



Office of Student Life and Cultural Centers
“Exploring the Persistence to Graduation of Cal Poly Pomona’s African
American and Native American Students”
Assessment Report

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Choose One: Needs Assessment

Date of Assessment Implementation: May 2012

Date of Report: June 2012

Purpose of Assessment

To observe best practices at various colleges and universities, review the literature on recruitment and retention, and listen to the voices of current students, community partners and stakeholders about the Cal Poly Pomona experience for both African American and Native American students.

Division Learning Outcome Diversity & Global Consciousness

Targeted Learning Outcome

To examine the current recruitment and retention practices of African American and Native American students at Cal Poly Pomona, compare CPP’s methods to other institutions, and to identify the issues and best practices in order to explore ways to help increase the numbers of students affiliated with these targeted populations.

Assessment Methodology

A multi-disciplined team of faculty and staff conducted site visits of other colleges and universities to learn about best practices, and utilized Institutional Research and Academic Resources (IRAR) to gather current data regarding African American and Native American students. On-line surveys and focus groups were used to gather information directly from current African American and Native American students regarding their experience at CPP.

Results

AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENT SUCCESS ONLINE SURVEY:

A total of 82 students completed the online survey.

- 89% say their families are supportive of their efforts to do well in college
- 89% study mostly alone
- 75% admit to being procrastinators
- 71% admit to being easily distracted from studying
- 69% have a specific place where they study
- They meet with their academic advisors the following number of times per year:
 - 66% meet with their advisors 1 – 3 times per year
 - 23% have never met with their advisor
- 91% have used campus services. When asked to select all that apply:

- 58% use health services
- 46% use tutoring services
- 34% use writing support services
- 55% are involved in campus organizations. Of that number:
 - 48% are in academic clubs
 - 38% are in social clubs or organizations
- 30% have been involved in academic programs.
- 28% participated in pre-college programs
- 19% participated in a college transition program
- 55% have not applied for scholarships since attending CPP.
- 53% currently have a paying job.
- 65% live off campus.
- 74% believe the student body is racially diverse, BUT only
- 29% believe their ethnicity is proportionately represented among students
- 19% believe they have met most African American students on campus

NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENT SURVEY

A total of 11 students completed the online survey. All but one resided off campus with 90% living within 40 miles from the campus. All respondents listed tribal affiliations, with some participants listing multiple affiliations. These included 10 federally recognized tribes and 4 non-Federally recognized tribes.

Persistence and Retention

Just under half of the respondents ($n=5$; 45%) were the first in their family to attend college. All participants indicated that their families were “supportive of... efforts to do well in college” and 7 respondents (64%) indicated that their families were able to visit them on campus.

Academic Performance at CPP:

Most participants ($n=10$; 91%) reported seeing their academic advisors 1-3 times per year. When asked about study habits, 6 (55%) reported studying 1-3 hours per day, 2 (18%) reported studying 4-5 hours per day, and 3 (27%) reported studying 6 or more hours per day. Most participants ($n=10$; 91%) reported that they studied alone; 4 (36%) reported that they used the “Native American Student Center as a place to study or work on assignments.”

Persistence towards Graduation

Campus Support Services

The survey indicated that 9 (83%) Native American student respondents did not participate in pre-college transitional programs. The survey also indicated that although 10 (92%) of the Native American students met with an academic advisor one to three times a year, 100% of the respondents did not meet more than four times throughout the academic year.

Peer Networks, clubs and organizations

Six Focus group respondents indicated that clubs and organizations were helpful in their persistence, feeling connected and important to their identity

Student perspectives and concerns

About two thirds of respondents (64%) indicated that they had “major concerns about coming to Cal Poly Pomona prior to beginning your first year”. The most commonly endorsed concern was financial need (reported by 91% of participants).

Campus Representation of Native Americans

All respondents indicated that they did not feel that Native Americans were proportionally represented among students at CPP.

Conclusion

African American Students - Lessons Learned

- Students must be assisted with setting realistic graduation goals.
- Students must be provided with additional opportunities for campus engagement.

- Students must be taught how to be better students.
- Students must be made aware of and guided through the process for applying for more scholarships and grants.

Native American Students - Lessons Learned

- Students are concerned about their financial need at the beginning, middle, and towards the end of their education, which may hinder their college achievement and persistence.
- Most of our native students come from the surrounding urban setting.
- Involvement and support of family is critical to the success of Native American students.
- Cal Poly Pomona lacks sufficient scholarships for Native American students who frequently fall in a low-income status.
- Services such as mentoring, academic advising, tutoring and program planning are insufficient for Native American students.
- Representation of faculty and staff is insufficient for such a large university.
- Professional Development with faculty and staff (including residential staff) in the areas of cultural awareness and sensitivity is needed.
- Outreach and involvement to our local Native community and schools is needed.
- There are potentially promising local programs for Native American college students.

Implications for Practice

1. Advising is seen as a successful intervention. CPP needs to find ways to introduce intrusive advising for African American and Native American students in order to help them succeed at the university.
2. Many African American and Native American students do not participate in most activities. Engaging this population of students in more co-curricular activities may assist with increasing retention levels.
3. Many programs across campus do not keep statistical data or records of outreach efforts, student visitations, number of contacts, overall program advising and mentor visits, and the number of scholarships given to undergraduates and graduate students. This should be done.
4. Many programs across campus do not provide any specific services for African American and Native American students. This should be done.
5. Program challenges are campus wide and there should be a larger campus conversation on how to better assist African American and Native American students.
6. The number of African Americans employed in programs that serve these underrepresented populations is significantly low. The number of Native Americans is drastically and significantly low across the Cal Poly Pomona campus. An effort by the campus as a whole needs to be made to increase the number of African American and Native American faculty and staff.