2012 Evaluation Visit

March 19-22, 2012

Interviewee: Christine Sison

Interviewer(s): Dr. Roger Welt

Venue: Student Center, Conference Room

Other Participants: None

1. Tell me about your program. BACKGROUND/HISTORY: TRiO Student Support Services (official name) has been around for close to nineteen years. However, our house name as I call it is "Project AIM" to avoid confusion with the Student Support Services that currently manages room utilization and disciplinary actions, parking decals...etc. Project AIM became popular because the goal for students was to aim high for higher education and to help students go beyond their associates degree. SERVICES/STATS: After the history, I went on to indicate our services from tutoring, advising/counseling, financial aid scholarships. Then, talked about the three objectives to help students achieve a 2.0 or higher, to have at least 50% of students persist (retainable) from Fall to Fall of the following year; and to graduate and/or transfer within four years from acceptance to our program. Then further provided our current stats on these objectives. Indicating we have met the objectives. CHALLENGES: I did present the challenges of graduation/transfer from the perspective as a community college across the nation. He agreed by nodding his head. Documents of evidence were presented to show how we tracked students progress, to getting students

2. How many students do we serve? Our program is approved to serve 175. Currently, we are at 176 and growing with Summer Success students to be served.

3. Questions on processes on communication with management? I report quarterly to the Dean who reports to the AVP, President and Board of Trustees. But I also have my team report monthly to me for my findings before the quarterly report including tutors who report to their supervisor, Program Coordinator.

4. Questions about academic evaluation. I wasn't sure if he was taking it from a faculty or student evaluation perspective. I asked for further clarification and took the approach of how our programs help students review the academic catalogs for individualized academic planning to help with students' persistence and graduation. I basically tied in what we do with academic evaluations and tied this into our retention and graduation objectives. Then emphasized students services (tutoring and advising) to assist students pass out of developmental math and English in order for students to be successful in persisting and graduating. I did indicate that within our grant aid competition, I made a revision so students who have repeated developmental classes two or more times must seek tutoring and made concerted effort towards passing in order to compete for grant aid (additional financial assistance). Grant aid is provided only by our program and if student was eligible for Pell Grant and active in our program.

 5. How do you develop your budget? What is the process of developing the budget? We have annual grant award notification (GAN) provided by our program officer from U.S. DOE upon review of our performance reports. Then an itemized budget  based on ensuring operations is support, equipment, supplies, etc. supports our objectives. The budget is sent to the program officer which is communicated with our federal accounting supervisor to set up the budget codes. The budget is also discussed with our Dean.

6. He asked about my background and briefed him about my former roles as Financial Aid counselor, Career Placement Officer and now current director (a first generation student). He said they picked the right person for the job who is not only knowledgeable but passionate towards the students. I blushed.

7. Lastly, he requested to visit our offices because our interview was in CSI's conference room.