly to the English SI, the participant indicated a referral for the position was made by a professor based on past class performance. The participant discussed past experience in taking a number of upper division math classes. A 2 day training as a math SI included a two day training component and a training manual with information explaining the role of a SI was provided similar to the training of the English SI. Essentially the SI was given the tools needed to help students succeed inside and outside the classroom. The SI stated that the most effective part of the training was the questions asked of them before training began. For example, “what do you think your position is? What do you think your position is not? What things do you think that you shouldn’t be doing as a supplemental instructor? Like, grading homework, or like do they think that we’re supposed to be doing that? Or, do you think you’re not supposed to be doing that?” When asked if any part of the training was ineffective, no specific concern was raised. As an overall critique however, the SI mentioned confusion about the amount of hours that they worked or were supposed to work.

As an SI, certain skills are needed in order to foster student success. The SI mentioned having knowledge of subject material was essential to being effective with the students. Also, needed is patience and the ability to relate to others. According to the SI, “You have to be able to relate and help them feel comfortable about the actual task at hand and themselves.” The participant also noted that knowing how to articulate ideas and concepts was an important skill. Just because the knowledge of a concept is there does mean one can explain it. Essentially, the job was to fill in the gap between students and professors; “I’m there too, you know”, “be in
conjunction with the teacher to get them [the students] to understand okay this is what she’s saying.” The participant also reiterated the importance of a positive rapport with the professor.

When asked about the strengths and challenges regarding the Supplemental Instruction Model, having the combination of teaching then outside classroom help was mentioned, according to the SI, getting hands-on experience after learning a concept was a major strength. The main challenge that the SI mentioned was starting in the middle of the semester: “Some students felt that they didn’t have enough time with the tutors and then they think they wouldn’t make it any better if they already were failing. So, since we came in the middle, like we weren’t as effective as if we would have come in the beginning.”

Overall the SI had a very positive experience with the program. The participant mentioned how excited the students were to know the program provided free tutoring, and how easy it was for the students to get acclimated to them, because they were able to relate. The SI mentioned a couple of students got their first A’s in math because of the tutoring: “One student had been struggling. And, when I worked with her, she took her test, the last test that she took she got an A. And, she was like, this is my first A. I’m so excited. She was like almost in tears.”

Noted recommendations were to have the SI start in the beginning of the semester instead of the middle. Furthermore, having a designated classroom for the SI to tutor would be helpful in effectively tutoring students because the math lab can get too full. Lastly, the program should continue to be implemented in math classes.

Faculty Academy

The fourth ATD intervention was the LASC Faculty Academy. The Faculty Academy serves as a learning community for full-time faculty that supports professional development
focused on faculty-student instruction, communication and engagement. The academy aims to promote a sustainable culture of student success by encouraging active instructional methods, teaching innovation, and excellence. The academy is designed to assist LASC faculty in providing pathways for students to overcome challenges that impede success. The goal is to provide faculty with a safe environment to rethink how students of color in impoverished communities learn while additionally exploring innovative techniques to reach those students who have had difficulty in traditional classrooms.

Academy participation was solicited via email. Faculty members across all disciplines were encouraged to submit applications in fall 2011. In the spring of 2012, the pilot academy enrolled eight professors for participation. This year the academy was facilitated by Professor Cynthia McDermott, Chair of the Department of Education at Antioch University. Throughout the semester, the academy ran nine sessions every other Thursday for 90 minutes. Throughout the nine week academy, members actively engaged in discussions on the topics of extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation, interactive processes, neuroscience research, teaching methods, instructional technology, and assessment. In addition to each session, members were provided two backgrounds texts which were integrated into the sessions, “What the Best College Teachers Do” by Ken Bain (2004) and “Teaching First Year College Students” by B. Erikson, C. Peters, and D. Strommer (2006).

The C-REAL evaluation team interviewed three faculty participants to gain insight into their experience with the academy. Questions focused on their perceptions of the program, their ability to apply lessons to their instruction in the classroom, and their recommendations (See appendix b). Overall the faculty mentioned positive views, and expectations of what they expected. It would be a good opportunity to meet faculty across disciplines, networking and
learn new techniques and teaching styles. Overall, all the participants had positive views and expected to learn new concepts and ways of teaching classes. Some participants reported that they believed other faculty participants not present for the intervention also had a positive program perception because of the quality of the program.

Participants indicated to what degree they used strategies from the academy in the classroom. When asked for specific examples, some strategies mentioned included learning and using new pedagogical and problem solving techniques. One participant mentioned, learning how to approach students differently in order to address specific issues and change the philosophical strategies to better serve the needs of the students. One faculty member cited reengineering the classroom to better suit student’s needs instead of professor’s needs. Also, the use of technology in the classroom to engage students for better learning results. For example, a participant mentioned using online blogging as a tool to engage students to want to do their homework assignments and creating variety to keep the class engaged so professors are not just standing and lecturing. Another participant mentioned using the reflection strategies and small group activities in the classroom to help students retain more information and be more active in the classroom. The same participant also mentioned creating more of an open communication with students.

Additionally, faculty described the change in student reactions to a different teaching style. Most reported that students had very positive responses toward the changes in teaching. Some mentioned wanting to do more to further engage students with the new teaching styles. Only one participant mentioned their class having difficulty with the changes in teaching style, because not all the students were invested in the curriculum. The students who were taking the
class for general education purposes had a much harder time adjusting to more learning intensive strategies than students who were taking it as a core class.

Faculty felt they benefited as a result of their participation in the academy. The workshop that the participants mentioned as being the most effective related to the brain and the mind. One faculty member said, “I can basically conclude that a person will remember an instructor forever because that person was able to reach the mind of the students and get that information stored in the brain.” They mentioned that having that exposure allows them to have better tools when dealing with students. The Faculty Academy offers training for faculty to experience deeper connections with students through strengthened communication, developing an understanding of learning modalities, and exploration of innovative instructional techniques that can be implemented in the classroom immediately.

Lastly, faculty made recommendations for program improvement. One participant said having a clear agenda from the beginning to set out clear topics and goals would be helpful to better grasp what faculty academy is going to cover. Having a tentative calendar would be helpful, as many of the participants mentioned timing to be problematic. Some also mentioned feeling rushed. One participant mentioned, “I always felt like just when the discussion was developing I was out of time.” Another participant recommended less reading material because they just do not have the time to read it. All of the participants would recommend faculty academy to others because they felt it to be very beneficial. There was even mention of what a great facilitator Cynthia McDermott was during the sessions. Future plans for the Faculty Academy include expanding participation and length. In fall 2012, the academy will recruit ten new faculty members and increase the program to two semesters. The previous eight academy
members will serve as coaches for new academy members and Cynthia McDermott will continue to facilitate the sessions.

Conclusion

The Achieving the Dream program was implemented at LASC and provided a variety of services to students. In order to assess the effectiveness of the program in its ability to close the achievement gap, both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered for analysis.

One of the first interventions implemented was the Extended Orientation. Students are very receptive to the Extended Orientation and they provide very positive feedback. Responses indicate that the majority of students either strongly agreed or agreed with all the helpful information that Extended Orientation provides to them. Majority of students also indicate that the presenter was engaging, informative, knowledgeable, able to kept the student interested in the topic, and that the information is relevant to their personal, as well as, academic lives. Overall, students have very positive views toward the New Student Orientation. The majority of the responses towards the 6 questions are either strongly agree or agree. In all, the data shows that having the New Student Orientation is a positive asset to the academic awareness of Los Angeles Southwest College.

Students were then offered the Freshman Experience to get them better acclimated with the college. Overall, participants of the program believe the program is well organized and structured. Because the program helps familiarize students to the campus environment and clarify pertinent information, students believe they are better prepared for the first day of instruction. Many students express learning about topics and services that they have no prior knowledge of as well as having many of their questions answered. Students speak very highly of
Mr. B and his inspirational role, and over half of the participants said they recommend that every freshman go through the Freshman Experience.

In depth interviews provide a better perspective on Supplemental Instructor’s experiences. One point of interest is the importance of having a good relationship with the professor that SI’s work with. Both SI’s mentioned having a good relationship with the students is important to foster the best possible results in terms of student success in the classroom. Effective training is important in meeting the needs of the both student and SI in order to be effective in the classroom. Each participating SI believes the Supplemental Instruction Model should be put in every developmental class to fills in the gaps between instructors and students.

Quantitative data for the Math Supplemental Instruction was also taken. However because of summer schedules the research team was unable to acquire the data results. Conversely, an interview was conducted and the Math SI’s perceptions of the program were reported. In line with the English SI perceptions of the program, the Math SI echoes many of the comments made from the English counterpart. Some of the notables are relationships with both professors and students being important to for student success. Positive comments about the training being informative and that SI’s were provided a packet that contains additional information needed for success are also reiterated by the Math SI. Suggestion for improvement relate to the hours worked and having a designated space to work with students.

The Faculty Academy is designed to assist LASC faculty in providing pathways for students to overcome challenges that impede their success. The faculty had nothing but good things to say with regard to the Faculty Academy. All participants believe that the faculty academy helps improve their teaching in some capacity. The new strategies are immediately implemented in the classroom environment and worked in with instruction. Workshops are
beneficial and influential on the participants as they develop as professors. Faculty members state that the information is informative and that more time in the sessions is warranted

**Recommendations**

Overall, students were very receptive to the Extended Orientation and found it to be effective. It is important to continue the Extended Orientation and maintain consistency with the delivery of information as well as continue to use relevant and creative activities to engage students during the program. We recommend the monitoring of students’ needs in order to ensure information provided during the orientation is meaningful and applicable.

Overall, The Freshman Experience was a successful component of the grant. Many of the students recognized the value of the experience in their overall acquisition of important information related to the college and campus services offered. However, some students indicated that follow up meetings throughout the semester would help facilitate their progress. Additionally, students also recommended an expansion of program activities and additional services. Creating follow up workshops to inform and remind students of services and programs that address any new questions or concerns would be helpful. Additionally, these follow up sessions could be used to, track student progress, and address any new questions or concerns.

The data reveals positive results for the English Supplemental Instruction, but there was no quantitative data for the Math Supplemental Instruction. Overall, having SI’s present in the class has a positive effect on grade improvement. Students who took advantage of the SI reported positive experiences. We recommend that there be greater flexibility with session hours offered as well as session locations, this may enhance student participation. We also recommend greater publicity of SI sessions occur to increase student awareness of services.
Faculty Academy participants offered excellent recommendations for program improvement. Faculty recommended extended session time, less reading materials, and expand to include other faculty.

The evaluation team recommends improved documentation of change throughout the program from faculty, as well as more collaboration and support from program coordinators as they implement program activities. The program needs enhanced coordination and follow-through for evaluation projects including program documents. In terms of Faculty Academy we recommend, summaries of readings on PowerPoint to reduce time for reading of theoretical concepts and pedagogy.
Appendix A

Achieving the Dream Evaluation- Supplemental Instructor

Supplemental Instructor Qualitative Interview

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this qualitative interview today. Our purpose here is to allow you the opportunity to share your feelings, experiences, and perceptions of your experience with the supplemental instruction model. Your open and honest responses will allow us to provide strong recommendations for LASC to improve the quality and effectiveness of the program.

Background:

Name:

Sessions Tutored:

Year:

1. How did you get involved with supplemental instruction?
2. Please describe your experience supplemental instructor training.
3. In your opinion what was effective about the training? Give 2-3 examples
4. In your opinion what was ineffective about the training? Give 2-3 examples
5. What skills do you feel are relevant to possess prior to becoming a supplemental instructor?
6. Previously, students expressed a disconnect between methods taught in the classroom and methods taught by the tutors, in what ways have you felt you have been able to close the gap? Give examples.
7. How would you describe the nature of your relationship with the primary instructor? Has this strengthened or weakened your abilities as a supplemental instructor?

8. Being that this was the first year of inception of the supplemental instruction model, what do you feel were some of the challenges that were faced this year? Give the top 2-3 examples.

9. What are some of the strengths exhibited by the SI model? Do you feel that SI is an effective method for teaching LASC students. What evidence do you have to support this?

10. What are some recommendations you have for the program in future implementations of supplemental instruction?

Appendix B
Achieving the Dream Evaluation- Faculty Academy
Faculty Qualitative Interviews

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the focus group today. Our purpose here is to allow you the opportunity to share your feelings, experiences, and perceptions of the faculty academy. Your open and honest responses will allow us to provide strong recommendations for LASC to improve the quality and effectiveness of the program.

Background:

Name:

Courses Teaching:

Years at LASC:

1. What’s your perception of the Faculty Academy? How do you feel other faculty perceive it?
2. To what degree do you use strategies and learning from the Faculty Academy in the classroom? Identify 2-3 strategies that you have integrated into your classroom.

3. Provide an example of how you used the Faculty Academy as effective tool in meeting students’ needs. Please give specific examples.

4. How effective do you feel these strategies have been? Please give 2-3 examples.

5. In light of what you have integrated from the faulty academy, describe the change in student reaction to your teaching style.

6. In your opinion which workshops were most effective for you and why? Please give 2-3 examples. Which workshops were least effective and what do you think could be done to make them more effective?

7. What did you take away from the workshops that you implemented in the classroom?

8. In what ways has your participation in the Faculty Academy benefited you as a professional?

9. What recommendations do you have for program improvement?
10. Tells us about the strengths of the academy

11. Would you recommend the Academy to other faculty?

12. In light of what you have gained from the Academy, what core concepts/strategies would you recommend? Please give 2-3 examples.
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