



**ARCHES (Achievement, Retention and Commitment to Higher Education Success)
ARCHES Peer Advising
Assessment Report**

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Assessment Type: Satisfaction Assessment

Date of Assessment Implementation: May 2009

Date of Report: July 2009

Purpose of Assessment

ARCHES wanted to evaluate students after receiving peer advising throughout the academic school year. We wanted to assess the methods utilized by our Peer Advisor as they related to the specific services that are offered, including but not limited to: time management, study techniques, financial planning and other disability-related needs. It was our belief that ARCHES students would demonstrate an increase in their competency and ability to utilize these techniques in their daily lives and find value in the peer advising component. We also wanted to find out from students how we could improve peer advising and similarly understand from students who have not been actively utilizing the ARCHES Peer Advisors what could be done to encourage them to participate in peer advising.

Targeted Learning Outcome

In order to create a learning outcome measuring the students' utilization of the Peer Advising Component, we needed to first evaluate how students are utilizing the component and what they are receiving as a benefit from the services provided. We also want to understand why students were seeking peer advising assistance and how we could increase the usage in order to improve the program. We wanted to create baseline data to shape the ARCHES Peer Advising Student Learning Outcome. At this stage no formal student learning outcome was identified but we did create an assessment survey to better understand the components students are participating in and the program.

Assessment Methodology

An evaluation was created through student voice as a result of a class project that was completed through a Psychology Assessment/Evaluation class that our current Peer Advisor Edna S. was involved in. They set out to create an assessment and evaluation tool to review the ARCHES Peer Advising Component. Once they had completed the class project the ARCHES Program Coordinator worked with the ARCHES Staff to implement the evaluation with the following minor changes:

- A **Student Survey** was utilized to gauge students' perception of the peer advising component as well as collect individual data from the students in both a qualitative and quantitative fashion. A survey link was e-mailed to each ARCHES Participant Cal Poly Pomona address from the 2008/2009 ARCHES Participant list. A two week timeframe was given for the completion of the survey and a reminder e-mail was sent out during the second week. A drawing of a Bronco Bucks gift card and a couple Golden Spoon gift cards were used to help encourage participation. Total Surveys Distributed was 150 and we received 17 surveys back completed. That gave us an 11% return rate.

- **Direct Supervision** was provided by ARCHES Program Coordinator and Learning Specialist with the Peer Advisors to assist with issues and concerns as well as offer continuous training during the peer advising position.
- **Informal Observations** were done during the peer advising sessions to assess value of advising component.
- **Tracking Database** verification was completed on peer advising attendance and occurrences to measure the number of completed student appointments.

Results

When looking at the usage of Peer Advising Services, it was discovered that seven students (41%) have not been to a peer advising appointment. Of the seven students, six student responses that were given showed that 50% said they were aware of the service that peer advising provided while the other 50% said that they were not aware of the services provided by ARCHES peer advising. Five responses gave ways of motivation that would encourage them to use Peer Advising. Including, "having more time in my schedule...ironic, huh" and "help with choosing classes" and "if there ever comes a time for me to need help with any of the services they provide, but right now I am doing great on my own." Of the seven students, five responses provided answers to what they would expect if they visited a peer advisor with answers including, "everything" and "examples of personal experiences" and "help and examples of how to excel in school, and be successful." On the other hand, ten students (59%) reported that they have been to a peer advising appointment. Those ten students responded to when the last time they visited a peer advisor as follows: eight students (80%) received peer advising in the last academic year 08/09, one student (10%) received peer advising in 07/08, and one student (10%) received peer advising in 06/07. Out of the eight students who received peer advising in the last academic year, two students (25%) attended peer advising one time, four students (50%) attended peer advising two times, one student (12.5%) attended peer advising three times, and one student (12.5%) attended peer advising five or more times. The students who had utilized peer advising responded to what their peer advisor has assisted them with from the following areas: nine students (75%) responded to receiving Time Management, one student (8.33%) responded to receiving Study Techniques, one student (8.33%) responded to receiving Financial Planning, and one student (8.33%) responded to receiving other services as specified as personal support.

Conclusion

As a result of this survey we were able to see that students are indeed receiving the assistance they are seeking during their peer advising appointments. It also showed us that while the students that have seen a peer advisor are satisfied, there are still a number of students not utilizing the peer advisor component. We may have only received a small response from the students but the responses gave us valuable data. We understand that the response does not represent the whole population, but it gives us a good idea and starting point for improving the peer advising component. Potential reasons why we received a small number of responses could be due to these factors:

- (1) students viewed it as not being applicable to them if they did not utilize the peer advising component
- (2) the time period the survey was available, or
- (3) students' lack of time and follow through.

Implications for Practice

In the first survey of evaluating the peer advising, we have been able to gain valuable information and data. This information and data will guide us as we create our student learning outcome for the peer advising component. As a result of this survey we will begin to implement a pre/post survey to each student at the beginning of a peer advising session. The pre survey will take place at the beginning of the first session reporting on what the student's expectations, areas of expected support, and how we can help them during the peer advising session. A post survey will be conducted to the same student approximately two weeks after the first session. The post survey will report if the student's expectations were met, how they have implemented the learned skill, and what future services they would be interested in receiving during a peer advising session. The pre/post survey will open lines of communication between peer advisors and students, and will give the peer advisors a follow up with each student. We will continue to evaluate the peer advising component with the survey on an annual basis. We will be reviewing the survey to make sure that it is meeting our needs for evaluation of the peer advising component. In order to increase the student responses to the survey we will also be reviewing ways to find a better time to conduct the survey to the students, as well as an improved marketing strategy to the students. We will be utilizing the pre/post surveys as an evaluation at the end of each quarter as a guide of how we are doing and as an evaluation of the peer advisors. The Learning Specialist and Program Coordinator will also be conducting a quarterly review with each peer advisor to discuss the data from the pre/post survey, offer feedback, and make appropriate changes to improve the peer advising sessions. In addition, the Learning Specialist and Program Coordinator will review the pre/post surveys to look at additional support services or trainings we can provide to the peer advisors to meet the needs of the students.