Department Name
Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS)

Department Mission Statement
We support the success of students with disabilities by providing programs and services that promote access, equal opportunity and empowerment.

Student Learning Outcomes
Many students seeking DSPS support have difficulty understanding the nature of their disability, explaining its educational impact, and asking for the accommodations they need in an appropriate manner. This is especially true of students who have hidden disabilities, which at Santiago Canyon College (SCC) represent over 85% of the DSPS population. This lack of awareness compromises students’ ability to effectively advocate for themselves and limits their access to equal educational opportunities. Since it is understood that self-advocacy is a critical component of student success and empowerment, the DSPS Department identified the following student learning outcomes for the 2008-2009 academic year to promote the development of these skills:

As a result of participating in Disabled Students Programs and Services,

1. Students will be able to identify their disabilities and explain their educational limitations.
2. Students will be able to articulate the accommodations they require.

Methods
New Students
All students who apply for DSPS participate in an individual evaluation of needs with a DSPS faculty member to determine program eligibility and required academic accommodations. The evaluation is a didactic process designed to help students learn about their disabilities and the accommodations that will benefit them. The evaluation culminates with students learning what disability category they qualify under and the academic accommodations that are authorized for them. This information is provided to students orally and in writing.

Before meeting with the faculty member, students complete a DSPS Application for Services. The application includes three questions designed to provide an initial assessment of students’ awareness of their disabilities, educational limitations, and needed accommodations. The application questions are as follows:

1. What is your disability?
2. What educational difficulties do you experience because of your disability?
3. What services/accommodations are you requesting?
Responses to these questions are used by DSPS faculty to inform them in their discussions with students about their disabilities and accommodation needs.

To assess the student learning outcomes for new students, DSPS faculty asked them the following three questions at the end of the evaluation meeting:

1. What is your disability?
2. How does your disability affect your learning?
3. What accommodations are authorized for you?

Students who were unclear about the answer to any of these questions were provided with additional instruction and asked the questions again to check understanding.

Criteria for each outcome
Evaluators assessed students’ verbal responses to the three questions utilizing the following criteria outlined on the back of the DSPS Application for Services:

The student is able to:
1. Identify disability(ies)
2. State educational limitations
3. Articulate needed accommodations

Responses were rated according to three levels and recorded as: yes, somewhat, no. These assessment results were then transferred to an excel spreadsheet.

Limitations
In some cases, confounding factors related to the nature of students’ disabilities interfered with their ability to meet outcome criteria. These factors included below average cognitive ability, receptive/expressive communication difficulties, attention problems, anxiety, and other psychological issues.

Continuing Students
At the end of each semester, most DSPS students meet with their DSPS instructor to review progress towards their stated educational goals and to develop a class schedule for the following semester. This year, student learning outcomes for continuing students were assessed during this review/planning meeting in the same manner used with new students. This assessment method was selected over last year’s survey method to explore the difference between students’ self-reports and instructors’ ratings in one-on-one meetings.

To assess the student learning outcomes for continuing students, DSPS faculty asked them the following three questions at the end of the review/planning meeting:

1. What is your disability?
2. How does your disability affect your learning?
3. What accommodations are authorized for you?

Students who were unclear about the answer to any of these questions were provided with additional instruction and asked the questions again to check understanding.
Criteria for each outcome
Evaluators assessed students’ responses to three questions asked verbally utilizing the following criteria:

The student is able to:
1. Identify disability(ies)
2. State educational limitations
3. Articulate needed accommodations

Responses were rated according to three levels and recorded as: yes, with assistance, no. These assessment results were then transferred to an excel spreadsheet.

Limitations
Confounding factors similar to those demonstrated in new students were also observed with continuing students.

Implementation of Assessment Process

Individuals Responsible for the Evaluation Process
DSPS full-time faculty was responsible for assessing student learning outcomes for new and continuing students. New students were assessed as part of the process of evaluating their eligibility for program services. Continuing students were assessed during individual review/planning meetings with DSPS faculty. The DSPS faculty evaluated the data.

Implementation Timeline
Data assessing learning outcomes for new students applying to DSPS was gathered over the course of fall 2008 and spring 2009. Continuing students were assessed during individual review/planning meetings during the last few weeks of the fall and spring semesters.

Students Evaluated
Learning outcomes were assessed for all new students applying for DSPS services. The continuing student population was made up primarily of students enrolled in the class Special Services N65, Academic Coaching.

Intended Users of Collected Data
Disabled Students Programs and Services is the intended user of the assessment data collected. Information learned from the assessment of student learning outcomes will be used to improve and expand practices related to helping students develop self-advocacy skills.

Results

New Students
One hundred and fifty-three (153) new students were assessed during fall 2008 and spring 2009 with the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The student is able to:</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Somewhat</th>
<th>No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify disability(ies)</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. State educational limitations</td>
<td>96%</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Articulate needed accommodations</td>
<td>95.4%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
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These results for new students were higher than in the previous year yet consistent with expectations. It was anticipated that most students would meet the outcome criteria after the instruction provided since the process allowed for a verification of understanding and additional instruction as needed. In other words, students were expected to meet the criteria. However, in some cases, students were unable to meet the criteria because the nature of their disabilities interfered with their ability to process and/or articulate the information. As faculty has engaged in the student learning outcome process, the feedback received from students has informed their communication about students’ disabilities, educational limitations and accommodations. Consequently, students’ understanding of their disability and ability to communicate their needs more effectively has increased.

Continuing Students
One hundred and seventy-nine (179) continuing students were assessed during fall 2008 and spring 2009 with the following results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The student is able to:</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>With Assistance</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify disability(ies)</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. State educational limitations</td>
<td>79.8%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Articulate needed accommodations</td>
<td>83.7%</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
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This year, results for continuing students were consistently lower than those for new students. They were also lower than last year’s results for continuing students. This may be attributed to the following factors: first, we hypothesized that last year’s data for continuing students may have been inflated because it was based on self-report. When students were asked to answer the criteria questions orally in individualized meetings with faculty, they generally demonstrated greater difficulty.

There was also a difference when comparing new with continuing students. We found that new students were better able to discuss their disability and accommodations than continuing students. This difference could be attributed to the time lapse between continuing students’ initial evaluation and the assessment of learning outcomes. Many students with learning-related disabilities have memory difficulties and may not readily hold on to the information. Additionally, some students never received the training that is now completed with initial eligibility evaluations.

Validation of Results

The results of student leaning outcomes for new and continuing students are deemed valid because they are consistent with the subjective experiences of DSPS faculty and staff.

Decisions and Recommendations

Summary of Recommendations
The following recommendations apply to both DSPS student learning outcomes and are designed to enhance instruction in self-advocacy:

- Continue to assess student learning outcomes as part of the application and evaluation process for DSPS.
• Continue to model self-advocacy strategies throughout the Special Services N65 curriculum.
• Develop a survey instrument to assess student learning outcomes in continuing students.

Decision Participants
DSPS faculty and staff participated in discussions that led to the recommendations.

Suggestions for Improving the Assessment Process
We will make efforts to complete student learning outcome assessments with a greater number of DSPS students not enrolled in Special Services N65, Academic Coaching.

Future Evaluation Plan
New students will continue to be assessed as part of the initial evaluation for program services. Continuing students will complete a student learning outcome survey as part of the review/planning meetings with faculty during the last few weeks of the spring 2010 semester.

Implementation of Changes
The DSPS faculty will be responsible for implementing the recommended changes.