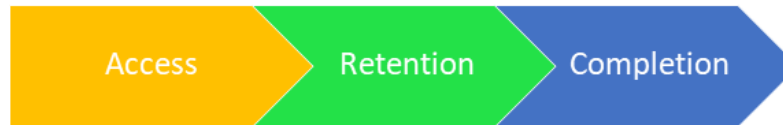


Student Services Comprehensive Program Review 2020-21

Framework for Student Services



New for Program Review in 2020-21:

- *Impact of COVID-19: Prompts related to the impact of COVID are in italics*
- Equity considerations: Prompts related to equity are underlined

PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND DATA REVIEW & REFLECTION

MISSION

★ **Did you already start your PR in 2019-20?** If so, you can copy and paste your answer to the prompt, “Describe how your program aligns with the institutional mission and any changes needed” below in this box.

★ **New to PR in 2020-21?** Describe how your program aligns with the institutional mission and plans (College Mission Statement, Education Master Plan, Student Equity Plan, Guided Pathways (four pillars), etc.)

Type your response here:

Admissions and Records aligns with the institutional mission in many ways. Admissions and Records serves in a unique capacity, supporting all student learning populations throughout their entire time at MPC and beyond; as prospective students, current students, returning students, and alumni. Admissions and Records specifically supports the college mission in the areas of facilitating open-access, providing high quality services, and supporting students pursuing transfer, career training, basic skills, and lifelong learning opportunities.

Admissions and Records facilitates open-access to MPC through the application process. Students are encouraged to apply online for the best service, through the CCCApply application program, provided by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office (CCCCO). Applications are accepted by an automated download, which sends a tailored welcome email to the student within a few minutes of submission. Additionally, some students require the use of hard copy applications, such as our twelve-year-old dual enrolled students, due to online privacy laws.

Admissions and Records strives to provide high quality services, including the application process, to all students. Toward that end, the Admissions and Records departmental missions reads as follows:

The Admissions & Records Office strives to provide high quality service, knowledge and guidance to

students, staff, faculty and the community at large in regards to admissions, registration and records in order to foster a successful experience in higher education.

In order to achieve the Admissions and Records mission, the department created the following values statement:

In order to achieve our mission Admissions and Records commits to:

- *putting a positive face on the application and registration process*
- *being the lifelong point of contact for students and alumni*
- *empowering all toward self-sufficiency through the use of technology*
- *support faculty through the administrative process.*

To measure the quality of services provided, Admissions and Records participates in surveys on behalf of the college in relation to the student experience and works towards continuous improvement through the use of Student Learning Outcomes. The Admissions and Records Student Learning Outcomes are:

- *Students will demonstrate self-advocacy by contacting Admissions & Records for assistance with Admissions & Records procedures.*
- *Students will demonstrate technical competence by investigating and completing Admissions & Records procedures online.*

Admissions and Records supports the goals of students pursuing transfer through the use of reminder portal messages, suggesting students see a counselor when they have completed 40 or more transferable units, as they may be closer to graduating and/or transferring than they realize. For students who are pursuing an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT), Admissions and Records participates in the online verification process for admission to the California State University (CSU) system. Admissions and Records works to notify students of the process, the steps they may need to take, and completes the verification process.

Admissions and Records supports the goals of students pursuing career training through typical application and registration for Career Technical Education courses, as well as by working closely with the South Bay Regional Consortium, local Instructional Service Agreement (ISA) organizations, and students who come or return to MPC for specific program training. The South Bay Regional Consortium works to provide training for law enforcement officers, including cadet academies. This is a large partnership for MPC, garnishing more than 600 FTES per year, and for which all registrations are completed manually within Admissions and Records. Some of the largest ISAs for MPC are within the area of fire protection. Admissions and Records works with the staff at the Public Safety Training Center (PSTC) to facilitate the application and registration of local area fire protection personnel for in-service training and fire protection courses. Additionally, Admissions and Records and the PSTC work collaboratively to ensure a streamlined process for course repetition, while adhering to state standards.

Students seeking either basic skills classes or lifelong learning opportunities are supported through the Admissions and Records Office. Students in both areas are able to receive assistance with the application

and registration processes, as well to receive answers to any questions in regards to their academic goals or the college in general. In fact, students with these goals are also frequently students who benefit from in depth assistance to navigate online processes. Admissions and Records staff walk these students through a variety of processes, either in person on computers within the lobby, over the phone, or through electronic correspondence. Students within these populations may not identify as typical college students, and the Admissions and Records team works hard to ensure they feel included and valued.

ACCESS

★ **Did you already start your PR in 2019-20?** You can copy & paste your answers to the prompts, “**Review data on access & success. What are the interesting/key findings?**” and “**Describe your program access in terms of day/time, location, modality, etc**” below in this box. Please also consider addressing the prompts related to *COVID* and Equity, below.

★ **New to PR in 2020-21?** [See the prompts below](#)

Who are you serving? Are there particular groups of students you are not reaching? *How has the shift to remote student support impacted who you serve?*

Data to consider: student demographics for your program vs. MPC overall, community demographics, HS graduates,

What services are available to students and to what extent? *The shift to remote student support has impacted your students’ access in terms of day/time, location, and modality. What might your services look like (in terms of day/time, location, and modality) after we shift back to face-to-face support?*

How will the shift back to face-to-face support provide equitable opportunities for access, retention, and completion?

Data to consider: List of services available, how services are delivered, hours of operation, login records, usage records (shows vs. no shows), grades for students who participate in services, number of contacts per student, average time per student (½ vs. 1 hour), student satisfaction, student narratives, data dashboards, SARS, Zoho, etc...

Type your response here:

Admissions and Records is a unique department in that it serves the entire college population of students. There virtually is no distinction between the overall college population demographics and the students served by Admissions and Records. This is uniquely possible because all prospective students must first be served by Admissions and Records in order to become current students, while all current and continuing students register in classes through services provided by Admissions and Records, and all former students (alumni) access their records through Admissions and Records. While admittedly not all services are delivered directly by personnel, all students are served by Admissions and Records throughout their entire relationship with MPC.

Admissions and Records implemented a helpdesk system a few years ago and thank goodness it was already in place when the college went to 'shelter in place' orders. Admissions and Records was able to remain fully open and accessible, in the online space. For several months this access point was the main access point for the college entirely, allowing other departments to spin up online, shifting to a virtually accessible campus.

The shift to using the helpdesk system as the singular point of contact during the pandemic resulted with mostly positive results overall, although not without growing pains. First of good news to our students, Admissions and Records expanded service time, because without having to keep a physical space open to the public, staff are able to work at different times/days. Plus, by having students contact Admissions and Records through the helpdesk system, they are able to receive faster results and better communication on average. Conversely, contact by phone has become less available, with a reduction in hours. This reduction was necessary in order to allow for a consistent forward facing schedule, while allowing people to remain physically distant and safe while in the office. Even with the reduction in the available hours for phone assistance, the phone calls for the 2020-2021 year are nearly 2,000 more calls than were seen in all of 2019-2020, as of May 1, 2021.

Although there have been growing pains as the playing field kept shifting through the pandemic, overall the shifting of service into the helpdesk system has been a benefit. As such, anticipating the return of in person services gives rise to some concerns. One of the predominant positive aspects of consolidating the communication channels into Admissions and Records is the ability of staff to focus within that area, rather than having the feeling of being pulled in multiple directions at once. Prior to the pandemic staff routinely experienced the need to multitask, while working on desk tasks, answering the phone, helping staff and students in person, all at the same time. Staff have expressed feelings of relief to be able to work on their desk tasks, even with intermittent phone calls and helpdesk tickets, without the hustle and bustle and fast paced environment.

The department absolutely recognizes the need to be open for students for in person services, while wondering how the new desire and growth of online services will be able to be managed in congruence with the return of in-person services. The concern is namely, how will the department be able to keep up with the demand and turnaround expectations now prevalent within the online space, while having to address the return of in person requests? Document and forms processing has been faster within the online space and no one wants to see this service level decrease in response to the need to be open in person. Communication dialog within the helpdesk has most often been rapid, far exceeding previous expectations for digital communications.

The use of the helpdesk system helps to keep the department's work more organized and readily accessible. Previously the department was accepting forms via email, U.S. mail, in person delivery, by fax, or by intercampus mail. Although most of those options are still available, the predominant use is via email to the helpdesk system, which allows staff to look in one place to see how many forms are to be processed, allowing for an increase in organized and efficient use of staff talents/time.

As a service example, the Dual Enrollment Form has had the service expectation of being processed like all our forms, within 10 business days. This form has traditionally been delivered in person most often, with others being faxed, mailed, or occasionally emailed. Oftentimes the same form was delivered through multiple avenues, creating additional confusion and delays. During the 2020-2021 school year, virtually

every dual enrollment form was received through the helpdesk system. As such, the processing timeline for all tickets labeled as having to do with dual enrollment, whether they included a question, a single form, or many multiple forms from counselors, decreased dramatically. Out of 951 tickets received between September 2, 2020 and February 1, 2021, the average resolution time was 12 hours 39 minutes. The resolution time is the time between when the ticket was received by the Admissions and Records department and the moment the ticket was marked as resolved (completed). As such, it is the opinion of department staff that the transition to the helpdesk has dramatically increased the service to students.

At the time of this writing, Admissions and Records has resolved 10,618 tickets between July 1, 2020 and May 1, 2021.

STUDENT SUCCESS (RETENTION & COMPLETION) AND OUTCOMES

★ **Did you already start your PR in 2019-20?** You can copy & paste from the prompts, “**Review your SAOs--are you seeing your expected outcomes? What are the key findings?**” and “**Review data on access & success. What are the interesting/key findings?**” and “**Are there barriers to student success? If so, what?**” below in this box. Please also consider addressing the prompts related to *COVID* and Equity, below.

★ **New to PR in 2020-21? What is your program trying to achieve? Are students achieving the expected outcomes?** *How has the transition to online student support affected attainment of SAOs for your area? What were some of the challenges students experienced? Are there any groups of students that are struggling with achieving those outcomes? How did you shift your practices during this pandemic to help students achieve the SAOs and what were the results? Did these efforts help students who were disproportionately impacted and, if so, how?*

Data to consider: technology platforms and how they are utilized (SARS, ZOHO, Freshdesk, etc.),

Type your response here:

As for student learning outcomes, the pandemic year has actually provided a dramatic increase in achievement for students being served by Admissions and Records. One of our student learning outcomes is as follows: Students will demonstrate technical competence by investigating and completing Admissions & Records procedures online. In most instances, students were *only* able to complete Admissions and Records procedures online, or with forms obtained online and submitted through email. Without concrete evidence in prior years, this has seen nearly a 100% increase, as in person services were not available and very few documents were received in the mail. By having services expected to be completed online, or in the virtual world, many more students completed processes electronically than ever before.

To achieve these outcomes, many students needed additional coaching, without the ability to provide the coaching in person. Students were suddenly required to do things online, rather than having that as one of their options. This resulted in a lot of high-touch assisting, yet in a remote capacity. One of the

circumstances that helped, was students were normalizing to new technology in their lives in general because it was required all throughout the world at the same time, not just MPC.

One of the common areas where students needed additional assistance was with digital signatures. The requirements for this process changed a few times during the year, which is now somewhat easier, although no longer within a compliance comfort zone. One of the significant challenges can be summed up as not having a paperless solution in place. The amount of time staff spent directing students how to sign digitally and properly filling out forms was very significant. Everyone on campus looks forward to the implementation of a paperless forms solution in the future and this experience has helped to further that college goal.

As for equity considerations, Admissions and Records is again uniquely positioned in terms of equity as the department serves ALL students at MPC and does not/cannot distinguish between groups by need. We are not categorically funded to serve a specific population, we are here to serve ALL students. We serve all generally, and not any specific group in depth. As such, we do not see any particular group that is adjusting less/more. As we assist students from all walks of life, whether they may be from disproportionately impacted populations or not, we do not have any way to tell without the students self disclosing the information.

We assist all students who are in need, referring them to services that allow them to complete what they need to; whether it's obtaining a bag of food, urgent financial needs, or submitting forms to our department. From what the staff have experienced over the last year, the most complaints have come from people who find our processes to be an inconvenience to them, rather than from students who didn't have the resources to complete the process. The main difference being those without the resources most often gladly accept the options we have in order to assist them (such as providing an application or chromebook, or walking them through a process over the phone, etc.), while those with resources often acknowledge the options we present and then simply complain about why they don't want to complete it.

Overall the Admissions & Records staff are to be commended for their work this year thinking outside the box and problem solving in order to ensure all students were served. There were extremely few students who we were not ultimately able to have their needs met. Sometimes the circumstances meant the process took a little longer than ideal conditions, yet in virtually every case, students were able to obtain their objective.

PROGRAM HEALTH AND RESOURCES

★ **Did you already start your PR in 2019-20?** If so, you can copy and paste your answer to the prompt, **"Describe your program health in terms of students served and staffing"** below in this box. Please also consider addressing the prompts related to *COVID* and Equity, below.

★ **New to PR in 2020-21?** **What are the resources (staffing, technology, facilities, budget, etc.) available for your program to support students? To what extent do the available resources address students'**

needs? Are there particular groups of students whose needs are not met with available resources? *How have the resources available for your program been impacted by the shift to remote student support? How might the resources look after we return to face-to-face support?*

Data to consider: Staffing, connectivity/computer access, FTEF/students, professional development opportunities & participation,

Type your response here:

The Admissions and Records office is a high volume office, with a myriad of processes and procedures, many of which are used by the entire student population, as well as all faculty and many staff. This unique situation, unlike most offices at the college, is frequently not realized in terms of recognizing the enormity of tasks completed within a small office, with frequently antiquated equipment. Some areas the department has been able to improve, while other processes are hopelessly behind industry standards.

Like many offices, our computer application systems are at the heart of how/when/in what way we can provide services. As a whole, MPC does not have industry standard computer software within the area of Student Services and ERP related processes. Although some improvement has been seen over the last few years, it's been primarily in secondary support systems, such as a call center and helpdesk. In a nutshell, if the department was able to have better software, it would in turn be able to offer more efficient services for the students. If the department was able to be provided with more efficient computer software, staff would be able to provide more time to students and students could get what they need faster.

As another example, one of the projects we have wanted to do for several years is to create How-To Videos for our core processes in order to assist students while we are not available, or if they need assistance remotely. We have not been able to succeed at this request due to lack of resources, specifically staff time to work on them and appropriate software. In this absence another department has created a few videos covering processes the Admissions and Records office is responsible for, unfortunately with some errors and/or within a vein that the office would not have chosen. Another example is the paperless solution search across campus this year.

As it stands, the college is looking at continuing to have long processing timelines (such as several months for graduation petition evaluation), hiring additional positions to handle the load and decrease manual processing time, or look toward technological solutions to allow the existing staff positions to work more effectively than is currently possible. This situation is currently additionally complicated by the pandemic. Staff are functioning well in the online space, yet soon will have to add in person service back into the mix. There is significant concern as to how this will play out. Given the huge online presence, how will that look when in person services pull staff away from that effort? Staff are ready and prepared to react to the changing environment, yet are looking for future solutions.

In regards to staffing, Admissions and Records has had a history of turnover, largely due to positions' placement on the compensation scale. Admissions and Records is a great place to begin your career at MPC, with options to transfer out and significantly up the salary scale frequently available. This makes it often difficult to retain staff members. Additionally, during the pandemic it has been difficult to train new employees for their jobs, as well as evaluate new employees, as their job is temporarily so highly affected as to make it almost entirely different to previous expectations. We have had a vacancy for some time now as well, which proves difficult to hire for during these times. We are hopeful we will be able to fill the position soon.

COLLABORATIONS

★ This was not in the PR for 2019-20

★ New prompt for everyone: **What are some salient relationships or collaborations between your area and another area (department, committee, off-campus organization or Local Educational Agency (LEA)?** In what ways do these relationships or collaborations support students, particularly historically underrepresented or marginalized groups of students? *How has the shift to remote student support affected these relationships/ collaborations? How might these relationships/collaborations look after we shift back to face-to-face student support?*

Type your response here:

Within this section Admissions and Records continues to be in a unique position, having relationships with nearly every department on campus. All academic and instructional departments interact in regards to training, rosters, grading, and troubleshooting; other Student Services departments often have close relationships, with interacting processes to serve students; while many Administrative Services departments also work closely with Admissions and Records, especially in regards to technology, fiscal needs for students and the department, as well as security and facilities. Most of these relationships are built on respect and mutual understanding, with service to students at the core, and some have room for improvement.

As a service department Admissions and Records often finds itself in the conundrum of being “out of sight, out of mind” when things are working well or according to a user's expectations, and conversely being a viewed as a “problem” department when user's experience does not match up with their expectations. This contributes to the office largely perhaps being misunderstood in some areas across campus. Adding to this perception is the large level of compliance required for many of the processes facilitated by the department. The department is tasked with keeping the college in compliance at many levels including local, state, and federal policies and laws, as well as district policy. Often people believe that staff are informing users of instructions or process requirements that are too technical or which they feel are not necessary. When in truth, the staff are facilitating the process to the level required by audit, mandate, statute, etc. For this reason, the department often is the recipient of negative feedback within the areas of compliance from both internal and external to MPC users.

Sometimes within this vein of misunderstanding, some programs prefer to assist their students as much as they can, rather than encouraging them to reach out to Admissions and Records, or facilitating a warm handoff. Lots of population specific programs mistakenly assume that for processes that involve their students we would have some sort of trigger or indication on the student's account of what is needed. Yet, in fact, we serve the entire prospective, current, and former student populations, making those assumptions impossible not only by systemic processes but by sheer volume. Admissions and Records staff routinely answer questions, are invited to program meetings as informational guests, as well as provide training on specific processes for staff outside of Admissions and Records, in order to boost awareness of departmental processes and how our colleagues can best assist students.

During the pandemic year tensions ran especially high at times, which was exacerbated by limited communication channels. As such, some relationships became strained as communication was constrained to only email and then with the additional unreliable potential for phone calls added in. This is likely a

trend that could be seen across the entire campus, yet was readily identified by Admissions and Records staff. When people are confined to email they often tend to forget manners and may become snippy, or rude, causing a lack of camaraderie. Email has never been a good communication tool for sensitive or frustrating topics. Hopefully this will improve as people begin to return to campus fulltime and are allowed to interact with each other in person again.

INTERNAL/EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

★ **Did you already start your PR in 2019-20?** If so, you can copy and paste your answer to the prompt, “**Note any internal or external factors that affect your program**” below in this box. Please also consider addressing the prompt related to Equity, below.

★ **New to PR in 2020-21?** **Note any internal and/or external factors (not already addressed above) that affect your program.** Do these factors disproportionately affect any particular groups of students?

Type your response here:

The greatest external influences this year were the ever constant and fluctuating recommendations/regulations/mandates from the state and the California Community College Chancellor’s Office in response to the pandemic. It came down to Admissions & Records on multiple occasions to review and digest their directives, decide on a course of action, send that course for review, and then communicate what that meant to the college as a whole. And then do it all over again when the directives changed again. This understandably caused some confusion as updates continually rolled out and implementation decisions were made and remade.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS/SUCSESSES

★ **Did you already start your PR in 2019-20?** If so, you can copy and paste your answer to the prompt, “**Briefly describe any program highlights and success stories**” below in this box. Please also consider addressing the prompt related to Equity, below.

★ **New to PR in 2020-21?** **Briefly describe any program or department highlights and/or successes.** In what ways do these successes foster and support diversity and inclusion?

Type your response here:

The Admissions and Records team had an amazing response to the COVID environment! The helpdesk system became the helpdesk not only for Admissions and Records, but for the whole college while in shelter in place. This provided the college the ability to make decisions on how to spin up online, while Admissions and Records held down the fort for everyone and bought them time to do so. The 3 months we worked remotely were crazy and anything/everything was sent through Admissions and Records. Kudos must be given to the Admissions and Records team members who rose to the occasion to serve the college and the students tirelessly during this timeframe. They responded as nimbly as possible to the rapidly changing environment, including processes being updated on a daily/weekly basis as the situation unfolded. Staff have been more adaptable than ever before, interpreting our system requirements to all. Thank you!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM 2019-20 TEMPLATE

★ **Did you already start your PR in 2019-20?** You can copy & paste from the prompts, **“Describe any updates to your program (e.g., change in hours or how services are delivered, staffing changes)”** and **“Review other data relevant to your program. What are the interesting/key findings?”** and **“What are you still curious about? What would you like to investigate further?”** below in this box.

Type your response here:

There are additional systems usage that is tracked in response to our Student Learning Outcomes. These data points are of interest to the department, are tracked within TracDat for each academic year, and are regularly discussed at team meetings/retreats at the minimum of an annual basis. Overall trends indicate applications and transcript requests are holding fairly steady over time, while phone calls have fluctuated, front counter visits have decreased overall, and helpdesk usage has skyrocketed.

Below is a graph, including data through 2019-2020 as the data is not yet complete for 2020-2021.

Admissions and Records Stats
2012-2020

