RECOMMENDATION 3: At Risk Students

The College should define the at-risk population, develop and implement strategies for addressing the needs of the at-risk population, and create mechanisms for the continuous assessment and improvement of services to this population. (Standard II.A.2d)

The Employment Training Center (ETC) is unique within the UHCC System in that it offers short-term, non-credit courses of study to an at-risk population that prepares this population for entry-level jobs. Therefore, at ETC the terms “course” and “program” are synonymous. 100% of ETC courses have a well-defined list of competencies with the general education component embedded in the vocational curriculum. These are reviewed annually and are incorporated into Windward’s Annual Assessment/Program Review Cycle. Each instructor completes a detailed assessment of the course’s competencies for each student, documents it, and reports it to the referring agency. Faculty revise and upgrade their curriculum and teaching strategies in response to changes in technology and advancements in their field.

Students are referred to ETC from private and governmental agencies and the State of Hawai‘i Department of Education (DOE). These agencies’ counselors collaborate with ETC’s counselors and staff to provide appropriate support for each individual.

Prior to enrollment, all students take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Based on their scores, students are counseled to do one of two things: take Essential Skills classes to improve their ability in basic math and communication skills and then enter a vocational program, or, if they are deemed prepared, enroll in a vocational course that includes integrated academics customized to that field. All students receive an orientation session at the start of their programs.

Throughout their time at ETC, each student is assigned a counselor who is equipped to support their needs. ETC has counselors specifically designated to work with students with disabilities, and with serving non-traditional students. ETC’s counselors are an integral part of a team approach to addressing each student’s needs. Faculty and counselors consult on a regular basis. ETC received federal funds to expand its Job Placement Office to include internship/work experience opportunities for all its students. The Office has created a Career Planning Course and a “soft skills” class that is aligned with the Standards set by the National Work Readiness Credential. These are all specifically geared toward our at-risk population.

Students of Hawaiian ancestry are generally recognized as at-risk, and ETC serves a significant number of them at all sites. The unit received funds from the Office of
Hawaiian Affairs to integrate Hawaiian healing methods into the standard Nurse’s Aide curriculum. This grant also provided tuition waivers, free uniforms and supplies to Hawaiians who take the class. The Nurse’s Aide program also has received a grant from Kamehameha Schools that serves as a pipeline to the RN degree. Students meeting a specified criteria are eligible for tuition and supplies at Kapiolani Community College’s Nursing Program.

ETC collects and analyzes the quantitative data required by the federal Perkins Guidelines for Vocational Courses. Analysis of that data has resulted in changes to staffing, facilities, equipment, and/or special support services. ETC has also developed a template that reflects ETC’s character, yet meets the mechanisms approved and used by credit programs at Windward to assess SLOs that have been established. The Annual Assessments and Program Reviews for ETC programs can be found at http://windward.hawaii.edu/Assessment.

The College has identified four distinctive at-risk groups for student success for students taking credit courses: incoming high school students, first generation students, students with disabilities, and students with a cumulative GPA below 2.0.

Incoming high school students are considered at-risk by virtue of transition from a prescriptive learning environment into one that is more developmental. The College has implemented the following strategies to address the needs of incoming high school students:

• Effective Fall 2007, all recent high school graduates entering Windward must attend New Student Orientation. They will not be allowed to register until they attend. The 3-hour workshop includes an introduction to Windward, strategies for success, a campus tour, introduction to campus support services, student grievance procedures, faculty interactions and academic advising.

• During the semester, peer mentors will contact these students and monitor how they are doing. If they are experiencing difficulties, the peer mentors will notify a counselor who will intervene to assist the student.

Statistics confirm that first generation students are less likely to complete degree programs than their peers. Students with declared disabilities require special assistance to accommodate their special needs to overcome obstacles they may face while attending school.

The College has solicited federal funds to address the needs of first generation students and students with disabilities. The College also established the Student Support Services (SSS) Program. This program serves approximately 300 students who self-declare as first generation and/or students with a disability. SSS provides students with:
• tutoring;
• intensive counseling;
• access to a computer lab;
• access to disability services.

The College has also hired a full-time general funded disability counselor who works closely with the SSS program. SSS compiles an annual performance report that tracks the success of their clients. The annual outcome measures for the program are 80 percent persistence as compared to, 70 percent retention, and 65 percent graduation. The rates for the entire school population were 63 percent persistence, 83 percent retention, and 6 percent graduation for the period reported. These measures will be used to assess the effectiveness of the strategies used to assist first generation students and students with disabilities.

Lastly, the College has defined students who have a G.P.A. below 2.0 as at-risk. Intervention strategies for these students include:

• mandatory advising;
• twice monthly Student Success Workshops covering general education and campus specific topics like time management, note taking, study skills, communicating with faculty;
• familiarization with campus services;
• a three tiered academic warning policy.

The academic warning policy allows for systematic intervention on the part of the College and allows students to reflect on their desire to pursue a college education. The Success Counselor is responsible for the monitoring of the College’s academic warning policy and conducts an annual assessment and evaluation of the strategies for this at-risk population. Leslie Opulauoho and Renee Arakaki will contact you to make this link to supporting data for the efficacy of the SSS program.